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**INTERNATIONAL
SOCIALIST
REVIEW**

SPECIAL ISSUE

Twentieth Anniversary
of Leon Trotsky's
Assassination

**TROTSKY
ON
AMERICA**

by

James P. Cannon



(1879 - 1940)

Twenty Years After

by Murry Weiss

Trotsky's Views on Dialectical Materialism

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Correspondence

Editor:

I got a chance to look at the *ISR* and found it to be the best periodical publication I've seen. I would not have come to this conclusion had not *Mainstream* been so milk-toasty in the last few issues. I find myself in agreement with just about all SWP principles except one, and that is Red China. It's entirely possible that I have the wrong idea on this country but if it's like the pictures in *Time*, it makes me sick to my stomach.

I have been wondering where I could get hold of a subscription to the *Labour Review* and *The Newsletter*. Maybe you can help.

T. L.

Pasadena, California

Editor:

"There is a very real possibility that the Negro movement will become the leading spokesman for the interests of all Southern oppressed." This statement, by Bert Deck, in *Challenge of the Negro Student*, in the Summer issue of the *International Socialist Review* is, I believe, an extremely perceptive statement.

My experiences in Memphis, Tennessee from 1938 until I was drafted in 1942, as first a Trotskyist sympathizer and then as an active party member, showed me how it was possible for Negroes to lead the labor movement in the South.

Organization of the industrial workers through the CIO did not come into Memphis until the beginning of the forties. The first CIO union organized was the Inland Boatmen's section of the National Maritime Union. It was organized in Memphis through powerful aid from workers in other inland ports through a strike that tied up all ports on the Mississippi River. The river workers established a small beachhead for the CIO in Memphis.

The office of the boatmen was in a building at the top of a hill leading down to the river. It was by far the most dilapidated union office I have ever seen. It was not safe to flush the toilet, there was a hole in the floor of one of the rooms, and the wood near the hole was broken and rotten so that it was not safe to walk near the hole.

However, Negroes saw in this dilapidated building the place to begin rebuilding their world. Two leaders of the boatmen's union told me Negroes went regularly and often to this office, asking for CIO organizers to organize their industries.

The CIO started to send organizers. The local papers started running stories telling how the police were buying George submachine guns and other weapons in large quantities in preparation for trouble.

The key spot was the Firestone Tire Company, which had recently been located in Memphis to escape the union. Two thirds of the workers were white and one third colored. Luckily George Bass was sent to organize this factory. He was a far better organizer than most of those sent to Memphis and he seemed to understand the color question better than the others. Some of the organizers were anti-Negro. One tried to organize Jim-Crow unions.

After some organizers were "roughed-up" the Firestone workers organized into the CIO. The day the workers had their first election a Memphis paper, which sprang up around the time the workers started organizing, had a headline screaming NEGRO ELECTED VICE-PRESIDENT OF CIO RUBBER WORKERS.

A terrific campaign was organized to get the rubber workers into the AFL. They did go into it for a while, but then voted themselves back into the CIO.

The election of a Negro vice-president of the rubber workers was one of the actions that made Memphis Negroes strong CIO people. They decided the CIO was something worth struggling and sacrificing for.

The first strikes of the CIO were at plants where only Negroes worked, cotton processing plants and hardwood lumber companies. There conditions and wages were poor judged even by Memphis standards.

City authorities had planned to stop these strikes by intimidation. There were more policemen around the struck plants than there were people who worked in them. Any strikers who tried to stop scabs would have been fortunate if they missed a trip to the hospital. However, there were no scabs. There is no way of being sure that no one wanted to scab, but any person would have known a scab could not dare go back into a Negro neighborhood. These strikes and the backing Negroes got from the CIO tied them more firmly to the union.

The first mixed strike, Negro and white workers, was at the Wabash Screen and Door Company. All of the workers went out, but the white workers generally just stayed home and the Negroes did almost all the picketing.

Except perhaps for the skilled workers, most white workers gave various

degrees of support to the CIO, but they looked to the Negroes for leadership. The white workers in the finishing plant where I worked considered their union a company union and would have preferred to get into the CIO, but they dared not make the try. However, many of them were ready to and later did follow the Negroes into the CIO. A white woman told me, "If the — (she used that word which she considered it necessary to use to prove that although she was willing to organize with Negroes she was still a Southerner) put up a picket line we will not go through it."

She was as typically Southern as a person could be, but was looking to the Negroes for leadership.

When the CIO called the first meeting to organize our plant most of the Negroes were there, but there were only two white people from our plant. Both of us had already been fired for our union activities. The plant was, however, in a short time organized into the CIO.

As the CIO came into the unorganized plants in Memphis white workers became more militant and took positions of leadership. However, at first it was the Negroes who supplied the initiative and drive that brought it.

