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THREEPENCE

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The Rise and Fall of the Communist International

By TED GRANT

The Third International has been officially buried. In the most undignified and contemptible fashion it would be possible to conceive, it has passed off the stage of history. Hurriedly and without consultation with all the adhering parties, not to speak of the rank and file throughout the world, without any democratic discussion and decision, as the result of the pressure of American imperialism, Stalin has perfidiously abandoned the Comintern.

To understand how it is that this organisation which aroused the terror and hatred of the whole of the capitalist world has come to such an inglorious end at the bidding of capitalism, it is necessary to review briefly the stormy rise and even stormier decline of the Inter-

national. The decree for its dissolution was merely an acknowledgment of what had long been known to all informed people; that the Comintern as a factor making for world Socialism was dead and had departed forever from its original aims and purposes. Its demise was predicted and foreseen long in advance.

The Third International grew out of the collapse of capitalism in the last war. The Russian Revolution sent a wave of revolutionary fervour through the ranks of the working class throughout the world. To the war-weary, disillusioned and embittered masses, it came as a message of hope, of inspiration and courage, it showed the way out of the bloody chaos into which capitalism had plunged society. It was born as a direct consequence of the betrayal and breakdown of the Second Inter-

national which supported the ruling classes in the last war, and even more treacherously, sabotaged and destroyed the revolutions which followed in the wake of the last war. The breakdown of imperialism and capitalism was signalled by the revolutions in Germany, Austria, Hungary, revolutionary situations in Italy, France and even Britain. The spectre of the Socialist Revolution hung over all Europe. The memoirs and writings of nearly all the bourgeois politicians of that time, bear witness to the despair, the lack of confidence of the bourgeoisie in the face of the revolution, and the recognition of the fact that they had lost control of the situation.

The Social Democracy saved capitalism. The powerful Trade Union and Socialist bureaucracies placed themselves at the head of the upsurge of the masses and diverted it into harmless channels. In Germany, Noske and Scheidemann conspired with the Junkers and capitalists to destroy the revolution. The Soviets of Workers, Soldiers, Sailors, Peasants and even students, which had issued from the November Revolution of 1918 held power in their hands. The Social Democrats handed the power back to the capitalists. Gradually, slowly, peacefully, as their theoretical conceptions developed it, they would transform capitalism into Socialism. In Italy by 1920 the workers had seized the factories. Instead of leading the workers to the conquest of power, the Socialist Party bade them cease "unconstitutional" procedure. So it was throughout Europe. The results of this programme are evident today. The worst tyranny and the bloodiest war in the history of capitalism.

But precisely because of the breakdown of International Socialism in the Second International, which had betrayed Marxism, was the Third International formed. As early as the beginning of the last world war Lenin had courageously issued the call for the Third International. The Third International was formally inaugurated in March 1919. Its declared aims and objects were the overthrow of world capitalism and the construction of a world chain of United Soviet Socialist Republics, to join up with the U.S.S.R.; which itself was not conceived as an independent entity but merely as the base for the world revolution. Its fate would be determined and was bound up with the fate of the world revolution.

The formation of the Third International swiftly led to the creation of mighty Communist Parties throughout the most important countries of the world. In Germany, France, Czechoslovakia and other countries, Communist Parties with a mass membership were created. In Britain a small Communist Party was formed which wielded considerable influence. The success of the world revolution in the next period seemed assured by the development of events. The Communist Parties in Europe were steadily increasing in numbers and influence at the expense of Social Democracy.

The last war had not succeeded in solving any of the problems of world capitalism. In fact it had aggravated them. Capitalism had broken down at its "weakest link" as Lenin expressed it. The attempts to destroy the young Soviet Republic by the wars of intervention had completely failed. German capitalism, the mightiest in Europe found itself stripped of its resources, part of its territory, burdened with staggering reparations payments, and generally placed in an impossible position. British and French imperialisms, the "victors" in the last world war, were in a fundamentally not much better position. Encouraged by the Russian Revolution, the colonial and semi-colonial masses were stirring and preparing to revolt. The masses at home were restless and uneasy and the economic position of Anglo-French im-

perialism had worsened considerably in comparison with that of Japanese and American capitalism.

It was on this international background that the crisis broke out in Germany in 1923. Germany with her high productive capacity was crippled by the restrictions imposed by Versailles and had now become the weakest link in the chain of world capitalism. The failure of Germany to pay the installments on the reparations resulted in the French capitalists marching into the Ruhr. This helped to complete the collapse of German economy, and the German bourgeoisie endeavoured to unload the burdens onto the shoulders of the working and the middle classes. The mark fell in value from 20 to 40 to the pound in January, to 5 million in July and 47 million at the end of August. The indignant German masses turned towards Communism. As Brandler, the then leader of the Communist International stated at the meeting of the Executive Committee of the Comintern:

"There were signs of a rising revolutionary movement: We had temporarily the majority of the workers behind us, and in this situation believed that under favourable circumstances we could proceed immediately to the attack . . ."

But unfortunately the leadership of the International failed to stand up to the test and take advantage of the opportunity. Success in Germany would inevitably have led to victory throughout Europe. But as in Russia of 1917, so in the Germany of 1923, sections of the leadership vacillated. Stalin, with his organic opportunism, urged that the German Party be "curbed" from taking any action. The result was that the favourable opportunity to take power in Germany was missed and the Communists in Germany suffered defeat. For similar reasons the revolution in Bulgaria suffered shipwreck also.

But the defeats of the revolution in Europe caused by the failure of the leadership inevitably led to serious consequences. As Lenin had written in urging the necessity to prepare for the insurrection in Russia in 1917:

"The success of the Russian and world revolution depends upon a two or three days' struggle."

The failure of the world revolution and the isolation of the Soviet Union, taken in conjunction with its backwardness, the weariness and apathy of the Soviet masses who had gone through years of war, terrible privations and suffering during the course of the civil war and the intervention, their disillusionment and despair at the failure of their hopes of aid from the workers of Europe: all this led inevitably to reaction within the U.S.S.R.

Reflecting at that time, unconsciously perhaps, the interests of the reactionary and conservative bureaucracy which was just beginning to raise itself above the Soviet masses, Stalin for the first time in 1924, came forward with the utopian and anti-Leninist theory of Socialism in One Country. This "theory" sprang directly from the defeat which the revolution had suffered in Germany. It indicated a turning away from the principles of revolutionary internationalism on which the Russian Revolution had been based and on which the Communist International was founded. Stalin, at the funeral of Lenin in January 1924, from force of habit following in the tradition of the Russian Revolution declared: "In leaving us Comrade Lenin enjoined on us fidelity to the Communist International. We swear to thee, Comrade Lenin, to devote our lives to the enlargement and strengthening of the union of the workers of the whole

world, the Communist International." At that time he had not the slightest notion of whether the theory of Socialism in One Country would lead the Soviet Union and the Comintern.

The history of the Comintern since those days has been largely bound up with the fluctuating policies of the bureaucracy of the U.S.S.R. Lenin had insistently linked the fate of the Soviet Union with that of the world working class, and principally of its vanguard the Comintern. Even the oath of the Red Army pledged the red soldiers to loyalty to the international working class. Indeed the Red Army was not regarded as an independent "national" force, but as one of the instruments of the world revolution. Of course, all this has long since been altered by Stalin.

Trotsky, in conjunction with Lenin, who in his last years, viewed the developing situation with alarm, had already begun the struggle against the bureaucratisation of the Bolshevik Party and the Soviet State in 1923. Lenin was warning of the dangers of degeneration which threatened the Soviet State:

On the background of the growing reaction, nationally and internationally, the struggle between the Internationalists and the Thermidorians entered into an acute stage. Trotsky in alliance with Lenin, was demanding the restoration of complete democracy within the Bolshevik Party and the Soviets. Lenin, in pursuit of this objective had demanded the removal of Stalin from the post of General Secretary of the Party because he had become the focal point around which the bureaucracy was crystallising. After Lenin's death, Zinoviev, Kamenev and Stalin, "The Troika" secured a decision disregarding Lenin's advice by the Central Committee and commenced a campaign against Lenin's ideas which were being put forward by Trotsky, with the spurious invention and legend of "Trotskyism."

The fate of the Comintern was linked with the fate of the Bolshevik Party of the Soviet Union which, through its prestige and experience, was naturally the dominant force in the International. The transition from the policy of world revolution to that of Socialism in One Country expressed a sharp turn to the right in the internal policy in Russia as well as in the policy of the Comintern.

In Russia Zinoviev and Kamenev were forced into opposition by the anti-Marxian policy now being developed by Stalin. They were thrust into an alliance with Trotsky and his supporters. Stalin, together with Bukharin opposed the policy of industrialising Russia through a series of Five Year Plans suggested by the Left Opposition led by Trotsky and came out with his famous aphorism at the plenary meeting of the Central Committee in April 1927 that "to attempt to build the Dnieperstroy hydro-electric station would be the same thing for us as for a muzhik to buy a gramophone instead of a cow". As late as the end of 1927, during the preparations for the 15th Party Congress, whose task was to expel the Left Opposition, Molotov said repeatedly: "We must not slip down into poor peasant illusions about the collectivisation of the broad masses. In the present circumstances it is no longer possible." Inside Russia the policy was to allow the kulaks (rich peasants) and the Nepmen (capitalists in the towns), full scope for economic development. This policy was perfectly typified by the slogan coined by Bukharin with the full support of Stalin, given out to the peasantry "Enrich yourselves!"