Dick Clarke
St. Louis

Editor:

I have much praise for your summer 1960 issue of the *ISR*, save one exception i.e. your repeated "knocking" (criticizing) of other socialist factions. Don't you think it would be a better policy and practice to accentuate the positive using all energies therefore? I observed this issue to be one of your best ever in its topics and contents otherwise.

M. A.
San Diego

Editor:

When we got home from our world tour I found a big bundle of mail and publications, including the Spring issue of the *ISR*. In it I found the enclosed slip as a reminder to renew the subscription. Therefore, I am herewith enclosing three one dollar bills to cover a two year renewal of the *ISR*, and the remaining fifty cents to apply as a donation to whatever purpose you want to use it.

I just got through reading the article by Gitano on the Cuban situation. It is certainly encouraging for a socialist in this country to learn that a progressive movement of that type has found a foothold right in our own international neighborhood. The article is well written, interesting and informative.

C.R.H.
Minneapolis, Minn.

Trotsky on America

For over two decades the eminent Marxist closely followed all developments in this country and made important contributions to its socialist movement

by James P. Cannon

ORIGINAL thinkers are as rare in the social sciences as in every other. In the hundred years of the modern movement of workers' emancipation we know only four genuinely creative minds. These are the masters of scientific socialism, Marx and Engels, and their great disciples, Lenin and Trotsky.

All four were Europeans — two Germans and two Russians. Fortunately for us, two of these men of genius devoted special attention to the problems of the workers movement in the America of their time. Engels was the first, Trotsky was the second.

Most of Engels' contributions on the problems of American labor, consisting of letters written to American socialists, have recently been translated into English and are available in a single volume. Trotsky had much more to say about America. Some of his richest thought was devoted primarily to the problems of American socialism. His articles, speeches and letters on the subject of America would fill many volumes; only a small part has as yet been collected and published in book form.

More than any other international leader of the working class, Trotsky personally participated in the process of preparing the party of the coming socialist revolution in this country. His intervention began in the midst of the first world war even before the Russian Revolution. De-

ported from France, then Spain, for his anti-war opinions, he took a ship from Barcelona for the United States, arriving in the New World on January 13, 1917.

"I plunged into the affairs of American socialism too quickly and . . . was straight-way up to my neck in work for it," he wrote in *My Life*. The day after his arrival he attended a meeting of twenty left wing socialists at the home of the editor Ludwig Lore in Brooklyn. A complete account of this important meeting is given in Chapter V of "The Roots of American Communism," by Theodore Draper.

It was called to discuss a program of action for organizing the radical forces in the American socialist movement. At this meeting, also attended by Bukharin, Trotsky formulated an anti-war platform for a new left wing in the Socialist Party. Two of its principal initiators, Lore and Katayama, says Draper, "agree that Trotsky talked himself into the momentary command of the American left wing."

Trotsky's only profession in New York was that of a revolutionary socialist. He worked on the Editorial Board of *Novy Mir* (New World), spoke at meetings and helped found the first theoretical review, *The Class Struggle*, which gathered together and educated the original members of the future Communist party.

ALTHOUGH he stayed in New York only two months, the United States made an even deeper im-

pression upon Trotsky than he did upon the radical socialist movement. "In one of the New York libraries I studied the economic history of the United States assiduously. The figures showing the growth of American exports during the war astounded me; they were, in fact, a complete revelation. And it was those same figures that not only predetermined America's intervention in the war, but the decisive part that the United States would play in the world after the war, as well. I wrote several articles about this at the time, and gave several lectures. Since that time the problem of 'America versus Europe' has been one of my chief interests. And even now I am studying the question with the utmost care, hoping to devote a separate book to it. If one is to understand the future destiny of humanity this is the most important of all subjects."

On March 27, 1917 he departed for the country of the revolution "in a deluge of flowers and speeches." Later he wrote "The Russian Revolution came so soon that I only managed to catch the general life-rhythm of the monster known as New York. I was leaving for Europe, with the feeling of a man who has had only a peep into the foundry in which the fate of man is to be forged. My only consolation was the thought that I might return."

Although Trotsky was not able to return, he never thereafter lost interest in the development of American communism.

Trotsky's next direct intervention

This article is based on two lectures given at the West Coast Vacation School in September, 1956.

in the affairs of American communism occurred in November, 1922 at the Fourth Congress of the Communist International in Moscow. As Chairman of the Workers party, I was one of the delegates to that Congress. A commission had been set up to consider the status of the American Communist party which had been thrust into illegality by the post-war repressions and the Palmer Raids. The leadership was divided between those who thought it obligatory to remain underground and those, like myself, who were pushing for its open and legal existence. We were condemned as "liquidators" by our opponents.