The policy of the Comintern was now pushed far to the right with the pre-occupation of Stalin to find Allies to "defend the Soviet Union from attack." The Comintern was already being reduced to the role of a border guard. The disagreements within the Bolshevik Party and the International flared up over the question of the Chinese Revolution and the situation in Britain. In China during 1925-27 the revolution was stirring the millions of Asia into action. The Comintern, instead of relying on the workers and peasants to carry through the revolution, as was the Leninist policy in Russia, preferred to rely on the Chinese capitalists and generals. The Left Opposition warned of the consequences of this policy. The Chinese Communist Party was the sole workers party in China and had a dominating influence over the working class; the peasantry were looking towards the example of Russia to show them the way out of their centuries-long suffering at the hands of the landlords, through the seizure of the land. **But the Comintern stubbornly refused to take the road of working class independence which Lenin had insisted on as the pre-requisite for Communist policy in relation to the bourgeois-democratic and anti-imperialist revolutions of the East.**

Meanwhile a similar policy was pursued in Britain where the masses were undergoing a process of intense radicalisation. As a means of struggling against intervention against the Soviet Union, the Russian Trade Unions made an agreement with the General Council of the T.U.C. The tendency towards revolutionary developments in Britain is seen in the fact that a million members, quarter of the trade union membership, were organised in the Minority Movement. Trotsky, analysing the situation in Britain, had predicted the outbreak of a General Strike. The task of the Communist Party and the Communist International should have been to prepare the workers for the inevitability of a betrayal on the part of the Trade Union leadership. Instead, they sowed illusions in the minds of the workers, especially as the trade union bureaucrats had covered themselves with the agreement with the Russian trade unions, whose prestige they utilised as a cloak. After the betrayal of the General Strike by the trade union bureaucracy, Trotsky demanded that the Russian Trade Unions should break off relations with the T.U.C. This Stalin and the Comintern refused to do.

After using the Anglo-Russian Committee for as long as they needed it, more than a year after the General Strike, the British trade union leadership broke off relations. The Comintern let out a howl that they had been betrayed. But meanwhile the young Communist party of Great Britain which should have increased its influence by leaps and bounds as a result of these great events, was paralysed and disoriented by the policy of the International, was completely discredited and dwindled in influence among the masses.

These further defeats of the International, due directly to the policy of Stalin and the bureaucracy, at first sight paradoxically, increased the power of the bureaucracy within the Soviet Union. The Soviet masses were further disheartened and disillusioned by these new defeats of the international proletariat and suffered a further decline in spirits. The defeats which had been a direct consequence of the policy of Stalin and the bureaucracy further strengthened its hold on the Soviet Union. The "Left Opposition" led by Trotsky which had correctly analysed and forecast these developments was now expelled from the Bolshevik Party and from the International.

The internal results of Stalin's policy now began to bear fruit in the alarming growth of the strength and influence of the kulaks and of the Nepmen. The Soviet Union stood on the brink of disaster. In panic and terror Stalin and the bureaucracy were compelled to adopt a caricature of the very policy, for which Trotsky and his co-thinkers had been expelled. In Russia the Five Year Plans were introduced which Stalin had so strenuously fought against. It is on the basis of this planned production that the Soviet Union achieved its greatest successes and on which at the present day U.S.S.R. bases itself in the war.

Meanwhile the panic turn to the left internally, was reflected in a panic turn to the left internationally. Stalin had burned his fingers badly in his attempts to lean on capitalist elements in China and to conciliate Social Democracy. Now he veered the International sharply in the opposite direction. In violation of its statutes the International had not held a Conference for four years. A new Conference was called which introduced officially the programme of Socialism in One Country into the programme of the Communist International. It also proclaimed the end of capitalist stabilisation and the beginning of what was termed the "Third Period." This so-called Third Period was supposed to usher in the period of the final collapse of world capitalism. At the same time the Social Democracy, according to the once famous (but now buried) theory of Stalin was supposed to have transformed itself into "Social Fascism." No agreements were now possible with "social fascists" who constituted the main danger confronting the working class and must be destroyed.

It was just at this period that the unprecedented slump of 1929-1933 affected the world. In particular it hit Germany. The German workers were thrust into a position of degradation and misery and the middle classes were ruined. Germany's figures of unemployment rose steadily till at the peak, it reached 8,000,000. The middle class, having failed to receive anything from the revolution of 1918, and disappointed with the failure of the Communists in 1923 to take power, now in anguish and despair began to look for a solution to their problems in a different direction. Subsidised and financed by the capitalists, the fascists began to secure a mass basis in Germany. In the elections of September 1930, they secured nearly 6½ million votes.

Despite their expulsion from the Communist International, Trotsky and his followers still considered themselves as part of it, and insistently demanded that they be allowed to return to the ranks. At the same time they subjected the suicidal theory which had now been adopted by the Comintern to a sharp criticism. In place of it they had demanded a return to the realistic Leninist policy of the United Front as a means of winning the masses in action and through their own experience, to Communism.

With the victory of Hitler at the polls Trotsky sounded the alarm. In a pamphlet entitled "The Turn in the Communist International—the Situation in Germany" he issued a signal for a campaign, which was carried on for three years by the International Left Opposition of the Comintern, as the Trotskyists looked on themselves. In Germany, France, U.S.A., Britain, in far away South Africa, and in all countries where they had groups, the Trotskyists conducted a campaign demanding that the German Communist Party set into motion a campaign for a united front with the Social Democrats to prevent Hitler from coming to power.

At the direct instructions and bidding from Stalin and the Comintern, the German Communist Party denounced this policy as a counter-revolutionary "social fascist"

one. They insistently fought against Social democracy as the "main enemy" of the working class and argued that there was no difference between democracy and fascism. In September 1930, the *Rote Fahne*, organ of the German C.P. proclaimed: "Last night was Herr Hitler's greatest day, but the so-called election victory of the Nazis is the beginning of the end." Right throughout these years the Comintern continued its fatal course. When Hitler organised a referendum in 1931 to oust the Social Democratic Government in Prussia, at the direct insistence of Stalin and the Comintern, the German Communists voted with the Nazis against the Social Democrats. As late as May 1932, the *British Daily Worker* could proudly indict the Trotskyists for their policy in Germany thus:

"It is significant that Trotsky has come out in defence of a united front between the communist and social democratic parties against Fascism. No more disruptive and counter revolutionary class lead could possibly have been given at a time like the present."

Meanwhile Trotsky had written four pamphlets and dozens of articles and manifestoes, everywhere the international Trotskyists explored every avenue to exert pressure on the Comintern to change its policy. In vain. In January 1933 Hitler was enabled to take power without any organised opposition whatsoever in a country with the most highly organised working class and with the strongest Communist Party outside of Russia. For the first time in history reaction was enabled to conquer power without any resistance on the part of the working class. The German C.P. numbered 6,000,000 supporters, the Social Democracy numbered 8,000,000—together, they were the mightiest force in Germany.

By this betrayal the German C.P. was doomed forever. But the Comintern was far from recognising the nature of the catastrophe. Instead it solemnly endorsed the policy of the German C.P. and of the International as having been perfectly correct.

An organisation which cannot learn from the lessons of history, is doomed. As a force making for world socialism, the Communist International was dead. The International Left Opposition broke away and proclaimed the necessity for a new International. But what was apparent to the vanguard who had abandoned the attempt to reform the Comintern, could not be apparent to the broad masses. Only great events could teach them.

The Communist International continued to carry on this false policy right up to 1934. When the fascists in France, encouraged by the successes of fascism in Austria and Germany conducted armed demonstrations for the overthrow of the Liberal Government and Parliament, the C.P. issued orders to demonstrate with them. But now the full danger which Hitler represented to the Soviet Union was apparent to everyone. Stalin and the bureaucracy became panic-stricken. Contemptuous and cynical of the capacity of the Comintern as an instrument of world revolution, Stalin more openly converted it into an instrument of Russian foreign policy. An organisation in class society which ceases to represent the working class, inevitably falls under the pressure and influence of the bourgeoisie. Stalin, in his search for allies, now turned to the bourgeoisie of Britain and France. The "Popular Front" policy was initiated and endorsed at the last Congress of the International held in 1935. This policy of coalition with the Liberal capitalists is one against which Lenin had struggled all his life. It represented a new stage in the degeneration of the Comintern and the first workers state.

With the rise of Hitler, again due to the policies of Stalin, the stranglehold of the bureaucracy within the

Soviet Union was further increased. Higher and higher over the Soviet masses has the bureaucratic caste raised itself and increased its power. But this progressive degeneration has had qualitative changes. From merely being incapable of insuring anything but defeats for the world working class, Stalinism has become opposed to the workers' revolution in other countries. The Moscow trials, the murder of the old Bolsheviks, the purges, the murder and exile of tens of thousands of the flower of the Russian communist workers, completed the Stalinist counter-revolution within the Soviet Union.

Events in France and Spain are fresh in every revolutionary's mind. The Comintern played the main role in destroying the revolutions which could have been accomplished. Indeed, it revealed itself as the fighting vanguard of the counter-revolution. The defeats of the world working class inevitably led to the new world war. Ironically, the war was ushered in by a pact between Hitler and Stalin. Thus Stalin dealt new blows to the world working class and the Comintern. It now executed a somersault and conducted a campaign for peace in the interests of Hitler, with a skilful counterfeit of a "revolutionary" policy. As Trotsky had forecast in his prediction of the Stalin-Hitler agreement in an article written in March 1933:

"The fundamental trait of Stalin's international policy in recent years has been this: that he trades in the working class movement just as he trades in oil, manganese and other goods. In this statement there is not an iota of exaggeration. Stalin looks upon the sections of the Comintern in various countries and upon the liberating struggle of the oppressed nations as so much small change in deals with imperialist powers.

When he requires the aid of France, he subjects the French proletariat to the Radical bourgeoisie. When he has to support China against Japan, he subjects the Chinese proletariat to the Kuomintang. What would he do in the event of an agreement with Hitler? Hitler, to be sure, does not particularly require Stalin's assistance to strangle the German Communist Party. The insignificant state in which the latter finds itself has moreover been assured by its entire preceding policy. But it is very likely that Stalin would agree to cut off all subsidies for illegal work in Germany. This is one of the most minor concessions that he would have to make and he would be quite willing to make it.

One should also assume that the noisy, hysterical and hollow campaign against Fascism which the Comintern has been conducting for the last few years will be slyly squelched."

This policy of Stalin and the "stinking corpse" of the Comintern suffered irretrievable ruin when the Nazis invaded the Soviet Union. The Comintern had to execute a right about turn and convert itself once again into a doormat for Roosevelt and British Imperialism. But with the increased dependence of Stalin on American and British imperialism, has come the increased pressure on the part of the capitalist "allies". Especially American imperialism has demanded the ending of the Comintern as a final guarantee against the danger of social revolution in Europe after the downfall of Hitler.

The long drawn-out pretence is over. Stalin has dissolved the degenerate Comintern. In doing so he openly announces his stepping over to the side of the capitalist counter-revolution so far as the rest of the world is concerned. But the imperialists, in forcing Stalin to make this trade-in return for concessions and bargains

on their part, have not understood the consequences this will have.

It cannot and will not prevent the coming of new revolutions throughout the world. In the less than two decades since the beginning of its degeneration, the Comintern has ruined many favourable situations in many countries. The coming decades will witness many revolutions with the breakdown and collapse of capitalism. Even the violently disturbed epoch of the period between the wars will seem comparatively tranquil compared to the period which lies ahead. On this background of storms and upheavals a real instrument of the world revolution will be created. What the workers lacked in the last decades, outside Russia, was a workers Bolshevik Party and a Bolshevik leadership. The great days of the Comintern of 1917-23 will live again. The Fourth International, as the heir and continuator of the traditions of Bolshevism, basing itself on the rich experience of the past and learning the lessons of the defeats of the working class, will lead the oppressed to the overthrow of capitalism and to the world Socialist Republic.

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EDITORIAL

The Road is Clear for the Fourth International

It is now nearly a century since Marx and Engels first put forward the programme of the international liberation of the working class from the horrors of capitalism. As an indispensable means for the liberation of the working peoples, Marx and Engels formed and led the First International. The First International was destroyed when the French workers were defeated in the first glorious attempt at the conquest of workers' power. The repressions of world capitalism led to the dissolution of the First International. But, always, Marx proclaimed the international fraternity of the workers of the world. He laid down through the First International the theoretical principles and ideas of Socialism.

As the workers movement began to stir and experience a rebirth and growth in the different countries, the advanced workers moved towards the formation of the Second International. The Second International played its part in the building up of mighty mass organisations of the working class in a period when capitalism was expanding. That was the historic task of the Second International. But the period of calm and peaceful development of capitalism resulted in the degeneration of the Second International into an organisation of gradual reformist change within the framework of capitalism. The last world war saw the complete debasement of the Second International. Instead of standing out against the capitalist slaughter of the peoples, each section supported their own ruling class. Facing this with unyielding courage and confidence in the future of the working class, Lenin already in 1914, issued the slogan "The Second International is Dead—Long Live the Third!"

In all the countries of the world, small groups of revolutionary internationalists refused to participate in the betrayal of the people. Karl Liebknecht and Rosa Luxemburg in Germany, Lenin and Trotsky in Russia, Connolly and MacLean in Great Britain. The internationalists of the world in 1915 were small, isolated groups.

Lenin confidently anticipated the awakening of the working class so foully betrayed by their leadership. He looked forward to the regroupment of the forces of world socialism round a fresh and unstained banner.

The October Revolution of 1917 saw the reply of the working class to the terrible slaughter and horrors of capitalism and its imperialist war. This revolution was followed by a wave of revolutions in Germany, Austria, Hungary, and revolutionary situations in France, Italy and Britain. But alas! The forces of international socialism

were too weak. The leaders of the Second International perpetrated an even greater betrayal on the working class than their perjured support for the imperialist war. In Germany the revolution was betrayed by the German social democrats under the dazzling slogan of a gradual and peaceful change of capitalism into socialism. They told the German workers that we had entered an epoch of gradual and uninterrupted progress through democracy and peace, a deception which was also put forward by the Socialist Party of France and Italy, and by the Labour Parties of Britain and other countries. Today the workers of the world are experiencing the results of this deception: the bloodiest and most barbarous regime in history on the continent of Europe and the most terrible of all wars.

But, it was to combat this and lead the workers to victory that the Third International was formed. Lenin warned the workers in the last world war that it was a lie that it was a "War to end Wars". If the workers did not overthrow capitalism we would have a series of terrible imperialist wars. The only force which could prevent this was a series of successful socialist revolutions. On this programme—the conquest of power by the world working class and the overthrow of imperialism, the Third International was formed. In a stirring message of international fraternity and goodwill to the toilers of the world lay the hope of mankind. In its first years it became a mighty force both in the Eastern and the Western hemispheres.

The capitalists of all countries trembled in fear and hatred of this force which swept into motion greater masses of people throughout the world than any movement in modern history. Lenin reiterated that it stood on the basis of the Marxist message of International Socialism, which had been abandoned and betrayed by the Second International.

But the isolation and economic and cultural backwardness of the young and weak Soviet Republic, coupled with the failures of the revolution in Western Europe through the betrayals of the Second International, led to the degeneration of the first workers' state. The theoretical basis for the betrayal was laid by Joseph Stalin when he came forward with the reactionary and utopian theory of Socialism in a single country. Trotsky and the revolutionary internationalists, who remained faithful to the teachings of Marx and Lenin, warned of the consequences of this betrayal. To abandon internationalism, he warned, would lead to the conversion of the Communist International into a border guard of the Soviet Union and inevitably national-

istic degeneration. History was to bear tragic witness to this prophecy. Stalinism led to the defeat of the workers in Britain, China, Germany, Bulgaria and other countries. This in its turn resulted in the defeat of the Leninist wing in the Communist International. Trotsky was expelled from the Communist Party of the Soviet Union, and the Communist Internationalists were expelled from the Communist International.

The internationalists were not prepared to allow themselves to be torn away from the instrument of liberation which had been created by Lenin. The Left Opposition, (Trotskyists) still considered themselves as a section of the Communist International and strove to turn it back onto the path of Leninist tactics and strategy based on internationalism. But the betrayal of Stalinism revealed itself in its full force with the rise of Hitler in Germany. Refusing to have a united front against Hitler with the Social Democrats, the Comintern rejected the attempts of Trotsky and the International oppositionists, in France, Britain, Germany, America, South Africa—wherever they had supporters, to change the fatal policy of "social fascism" which proclaimed the Social Democratic and Labour Parties as the main enemy of the working class. It was the disgraceful capitulation of the German Communist Party which allowed Hitler to come to power without firing a shot, and the refusal to learn the lessons from this, that led the International Communists to abandon the Comintern as the instrument for the liberation of the working class and to declare that it had now become an obstacle in the path of the workers.

Events since then have demonstrated the correctness of this Trotskyist prognosis. The revolutions in Spain and in France were betrayed by the so-called Communist International, which now remained Communist only in name.

The Bonapartist clique in the Kremlin has destroyed the generation that carried out the revolution, and with it the ideal for which they fought. Stalin and the bureaucracy concerned only with their privileges, look with mortal terror at the perspective of socialist revolution in any other country because of the threat this would mean to their usurped and bureaucratic privileges. They rely not on the workers of other lands, but lean first on one gang of imperialists and then on another. First on Laval, then on Hitler, now on Roosevelt and Churchill as a means of defending their privileges.

The 20 year old deception is at an end. Now Stalin openly proclaims that he does not stand for the extension of the Socialist Revolution. With a contemptuous stroke of the pen the Third International is thrown into the dustbin of history. Pollitt and the sections of the Communist International learned their fate over the wireless in a message broadcast to the whole world. Thus contemptuously does Stalin dismiss his lackeys.

Stalinism attempts to explain this by the changed circumstances since the founding of the International. Like Kautsky, they believe apparently that "the International is an instrument of peace and cannot exist in war time." As if Lenin had not answered these traitors long in advance!