This dispute was deadlocked until our delegation had an interview with Trotsky. After he heard our arguments, he stated that he would support our viewpoint and was sure that Lenin and the other Russian leaders would do the same. It so happened. Thus, upon Trotsky's initiative, the authority of the Communist International was cast on the side of liberating the American Communist party from the straitjacket of illegality in which it had bound itself. This was the second great service Trotsky rendered the pioneer communist movement in this country.

Europe and America

During the early twenties Trotsky expanded the ideas on the ascendancy of US imperialism in world affairs which he had projected during the war. In two speeches, subsequently published in a pamphlet en-

titled *Europe and America*, he analyzed the impact the staggering material preponderance of the United States was having upon the post-war world.

"What does American capitalism want?" he asked. "American capitalism is seeking the position of world domination; it wants to establish an American imperialist autocracy over our planet . . ." and, in pursuit of this objective, "it wants to put capitalist Europe on rations." Europe could protect itself from submission to the dictates of U.S. imperialism, he concluded, only if the working class conquered power and established a socialist United States of Europe.

In this "revolutionary Marxist critique of Americanism," Trotsky said, "we do not at all mean thereby to condemn Americanism, lock, stock and barrel. We do not mean that we abjure to learn from Americans and Americanism whatever one can and should learn from them. We lack the technique of the Americans and their labor proficiency . . . To have Bolshevism shod in the American way — there is our task! . . . If we get shod with mathematics, technology, if we Americanize our still frail socialist industry, then we can with tenfold confidence say that the future is completely and decisively working in our favor. Americanized Bolshevism will crush and conquer imperialist Americanism."

AFTER Trotsky was exiled to Alma Ata in 1928, he occupied himself

with writing a criticism of the Draft Program drawn up by Bukharin and Stalin for the Sixth Congress of the Communist International. In this classic of Marxist-Leninist literature Trotsky examined all the key problems of the international revolution, submitting the new revisionism introduced by the Stalinists to a devastating criticism. By good fortune I happened to be one of a selected group of delegates to the Sixth Congress who had access to this document. Up to this point I, like others, had been vaguely disturbed by many events within the Communist International and the Soviet Union but had neither adequate explanations nor solutions for them. I shall never forget the illumination Trotsky provided through his profound analysis of the problems of the world revolution in the imperialist epoch and the evolution of the Soviet state under Stalinist opportunism. He exposed the theoretical root of Stalinist revisionism in its advocacy of "Socialism in One Country" which broke with the Leninist program of international socialist revolution.

I have told elsewhere how the Canadian CP leader Maurice Spector and I smuggled a copy of the manuscript out of the Soviet Union, circulated it among our closest co-thinkers in the leaderships of the American and Canadian Communist parties, and how our championing of its ideas led to our expulsion in October, 1928.

This document provided a solid foundation for the establishment of the Communist Left Opposition in this country and a principled guide to our propaganda work. It also inspired our tendency with that internationalist outlook which it has retained ever since. At that time Jay Lovestone, then head of the American Communist party, was announcing that the prosperity of American capitalism was firmly based and that it had enough stability to escape the fatal consequences of the laws of the capitalist system for a long time to come. The crisis of 1929 exploded this illusion. Thanks to Trotsky's teachings our movement had already been inoculated against this dangerous bacillus of "American exceptionalism" which even today debilitates

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and has destroyed many American radicals.

After Trotsky's deportation to Turkey early in 1929, we got into direct communication with him at Prinkipo — and from that time until his assassination in 1940 he remained in constant correspondence and contact with us. Every important step of our movement was taken in consultation with him.

Although we made our own decisions, we always sought and valued his advice. For his part, he never gave directions or orders — and indeed we would not have accepted them. But we turned to him as a senior collaborator of immense experience and unique authority.

IN HIS letters and discussions he underscored the fact that the United States was, at its own pace and in its own way, also headed toward deepening class struggles and crises of revolutionary intensity. This was the theme of his first letter to the American Bolshevik-Leninists from Constantinople in March, 1929.

"The work to be achieved by the American Opposition has international-historic significance, for in the last historic analysis all the problems of our planet will be decided upon American soil. There is much in favor of the idea that from the standpoint of revolutionary order, Europe and the East stand ahead of the United States. But a course of events is possible in which this order might be broken in favor of the proletariat of the United States. Moreover, even if you assume that America which now shakes the whole world will be shaken last of all, the danger remains that a revolutionary situation in the United States may catch the vanguard of the American proletariat unprepared, as was the case in Germany in 1923, in England in 1926 and in China in 1925-1927.

"We must not for a minute lose sight of the fact that the might of American capitalism rests more and more upon a foundation of world economy with its contradictions and crises, military and revolutionary. This means that a social crisis in the United States may arrive a good deal sooner than many think, and have a feverish development from the be-



ginning. Hence the conclusion: it is necessary to prepare."

This first letter to us was written at the height of the boom of the nineteen twenties when it appeared to almost everyone that the American economy was heading upward forever. That bubble burst with the stock market crash seven months later.