War and revolution are the supreme tests for all programmes and policies claiming to stand under the banner of Marxism. It was to face these tests that the Third International was founded. The twenty-five years since the last world war have shown the rotten ripeness of capitalism for the socialist revolution. The victory of Fascism on the Continent of Europe is the warning signal that it is no longer only a question of improving the lot of the workers but of saving civilisation from destruction, at the hands of an uncontrolled capitalism which is advancing through its bestialities of fascism and wars. The problem of Fascism and of war, the problem of the defence of the Soviet Union demands more today than ever before the need for the international co-operation of the working class. Precisely when the test is here Stalinism abandons the International and the Workers of the World.

The capitalist class of the world entered this war with fear and trepidation. The vision of the Socialist Revolution as an outcome of their crimes against the people hung as a spectre before their eyes. Today they sigh with relief.

Stalin has demonstrated to them in action that he is willing to help to drown the coming revolution in Europe in blood. Fools! They think that the burial of this stinking corpse can break the will and the aspirations of the working class. As before in history they have celebrated the funeral of international socialism. But the revolution cannot be buried. From the dragon's teeth sown by world imperialism spring the legions of the new international. The programme of Marx, of Engels, of Lenin and Trotsky, the programme of World Socialist Revolution has never been buried.

The immediate reason for the burial of the Third International has been the pressure of Wall Street and the City of London—the Allies of the Soviet bureaucracy, which is being used today by the capitalists as an agency in their own interests. Hitler used Stalin—and then attacked. So too will the Allies use him—and then attack him. The basic reason, however, why Stalinism is capable of playing this role is the uninterrupted degeneration and defeats of the last two decades. But the mole of the revolution burrows deep. On the road of capitalism the masses have no other perspective than endless horror and misery. The first world war led to a series of revolution and to the formation of the Third International. The second world war marks a new stage in the decline of capitalism and the disintegration of the Second and Third Internationals. This dissolution is but an episode in the class struggle—an episode that clears the way for those who have stood by the programme of International Socialism.

Slandered, murdered, persecuted, hated—the internationalists who stand on the programme of Bolshevism will find the road to the masses. The Stalin clique will be overthrown by the revolutionary workers of Russia and the Soviet Union will be regenerated. The epoch of imperialist decay is the epoch of shocks and convulsions. New revolutionary outbreaks are on the order of the day. Beyond the swaying armies and the chauvinist poison still stands the international solidarity of the working peoples. In

A GRAPHIC HISTORY

By LEON TROTSKY

Printed below is the history of the Central Committee of the Bolshevik party in statistical form. These tables, carefully compiled from data in the Soviet press, are eloquent enough in themselves. But it would not be superfluous to append a brief commentary as an introduction to them.

Beginning with the Sixth Party Congress (July 1917) there were thirteen party congresses held in a period of 22 years. Between the Sixth and the Seventh Congresses eight months elapsed. The next six congresses were held at intervals of one year; furthermore, under Lenin this interval fixed in the party statutes was very rigidly observed. Thereafter, the schedule was violated. The Twelfth Congress was convened in April, 1923 and the Thirteenth was held in May, 1924, after a month's delay. The next congress, the Fourteenth, was held only in December, 1925, that is, one year and a half later. The Fifteenth Party Congress at which the Left Opposition was expelled from the party convened in December, 1927, that is, two years after the Fourteenth. Violations of the party statutes had already become the rule. The Sixteenth Congress was called only after a lapse of two and a half years, in June, 1930. But even this interval was found to be too brief. The Seventeenth Party Congress was called after three years and eight months had elapsed. Finally, the last Congress—the Eighteenth—was held in March of this year, more than five years after the preceding one.

This prolongation of time intervals was of course no accident. In the years of the revolution and the civil war the party found it possible to adhere to its own statutes; the Central Committee remained an organ subject to the control of the party. The Central Committee began to rise above the party simultaneously with the rise of the Soviet bureaucracy over the workers' state. The control of the party, however terrorised, became an irksome fetter for the Central Committee. The intervals between the Congresses were henceforth determined to an ever larger measure by the administrative exigencies of the ruling nucleus in the Central Committee, that is, Stalin's clique. Thus, the Fourteenth Congress was convened after a half year's delay in connection with the internal struggle in the "troika" (Stalin, Zinoviev, Kamenev). Before presenting himself at the Congress, Stalin had to make sure of his majority in the provinces. It was no longer a question of solving controversial issues, nor of exercising control over the C.C. but of setting the seal of approval on accomplished facts. The Fifteenth Congress was convened for the sole purpose of drawing the balance sheet of the strangulation of the Left Opposition. The time for its convocation was determined by this very task. An identical task was fulfilled by the Sixteenth Congress, this time, in relation to the Right opposition. The Seventeenth Congress was called only after the crisis in collectivisation had passed its acutest phases and the C.C. was already in position to report certain "consoling" items. Finally, the Eighteenth Congress was convened after the purges of Yagoda, Yezhov and Berya had succeeded in rooting out opposition, in terrorising the party, and reconstituting the ruling apparatus in the state and the army. The interrelationship between the party and the apparatus has been stood completely on its head.

The choice of the personnel of the C.C. was not left to chance but came as the result of years of work, testing

and selection. It was only in the nature of things that a stable nucleus should be formed in the personnel of the C.C. which was re-elected from one year to the next. The C.C. was renewed on the one hand by the dying out of the older men and on the other by the coming to the fore of young forces. Generally speaking, as appears from Table No. 1, from 60 to 86 per cent of the outgoing C.C. composed the members of the incoming committees up to the Seventeenth Congress. The foregoing statement must be qualified to this effect that these bare percentages do not of themselves provide a sufficiently correct picture of the actual process whereby the C.C. had been renewed. During the first seven congresses—from the Sixth to the Twelfth—one and the same nucleus was in reality re-elected, and the changes in the composition of the C.C. amounted to the inclusion of new elements who were then subjected to test and selection. The Thirteenth Congress marked a breaking point. In the initial period of Thermidor, changes in the political character of the Bolshevik staff were attained through an artificial expansion of the C.C., i.e., by a dilution of the old revolutionists with new office-holders grateful for a rapid career and firmly clinging to the coat-tails of the General Secretary. Up to 1923 the number of members of the C.C. varied between 15 and 27. From 1923 on, it was increased first to 40 and

TABLE No. 1*

Congress	Date of Congress	1. Members C.C.		Former Members of C.C. and Candidates Re-elected	
		2. Candidates			
VI	August 1917	21	—	—	—
		4	—	—	—
VII	March 1918	15	13	86.6	—
		8	2	25.0	—
VIII	March 1919	19	12	63.0	—
		8	1	12.5	—
IX	Mar.-April 1920	19	13	68.4	—
		12	3	25.0	—
X	March 1921	24	15	62.5	—
		15	4	25.6	—
XI	Mar.-April 1922	27	20	74.0	—
		19	7	36.8	—
XII	April 1923	40	24	60.0	—
		17	10	58.8	—
XIII	May 1924	53	37	69.8	—
		34	10	29.4	—
XIV	December 1925	63	49	77.7	—
		43	22	51.1	—
XV	December 1927	71	52	73.2	—
		50	39	78.0	—
XVI	June-July 1930	71	57	80.3	—
		67	39	58.2	—
XVIII	February 1934	71	56	78.9	—
		68	36	52.9	—
XVII	March 1939	71	16	22.5	—
		68	8	11.7	—

* Tables compiled by the Editorial Board of the *Bulletin of the Opposition.*

RY OF BOLSHEVISM

RY August, 1939.

later to 71. Stalin's clique found it easier at the outset, to introduce docile or semi-docile novices into the C.C. than to remove immediately the basic nucleus of Lenin's party. Toward the latter part of 1927 a stabilisation was achieved in point of the number of members but there began a shunting of the old Leninist nucleus. However, even as pariahs, the old Bolsheviks represented a political danger. A far greater danger was the growth of the Fourth International. Stalin in his own fashion "combined" these two dangers so as to cope with them through the medium of Yagoda and Yezhov. The shunting aside of old Bolsheviks as well as the revolutionists of the new generation was supplanted by a drive to exterminate them physically.

Of necessity, these complex processes are abstracted from Table No. I. It only registers in figures the proportions to which each new Central Committee was renewed. As we have already observed, up to a certain time each C.C. passed on to its successor from 60 to 86.6 per cent of its personnel. In the last five years we find this continuity violently disrupted. The Eighteenth Congress held in March of this year took over from the outgoing C.C. only 22.5 per cent of its members! The personnel of the C.C. which in the preceding eleven years had smashed the Left Opposition and then the United opposition and then the Right opposition

and had secured the complete "monolithism" of Stalin's party thus proved to have consisted of more than three-quarters traitors, betrayers, or just plain "enemies of the people".

Table No. II shows how many members from the staff of each of the preceding twelve Central Committees have been preserved in the composition of the present Central Committee; and it also registers the fate suffered by the members who were removed. As an instance in point we take the Central Committee that was elected in August, 1917 and which led the October revolution. This historical staff consisted of 21 members. Of them only one remains at the present time in the party leadership—Stalin. Seven have died of disease or have fallen at the hands of the enemy (we shall not engage in a dispute over the causes). Shot or condemned to the firing squad—seven; three have disappeared during the purges; three others have been liquidated politically—and perhaps also physically; a total of thirteen, that is, almost 62 per cent of the participants in the October staff turned out to be "enemies of the people".

Stalin here provides a statistical confirmation "sui generis" of the hoary theory of Miliukov-Kerensky that the October revolution was the handiwork of the agents of the German General Staff.

TABLE No. 2.

Date of Congress	Members of C.C. 1. Candidates	In the Party Leadership at Present		Deceased		Victims of Thermidor				General Total	
						By Court Decision	Suicide	Disappeared	Politically Liquidated		
										No.	%
March 1918	21	1	4.8	7	33.3	7	—	3	—	13	61.9
	4	—	—	—	—	—	2	2	—	4	100.0
March 1919	15	2	13.3	5	33.3	5	—	3	—	8	53.3
	8	—	—	2	25.0	—	1	4	1	6	75.0
Mar.-April 1920	19	2	10.5	3	15.8	9	1	3	1	14	73.7
	8	2	25.0	2	25.0	1	—	2	1	4	50.0
March 1921	19	3	15.8	3	15.8	10	1	2	—	13	68.4
	12	2	16.6	3	25.0	—	—	4	—	7	58.3
Mar.-April 1922	24	5	20.8	4	16.6	7	1	2	5	15	62.5
	15	—	—	3	20.0	3	—	7	2	12	80.0
April 1923	27	6	22.2	5	18.5	9	—	4	2	16	59.2
	19	3	15.8	3	15.8	2	—	6	5	13	68.4
May 1924	40	7	17.5	7	17.5	11	1	9	5	26	65.0
	17	2	11.8	1	5.9	1	1	1	9	14	82.3
December 1925	53	9	17.0	8	15.0	10	1	16	9	32	67.9
	34	2	5.8	—	—	3	1	9	19	36	94.1
December 1927	63	10	15.8	9	14.3	10	1	17	16	44	69.8
	43	3	6.9	2	4.6	4	3	10	21	38	88.4
June-July 1930	71	10	14.0	11	15.5	5	3	25	17	50	70.4
	50	5	10.0	1	2.0	3	1	12	28	44	88.0
February 1934	71	11	15.5	6	8.4	6	4	25	19	54	76.0
	67	4	6.0	1	1.5	7	—	21	34	62	92.0
August 1917	71	16	24.0	6	8.4	11	1	24	12	48	67.6
	68	8	11.8	1	1.5	8	2	20	29	59	86.7

The Tenth Congress, held in March 1921, which launched the "New Economic Policy", elected a Central Committee of 24 members. At the present time, participating in the leadership are five of them, that is, about 20 per cent. Fifteen members, that is 62.5 per cent have been liquidated physically and politically. The Fifteenth Congress, which expelled the "Trotskyists" in December, 1927 established a Central Committee of 71 members. Of them, ten have remained at the present time in the party leadership, i.e., 14 per cent; fifty men have been liquidated, i.e., over 70 per cent. Of the personnel of the C.C. established by the Sixteenth Congress (1930), 76 per cent have been exterminated physically and politically. Lastly, of the 71 members of the C.C. elected by the Seventeenth Congress (1934), only 16 souls now remain in the leadership; 48 have been liquidated, i.e., 67.6 per cent. We cannot tell as yet just how or to what extent the incumbent C.C. will be extirpated, but its horoscope is a dark one.

In the sphere of candidates the purges have taken even a more devastating toll. At the last Congress less than 12 per cent of the candidates to the previous C.C. were re-elected; 86.7 per cent of the candidates have been liquidated physically and politically. In almost all the congresses we observe the workings of one and the same law: the proportion of re-elected candidates is smaller while the proportion of those liquidated is much larger than the corresponding proportions among the actual members. This fact is of exceptional interest: the fate of the candidates, recruited from the new party bureaucracy is developing. Contrary to the constantly reiterated assertions that the youth is unconditionally "loyal" to Stalin it turns out that the proportion of "traitors", "betrayers" and generally unreliable elements among the young cadres is even larger than among the personnel of the old guard. This is the irrefutable testimony of figures! However, the difference lies in this, that the "criminals" from among the old guard were in most instances guilty of devotion to the revolutionary tradition, whereas the "criminals" from among the young bureaucracy are apparently pulling more resolutely than Stalin himself in the direction of class society. But both the former and the latter are dangerous!

The changes in the composition of the C.C. were accompanied by even more drastic changes in its role. The old Bolshevik C.C. was the undisputed leader of the party and was most conscientious in its attitude toward questions of theory and the voice of the workers. The incumbent C.C. has no independent meaning whatever. It is handpicked as an auxiliary to the ruling nucleus, and it is altered by the nucleus in the interval between the Congresses. Changes in the personnel of the C.C. are effected through the state apparatus, or, to put it more correctly, through certain "secret" departments of this apparatus, above all the G.P.U. Among the staff of 71 members of the incumbent C.C. there is Berya, the head of the G.P.U., and Vyshinsky, former chief prosecutor, now Molotov's deputy. Berya's past in the party is at best an obscure one. Vyshinsky's past in the party is quite clear: he adhered to Menshevism in the "heroic" periods of his career, at a time when it was impossible not to belong to a "leftist" party; but for the most part he was an attorney for the oil trust. He appeared on the Soviet arena during the period of the crushing of the Trotskyist opposition. This individual did not become a Bonapartist lackey, he was born such. Stalin leans not upon the C.C. but on Berya, Vyshinsky and their assistants in whose presence the ordinary members of the C.C. quake.

From among the diplomats, the personnel of the latest C.C. includes Litvinov and Potemkin. Litvinov is an old Bolshevik who participated in the party from its day of foundation. Potemkin is a former bourgeois professor

who joined the Bolsheviks after they were victorious; and who enjoyed, as an avowed and importunate courtier, the merited contempt of all those who knew him. Today Potemkin has not only replaced Litvinov as head of the diplomatic corps but he also plays a far more important part in the party line than does Litvinov. From among the old military men in the C.C. there is Budenny who has no essential ties with the party; and among the candidates there is the former General Shaposhnikov.* Shaposhnikov's political physiognomy may be characterised by the fact that during the Soviet-Polish war, the then head of the War Department suspended the publication of the periodical "Military Art" (Voyennoye Dyelo) in which Shaposhnikov had printed an exceptionally coarse chauvinist article in the style of the good old Czarist days. Even as a military man, Shaposhnikov is lacking in any stature. He is a docile functionary of the Czarist General Staff, and nothing more; his political stature calls for absolutely no comments. Surviving the purge which has destroyed the flower of the commanding staff, Shaposhnikov is today along with Potemkin a figure symbolic of the Stalinist C.C.

The Central Committee as a committee is a many-headed myth. It goes without saying, that the most important questions, such as purging the C.C. itself, cannot even be discussed in the Committee, inasmuch as 32.4 per cent of its members cannot possibly pass a decision to destroy 67.6 per cent. Such questions are decided by the Super-Central Committee of Stalin-Yagoda-Yezhov-Vyshinsky. The fate of the party depends as little on the C.C. as the fate of the latter does on the party.

The Political Bureau, in its turn, does not at all depend on the C.C. This is most glaringly demonstrated in the fact that the Political Bureau has undergone relatively little change in the Stalinist Era, while the C.C. "electing" it has been periodically subjected to extermination. But this immutable Political Bureau serves itself only as a more or less stable piece of decoration. It wields no power. In contrast to the C.C., the Political Bureau is composed predominantly of old Bolsheviks. Of them, Stalin alone served as a member of the Political Bureau under Lenin; Kalinin was for a while a candidate. The majority of the remaining members, men like Molotov, Andreyev, Voroshilov, Kaganovich, Mikoyan are by no means youngsters whose talents bloomed in the recent period. They were sufficiently well-known fifteen and even twenty years ago; but it was precisely for this reason that the idea never entered anyone's mind that these people were capable of leading the party. They are kept in the Political Bureau primarily because in the guise of "old Bolsheviks" they provide a species of cover for shysters of the Vyshinsky-Berya-Potemkin-et al. type. On every important question Stalin confronts his "Political Bureau" with an accomplished fact.

To sum up, on the basis of the tables printed below, we can draw two extremely important conclusions:

1. What is now being designated as party "monolithism" has acquired a social and political content which is the diametrical opposite of Bolshevism. A genuine Bolshevik party prides itself on its unanimity but only in the sense that it groups the vanguard of the workers on the basis of an irreconcilable revolutionary programme. The party demarcates itself from all other tendencies along the line of the proletarian politics toward the policy of defending the privileged layers (the kulak, the Nepman, the bureaucrat—in the first period; the bureaucrat, the labour and kolkhoz aristocracy, in the second period). This social shift is intimately bound up with the recasting of the entire programme both in domestic as well as world politics (the theory of socialism in one country, the struggle against equality, the defence of imperialist democracy, People's Fronts, etc.) The ruling

Continued on page 18.

Lenin's Last Letter to the Bolshevik Party

The Suppressed Testament

Lenin wrote what has come to be known as the Testament for transmission to the 12th congress of the Russian Communist party, the first one his illness would not permit him to attend. Hoping for his recovery, Krupskaya, withheld the notes and presented them to the 13th congress only after Lenin's death. By a vote of 30 to 10, the leadership refused to have the document read to the congress, for it was just then engaged in a violent struggle to discredit Trotsky and "Trotskyism." The document, so keen and profound a product of Lenin's mature thought and concern about the party situation, was literally suppressed. Its authenticity, widely denied by the supporters of Stalin, was, however, confirmed by the latter, under pressure of the Opposition, in a speech in Moscow, reprinted in the International Press Correspondence of November 17, 1927: "It is said that in the 'Testament' in question Lenin suggested to the party congress that it should deliberate on the question of replacing Stalin and appointing another comrade in his place as General Secretary of the party. This is perfectly true . . . Yes, comrades, I am rude towards those who are rudely and disloyally destroying and disintegrating the party. I have never made a secret of it and shall not do so now."

The allusion in the second clause of the first sentence is to a part of the notes dealing with economic organisation.—Ed.

By the stability of the Central Committee, of which I spoke before, I mean measures to prevent a split, so far as such measures can be taken. For, of course, the White Guard in *Russkaya Mysl* (I think it was S. E. Oldenburg) was right when, in the first place, in his play against Soviet Russia he banked on the hope of a split in our party, and when, in the second place, he banked for that split on serious disagreements in our party.

Our party rests upon two classes, and for that reason its instability is possible, and if there cannot exist an agreement between such classes its fall is inevitable. In such an event it would be useless to take any measures or in general to discuss the stability of our Central Committee. In such an event no measures would prove capable of preventing a split. But I trust that is too remote a future, and too improbable an event, to talk about.

I have in mind stability as a guarantee against a split in the near future, and I intend to examine here a series of considerations of a purely personal character.

I think that the fundamental factor in the matter of stability—from this point of view—as such members of the Central Committee as Stalin and Trotsky. The relation between them constitutes, in my opinion, a big half of the danger of that split, which might be avoided, and the avoidance of which might be promoted in my opinion by raising the number of members of the Central Committee to fifty or one hundred.

Comrade Stalin, having become General Secretary, has concentrated an enormous power in his hands; and I am not sure that he always knows how to use that power with sufficient caution. On the other hand, comrade Trotsky, as was proved by his struggle against the Central Committee in connection with the question of the People's Commissariat of Ways and Communications, is distinguished not only by his exceptional ability—personally he is, to be sure, the most able man in the present Central Committee—but also by his too far-reaching self-confidence and a disposition to be far too much attracted by the purely administrative side of affairs.

These two qualities of the two most able leaders of the present Central Committee might, quite innocently, lead to a split, and if our party does not take measures to prevent it, a split might arise unexpectedly.

I will not further characterise the other members of the Central Committee as to their personal qualities. I will only remind you that the October episode of Zinoviev and Kamenev was not, of course, accidental, but that it ought as little to be used against them as the non-Bolshevism of Trotsky.

Of the younger members of the Central Committee, I want to say a few words about Piatakov and Bukharin. They are, in my opinion, the most able forces (among the youngest) and in regard to them it is necessary to bear in mind the following. Bukharin is not only the most valuable and biggest theoretician of the party, but also may legitimately be considered the favourite of the whole party; but his theoretical views can only with the very greatest doubt be regarded as fully Marxian, for there is something scholastic in him (he never has learned, and I think never fully understood the dialectic).

And then Piatakov—a man undoubtedly distinguished in will and ability, but too much given over to the administrative side of things to be relied on in a serious political question.

Of course, both these remarks are made by me merely with a view of the present time, or supposing that these two able and loyal workers may not find an occasion to supplement their knowledge and correct their onesidedness.

December 25, 1922.

Postscript: Stalin is too rude, and this fault, entirely supportable in relations among us communists, becomes unsupportable in the office of General Secretary. Therefore, I propose to the comrades to find a way to remove Stalin from that position and appoint to it another man who in all respects differs from Stalin only in superiority—namely, more patient, more loyal, more polite and more attentive to comrades, less capricious, etc. This circumstance may seem an insignificant trifle, but I think that from the point of view of the relation between Stalin and Trotsky which I discussed above, it is not a trifle, or it is such a trifle as may acquire a decisive significance.

January 4, 1923.

LENIN.

Criticism of the Draft the Sixth Congress of

THE QUESTION CAN BE SOLVED ONLY ON THE ARENA OF WORLD REVOLUTION

The new doctrine proclaims that socialism can be built on the basis of a national state if **only there is no intervention**. From this there can and must follow (notwithstanding all pompous declarations in the draft programme) a collaborationist policy towards the foreign bourgeoisie with the object of averting intervention, as this will guarantee the construction of socialism, that is to say, will solve the main historical question. The task of the parties in the Comintern assumes, therefore, an auxiliary character; their mission is to protect the U.S.S.R. from intervention and not to fight for the conquest of power. It is, of course, not a question of the subjective intentions but of the objective logic of political thought.

"The difference in views lies in the fact," says Stalin, "that the party considers that these (internal) contradictions and possible conflicts can be entirely overcome on the basis of the inner forces of our revolution, whereas comrade Trotsky and the Opposition think that these contradictions and conflicts can be overcome 'only on an international scale, on the arena of the world-wide proletarian revolution.'" (Pravda, No. 262, Nov. 12, 1926.)

Yes, this is precisely the difference. One could not express better and more correctly the difference between national reformism and revolutionary internationalism. If our internal difficulties, obstacles, and contradictions, which are fundamentally a reflection of world contradictions, can be settled merely by "the inner forces of our revolution" without entering "the arena of the world-wide proletarian revolution" then the International is partly a subsidiary and partly a decorative institution, the Congress of which can be convoked once every four years, once every ten years, or perhaps not at all.* Even if we were to add that the proletariat of the other countries must protect our construction from military interventions, the International according to this schema must play the role of a **pacifist** instrument. Its main role, the role of an instrument of world revolution, is then inevitably relegated to the background. And this, we repeat, does not flow from anyone's deliberate intentions (on the contrary, a number of points in the programme testify to the very best intentions of its authors), but it does flow from the

internal logic of the new theoretical position which is a thousand times more dangerous than the worst subjective intentions.

As a matter of fact, even at the Seventh Plenum of the E.C.C.I., Stalin became so bold as to develop and defend the following idea:

"Our party has no right to fool (!) the working class; it should declare openly that the **lack of assurance** (!) in the possibility of building socialism in our country leads to the abdication of power and to the passing of our party from its position as a ruling party to the position of an opposition party." ("Minutes", Vol. II, p. 10. Our emphasis.)

This means that we have only the right to place assurance on the scanty resources of national economy but that we must not dare to place any assurance upon the inexhaustible resources of the international proletariat. If we cannot get along without an international revolution, then give up the power, give up that October power which we conquered in the interests of the international revolution. Here is the sort of ideological debacle we arrive at if we proceed from a formulation which is false to the core!

The draft programme expresses an incontrovertible idea when it says that the economic successes of the U.S.S.R. constitute an inseparable part of the world-wide proletarian revolution. But the political danger of the new theory lies in the false comparative evaluation of the two levers of world socialism—the lever of our economic achievements and the lever of world-wide proletarian revolution. Without a victorious proletarian revolution, we will not be able to build socialism. The European workers and the workers the world over must clearly understand this. The lever of economic construction is of tremendous significance. Without a correct leadership, the dictatorship of the proletariat would be weakened; and its downfall would deal a blow to the international revolution from which the latter would not recover for a good many years. But the conclusion of the main historical struggle between the socialist world and the world of capitalism depends on the second lever, that is, the world proletarian revolution. The colossal importance of the Soviet Union lies in that it is the disputed base of the world revolution and not at all in the presumption that it is able to build socialism independently of the world revolution.

In a tone of supreme superiority, entirely unfounded, Bukharin has asked us more than once:

"If there already exist pre-conditions, and starting points, and a sufficient base, and even certain successes in the work of building socialism, then where is the limit beyond which everything 'turns topsy-turvy'? There is no such limit." ("Minutes," Seventh Plenum of the E.C.C.I., p. 116.)

This is bad geometry but not historical dialectics. There can be such a "limit." There can be several such limits, internal as well as international, political as well as economic, as well as military. The most important and dire "limit" could turn out to be a serious and prolonged stabilisation of world capitalism and a new boom. Consequently, the question shifts politically and economically over to the world arena. Will the bourgeoisie be able to secure for itself a new epoch of capital-

* In Lenin's time, congresses of the Third International took place on the average of once a year, despite the extremely difficult domestic and foreign position of the Soviet Republic. The First Congress was held in March 1919; the Second Congress in July 1920; the Third Congress in June 1921; the Fourth Congress in November 1922. With Lenin removed from participation in the leadership, the interval between Congresses steadily increased. Thus, the Fifth Congress was held in June 1924. But four years elapsed before the Sixth Congress was held, in July 1928. Section 8 of Article II of the Constitution of the Comintern adopted at the 1928 Congress definitely provided that "The World Congress shall be convened once every two years" (Eng. ed., N.Y., 1929, p. 87). Despite this provision, the Seventh Congress did not convene in Moscow until August 1935, that is, more than seven years after the Sixth. No official explanation was ever vouchsafed for this explicit violation by the leadership of the Comintern of the constitution which it had itself adopted in 1928.

Programme adopted at the Comintern, 1928.

By LEON TROTSKY

ist growth and power? Merely to deny such a possibility, counting on the "hopeless position" in which capitalism finds itself would be mere revolutionary verbiage. "There are no absolutely hopeless situations" (Lenin). The present unstable class equilibrium in the European countries cannot continue indefinitely precisely because of its instability.

When Stalin and Bukharin maintain that the U.S.S.R. can get along without the "state" aid of the proletariat of the other countries, that is, without its victory over the bourgeoisie; because the present active sympathy of the working masses protects us from intervention, they betray the same blindness as is revealed in the entire ramification of their principled mistake.

It is absolutely incontestable that after the social democracy had sabotaged the post-war insurrections of the European proletariat against the bourgeoisie, the active sympathy of the working masses saved the Soviet republic. During these years, the European bourgeoisie proved unable to wage war against the workers' state on a large scale. But to think that this correlation of forces will continue for many years, say, until socialism is built in the U.S.S.R., is to be so utterly shortsighted as to judge the entire curve of development by one of its tiny segments. A situation so unstable that the proletariat cannot take power while the bourgeoisie does not feel firmly enough the master of its own home, must sooner or later be abruptly resolved in one way or another, either in favour of the proletarian dictatorship or in favour of a serious and prolonged capitalist stabilisation on the backs of the popular masses, on the bones of the colonial peoples and . . . perhaps on our own bones. "There are no absolutely hopeless situations!" The European bourgeoisie can find a lasting way out of its grave contradictions only through the defeats of the proletariat and the mistakes of the revolutionary leadership. But the converse is equally true. There will be no new boom of world capitalism (of course, with the prospect of a new epoch of great upheavals) only in the event that the proletariat will be able to find a way out of the present unstable equilibrium on the revolutionary road.

"It is necessary to 'prove' now by the practical work of the revolutionary parties," said Lenin on July 19, 1920 at the Second World Congress, "that they are sufficiently conscious and organised, and that they have sufficient contact with the exploited masses, and determination and ability to utilise the crisis for a successful and victorious revolution." ("Works", Vol. XVII, p. 264.)

Our internal contradictions, however, which depend directly on the trend of the European and world struggle, may be rationally regulated and abated by a correct internal policy based on Marxian foresight. But they can be finally overcome only when the class contradictions will be overcome, which is out of the question without a victorious revolution in Europe. Stalin is right. The difference lies precisely on this point and this is the fundamental difference between national reformism and revolutionary internationalism.

THE THEORY OF SOCIALISM IN ONE COUNTRY AS A SOURCE OF SOCIAL PATRIOTIC BLUNDERS

The theory of socialism in one country inexorably leads to an underestimation of the difficulties which must be overcome and to an exaggeration of the achievements gained. One could not find a more anti-socialist and anti-revolutionary assertion than Stalin's statement to the effect that "socialism has already been 90 percent realised in the U.S.S.R." This statement seems to be especially meant for a smug bureaucrat. In this way one can hopelessly discredit the idea of a socialist society in the eyes of the toiling masses. The Soviet proletariat has achieved grandiose successes, if we take into consideration the conditions under which they have been attained and the low cultural level inherited from the past. But these achievements constitute an extremely small magnitude on the scales of the socialist ideal. Harsh truth and not sugary falsehood is needed to fortify the worker, the agricultural labourer, and the poor peasant, who see that in the eleventh year of the revolution, poverty, misery, drunkenness, and prostitution have not abated around them. Instead of telling them fibs about having realised 90 percent socialism, we must say to them that our economic level, our social and cultural conditions, approximate today much closer to capitalism, and a backward and uncultured capitalism at that, than to socialism. We must tell them that we will enter on the path of real socialist construction only when the proletariat of the most advanced countries will have captured power; that it is necessary to work unremittingly for this, using both levers—the short lever of our internal economic efforts and the long lever of the international proletarian struggle.

In short, instead of the Stalinist phrases about socialism which has already been 90 percent accomplished, we must speak to them the words of Lenin:

"Russia (the land of poverty) will become such a land (the land of plenty) if we cast away all pessimism and phrasemongering; if clenching our teeth, we gather all our might, strain every nerve and muscle, if we understand that salvation is possible only along the road of international socialist revolution that we have entered." ("Works," Vol. XV, p. 165.)

From prominent leaders of the Comintern we have had to hear such an argument as: the theory of socialism in one country, of course, is unfounded, but it provides the Russian workers with a perspective in the difficult conditions under which they labour and thus gives them courage. It is difficult to plumb the depths of the theoretical debacle of those who seek in a programme not for a scientific basis for their class orientation but for moral consolation. Consoling theories which contradict facts pertain to the sphere of religion and not science; and religion is opium for the people.

Our party has passed through its heroic period with a programme which was entirely oriented on the international revolution and not on socialism in one country. Under a programmatic banner on which was inscribed that backward Russia alone, with her own forces, will not build socialism, the Y.C.L. has passed through the most strenuous years of civil war, hunger, cold, hard Saturday-ings and Sunday-ings, epidemics, studies on hunger rations, and the numberless sacrifices which were paid

for every forward step taken. The members of the party and the Y.C.L. fought at the front or lugged logs to the railroad stations, not because they hoped to build national socialism out of those logs, but because they served in the cause of international revolution which made it essential that the Soviet fortress hold out—and every additional log is important for the Soviet fortress. That is how we used to approach the question. Times have changed, things have altered (yet, not so very radically), but the principled approach retains its full force even now. The workers, the poor peasant and partisan, and the young communist, have previously shown by their entire conduct up to 1925, when the new gospel was for the first time proclaimed, that they have no need of it. But in need of it is the functionary who looks down on the masses from above; the petty administrator who does not want to be disturbed; the apparatus retainer who seeks to dominate under cover of an all-saving and consoling formula. It is they who think that the ignorant people need the "good tidings," and that there is no dealing with the people without consoling doctrines. It is they who catch up the false words about "90 percent socialism," for this formula sanctions their privileged position, their right to dominate and command, their need to be rid of criticisms on the part of "sceptics" and men of "little faith."

Complaints and accusations to the effect that the denial of the possibility of building socialism in one country dampens the spirit and kills enthusiasm are theoretically and psychologically closely related to those accusations which the reformists have always hurled at the revolutionists, notwithstanding the entirely different conditions under which they originate. Said the reformists: "You are telling the workers that they cannot really improve their lot within the framework of capitalist society; and by this alone you kill their incentive to fight." It was, indeed, only under the leadership of revolutionists that the workers really fought for economic gains and for parliamentary reforms.

The worker who understands that it is impossible to build a socialist paradise, like an oasis in the hell of world capitalism; that the fate of the Soviet Republic and therefore his own fate depend entirely on the international revolution, will fulfill his duties toward the U.S.S.R. much more energetically than the worker who is told that what we already possess is presumably 90 percent socialism. "If so, is it worth while to strive toward socialism?" Here, too, the reformist orientation works as always not only against revolution but also against reform.

In the article written in 1915 dealing with the slogan of the United States of Europe, which has already been quoted, we wrote:

"To approach the prospects of a social revolution within national boundaries is to fall victim to the same national narrowness which constitutes the substance of social-patriotism. Vaillant to his dying day considered France the promised land of social revolution; and it is precisely from this standpoint that he stood for national defence to the end. Lensch and Co. (some hypocritically and others sincerely) consider that Germany's defeat means first of all the destruction of the basis of social revolution. . . . In general it should not be forgotten that its own national state, whether because of its industrial level or because of its 'democratic' form and revolutionary conquests, is called upon to lead humanity towards socialism or towards 'democracy.' If the victorious revolution were really conceivable within the boundaries of a single more developed nation, this Messianism together with the program of national defence would have some relative historical justification. But as a matter of fact this is inconceivable. To fight for the preservation of a national basis of revolution by such methods as undermine the international ties of the pro-

letariat, actually means to undermine the revolution itself, which can begin on a national basis but which cannot be completed on that basis under the present economic, military, and political interdependence of the European states, which was never before revealed so forcefully as during the present war. This interdependence which will directly and immediately condition the concerted action on the part of the European proletariat in the revolution is expressed by the slogan of the United States of Europe." ("Works," Vol. III, part 1, pp. 90f.)

Proceeding from a false interpretation of the polemics of 1915, Stalin has many times endeavoured to show that under "national narrowness" I was here alluding to Lenin. No greater absurdity could be imagined. In my polemic with Lenin I always argued openly because I was guided only by ideological considerations. In the given case Lenin was not involved at all. The article mentions by name the people against whom these accusations were hurled—Vaillant, Lensch, and others. One must recall that the year 1915 was a year of social-patriotic orgy and the crushing of our struggle against it. This was our touchstone for every question.

The fundamental question raised in the foregoing passage was undoubtedly formulated correctly: **the conception of the building of socialism in one country is a social-patriotic conception.**

The patriotism of the German social democrats began as a legitimate patriotism to their own party, the most powerful party of the Second International. On the basis of the highly developed German technology and the superior organisational qualities of the German people, the German social democracy prepared to build its "own" socialist society. If we leave aside the hardened bureaucrats, careerists, parliamentary sharpers, and political crooks in general, the social-patriotism of the rank and file social democrat was derived precisely from the belief in building German socialism. It is impossible to think that hundreds of thousands of rank and file social democrats (let alone the millions of rank and file workers) wanted to defend the Hohenzollerns or the bourgeoisie. No. They wanted to protect German industry, the German railways and highways, German technology and culture, and especially the organisations of the German working class, as the "necessary and sufficient" national prerequisites for socialism.

A similar process also took place in France. Guesde, Vaillant, and thousands of the best rank and file party members with them, and hundreds of thousands of ordinary workers believed that precisely France with her revolutionary traditions, her heroic proletariat, her highly cultured flexible, and talented people, was the promised land of socialism. Old Guesde and the Com-munard Vaillant, and with them hundreds of thousands of sincere workers, did not fight to protect the bankers or the "rentiers". They sincerely believed that they were defending the soil and the creative power of the future socialist society. They proceeded entirely from the theory of socialism in one country and in the name of this idea they sacrificed international solidarity, believing this sacrifice to be "temporary."

This comparison with the social-patriot will, of course, be answered by the argument that patriotism to the Soviet state is a revolutionary duty whereas patriotism to a bourgeois state is treachery. Very true. Can there be any dispute on this question among grown-up revolutionists? But, as we proceed, this incontrovertible postulate is turned more and more into a scholastic screen for a deliberate falsehood.

Revolutionary patriotism can only have a class character. It begins as patriotism to the party organisation, to the trade union, and rises to state patriotism when the proletariat seizes power. Whenever the power is in the hands of the workers, patriotism is a revolution-

any duty. But this patriotism must be an inseparable part of revolutionary internationalism. Marxism has always taught the workers that even their struggle for higher wages and shorter hours cannot be successful unless waged as an international struggle. And now it suddenly appears that the ideal of the socialist society may be achieved with the national forces alone. This is a mortal blow to the International.

The invincible conviction that the fundamental class aim, even more so that the partial objectives, cannot be realised by national means or within national boundaries, constitutes the very heart of revolutionary internationalism. If, however, the ultimate aim is realisable within national boundaries through the efforts of a national proletariat, then the backbone of internationalism has been broken. The theory of the possibility of realising socialism in one country destroys the inner connection between the patriotism of the victorious proletariat and the defeatism of the proletariat of the bourgeois countries. The proletariat of the advanced capitalist countries is still travelling on the road to power. How and in what manner it marches towards it depends entirely upon whether it considers the task of building the socialist society a national or an international task.

If it is at all possible to realise socialism in one country, then one can believe in that theory not only **after** but also **before** the conquest of power. If socialism can be realised within the national boundaries of backward Russia, then there is all the more reason to believe that it can be realised in advanced Germany. Tomorrow the leaders of the Communist Party of Germany will undertake to propound this theory. The draft programme empowers them to do so. The day after

tomorrow the French party will have its turn. It will be the beginning of the disintegration of the Comintern along the lines of social-patriotism. The communist party of any capitalist country, which will have become imbued with the idea that its particular country possesses the "necessary and sufficient" prerequisites for the independent construction of a "complete socialist society," will not differ in any substantial manner from the revolutionary social democracy which also did not begin with a Noske but which stumbled decisively on August 4, 1914, over this very same question.

When the statement is made that the very existence of the U.S.S.R. is a guarantee against social-patriotism because in relation to a workers' republic patriotism is a revolutionary duty, then in this one-sided application of a correct idea there is expressed national narrow-mindedness. Those who say so have in mind only the U.S.S.R., closing their eyes to the entire world proletariat. It is possible to lead the proletariat to the position of defeatism in relation to the bourgeois state only by means of an international orientation in the programme on this central question and by means of a ruthless rejection of the social-patriotic contraband which is masked as yet but which seeks to build a theoretical nest for itself in the programme of Lenin's International.

It is not yet too late to return to the path of Marx and Lenin. It is this return that opens up the only conceivable road to progress. We address this criticism of the draft programme to the Sixth Congress of the Comintern, in order to make possible the realisation of this turn in which salvation lies.

This is only a section of Trotsky's Criticism. Other sections will be printed in future issues.—(Ed.)

Read

SOCIALIST APPEAL

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Reply to I.L.P.

BY MARC LORIS

In the October 1942 issue of "Left" you reproduced in part my article, "The I.L.P.—Words and Reality," from the June 1942 "Fourth International"; and I cannot but thank you for that. But, in so doing, you involved me in a discussion with Walter Padley, who answered my article in your December issue. I do not intend to reply to Padley's arguments one by one; the delays caused by distance would make such a controversy of extremely little interest to your readers. I must only say that neither Padley's answer nor—what is more important—the Independent Labour Party's policy and activities in the months after my article have been able to make me change my estimate of this party.

In this short letter my sole intention is to try to show the main defects of Padley's method of argument. First, Padley—like every true centrist—could not fail to accuse the Fourth International of maintaining a dictatorial regime; he cannot forgive the British followers of the Fourth International, "who allow an international centre thousands of miles away to dictate their political thinking." Very fortunately, the British Fourth Internationalists did not wait for my article to criticise the I.L.P. They have done it for a long time, very often with much more powerful and direct arguments than mine. Nobody had to "dictate" this to them. They only had to observe the political reality. As a matter of fact, how could the Fourth International "dictate" anything to anybody? It has no fat posts to offer, no well-lined cash-box, no G.P.U. What else could bind its followers together but the common recognition of a certain number of objective truths? The characterisation of the I.L.P. as a centrist party is one of these truths. Since centrism is not for us a subjective appreciation, some kind of insult, but an "objective" political reality, with very definite features, its existence can be established by different people, even "thousands of miles" apart, without anybody having to "dictate" anything to anybody else.

In my article I gave a few examples of the opportunist character of the I.L.P.'s parliamentary work. My criticism was based on facts and quotations—including the minutes of parliament. Padley does not try to dispute these, but to refute me; he simply quotes abundantly the I.L.P.'s basic statement on parliament. It is well known that every opportunist party has in its archives some fine resolutions that it takes out on holidays. (Incidentally, even the ceremonial "basic statement" is not so fine and could be criticised on many points.) The day-by-day practice, however, is quite different. The inconsistency, from a revolutionary viewpoint, of the work of the I.L.P.'s parliamentary representatives is traditional and can be verified by everybody (from Maxton's thanks to Chamberlain after Munich for having saved the peace, to Maxton's recent proposition that the African colonies pass under the yoke of American imperialism). I must also mention the disproportionate rôle played by the parliamentary group in the internal life of the I.L.P. where it is the bulwark of the right wing; indeed, the party as a whole is its prisoner.

I must make one final comment on Padley's remark that revolutionary parties "do not grow on trees" and that perfection does not exist in this world. Padley uses a very old sophism: perfection is impossible, there will always be defects, therefore—this is the implicit conclusion—why criticise them? An argument on the same pattern is used by every supporter of the status

quo. "Man is not perfect," answers the philistine to the socialist criticism of bourgeois civilisation. "The I.L.P. does not pretend to perfection," answers Padley to our criticism. Certainly perfection does not belong to this world. But what does it mean to repeat such a platitude? It means only to justify passivity.

No, indeed, the I.L.P. is not perfect and, in our opinion, it can go forward only through a sharp struggle against a large part of its present leadership. The coming wave of revolutions will require from revolutionary parties clarity, firmness, consistency and resolution. These qualities are those in which the present leaders of the I.L.P. are most lacking. The duty of the members of the party is to push aside those who prattle about "impossible perfection" and to proceed to adapt their organisation to the revolutionary requirements of our epoch.

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apparatus systematically adapts the party and its institutions to this changing programme, that is, in the service of new and ever more privileged social tiers. The principal methods of this adaptation are the dictatorial purges. The monolithism of the party signifies today not its unity on the basis of the proletarian programme, but its docility to the apparatus that betrays this programme. Renewals in the personnel of the C.C. have reflected and continue to reflect the social shift of the party from the oppressed to the oppressors.

2. The second conclusion is indissolubly linked with the first. The unimpeachable language of figures mercilessly refutes the assertion so current among the democratic intellectuals that Stalinism and Bolshevism are "one and the same". Stalinism originated not as an organic outgrowth of Bolshevism but as a negation of Bolshevism consummated in blood. The process of this negation is mirrored very graphically in the history of the Central Committee. Stalinism had first to exterminate politically, and then physically the leading cadres of Bolshevism in order to become that which it now is: an apparatus of the privileged, a brake upon historical progress, an agency of world imperialism. Stalinism and Bolshevism are mortal enemies.

Continued from page 7.

place of the foul national hatreds engendered by capitalism will come the fraternal co-operation of the peoples. The Fourth International will lead the coming revolutions to success. The First International laid down the principles; the Second built the mighty movement of the working class; the Third International laid down the principles of mass struggles and the conquest of power; the Fourth, embodying all that is alive and best in the traditions of all the Internationals, will lead the toilers to victory. Working men and women! Toilers of Britain! Soldiers, Sailors and Airmen! Place yourselves under the banner of the Fourth International! It is the banner of your coming victory! The Third International is dead! Long Live the Fourth International! For a Socialist Europe and a Socialist World!