The Coming Radicalization

Taken off guard by the onset of the depression, the American workers were unable to react vigorously to its effects for several years. Yet in the depths of the depression Trotsky foretold the labor upsurge of the 1930's and the rise of the CIO. Here is what he said in *Germany: The Key to the International Situation*, in 1931:

"Today it is still hard to ascertain, at least from a distance, any measure of important radicalization in the American working masses. It may be assumed that the masses themselves have been so startled by the catastrophic upheaval in the conjuncture, so stunned and crushed by unemployment or by the fear of unemployment, that they have not as yet been able to draw even the most elementary political conclusions from the calamity that has befallen them. This

requires a certain amount of time. But the conclusions will be drawn.

"The tremendous economic crisis, which has taken on the character of a social crisis, will inevitably be converted into a crisis of the political consciousness of the American working class. It is quite possible that the revolutionary radicalization of the broadest layers of workers will reveal itself, not in the period of the greatest decline in the conjuncture, but on the contrary, during the turn toward revival and upswing.

"In either case, the present crisis will open up a new epoch in the life of the American proletariat and of the people as a whole. Serious regroupments and clashes among the ruling parties are to be expected, as well as new attempts to create a third party, etc.

"With the first signs of a rise in the conjuncture, the trade union movement will acutely sense the necessity of tearing itself loose from the claws of the despicable AFL bureaucracy. At the same time, unlimited possibilities will unfold themselves for Communism.

"In the past, America has known more than one stormy outburst of revolutionary or semi-revolutionary mass movements. Every time they died out quickly, because America at

every time entered a new phase of economic upswing and also because the movements themselves were characterized by crass empiricism and theoretical helplessness. These two conditions belong to the past. A new economic upswing (and one cannot consider it excluded in advance) will have to be based, not on the internal 'equilibrium,' but on the present chaos of world economy. American capitalism will enter an epoch of monstrous imperialism, of an uninterrupted growth of armaments, of intervention in the affairs of the entire world, of military conflicts and convulsions.

"On the other hand, in the form of Communism the masses of the American proletariat possess — rather, could possess, provided with a correct policy — no longer the old melange of empiricism, mysticism and quackery, but a scientifically grounded, up-to-date doctrine. These radical changes permit us to predict with certainty that the inevitable and relatively rapid, revolutionary transformation of the American proletariat will no more be the former, easily extinguishable 'bonfire,' but the beginning of a veritable revolutionary conflagration. In America, Communism can face its great future with confidence."

IN 1932 he repeated his optimistic forecast of revolutionary changes in the United States. In a letter to the *Militant*, November 26, 1932, Trotsky wrote, "The political life of the United States is clearly approaching a turning point. Within the near future it will become clear that when Heraclitus the Dark said 'everything flows, everything changes,' he had in mind also the republic of Hoover-Roosevelt. Old traditions, conceptions, prejudices, will go by the board. Through a period of ideological chaos and stress, the classes in American society will create for themselves a new modern ideology. A strong revolutionary kernel, welded by a uniformity of doctrine and political method, will be called upon in such a period to play a great role. The creation of such a kernel is the achievement of the *Militant*. So much the heartier is my greeting."

In the five years between 1932

and 1937 the American Trotskyists broke out of their isolation, merged with the American Workers party of Muste and later entered the Socialist party of Norman Thomas, increasing their forces and influence with each political step. We benefited from advice received from Trotsky through letters and visits to him in Turkey, France and Norway.

Our contact became still closer after Trotsky arrived in Mexico in January, 1937. We supplied his household with secretaries and guards from our ranks, kept up continuous correspondence on many important political matters, and sent delegations to confer with him.

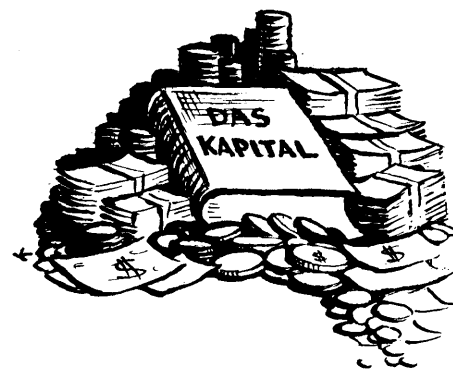
Together we engaged in the international campaign to expose the frame-ups of Stalin's Moscow Trials in which Trotsky and his son Sedov were the principal defendants. Prominent liberal and left wing intellectuals had formed a committee in New York to obtain asylum for Trotsky and afford him an opportunity to answer his accusers. Through the agency of this committee an International Commission of Inquiry, headed by the philosopher John Dewey was set up. This commission went to Mexico City to interrogate Trotsky and hear his case.

The testimony before this commission was published in a book called *The Case of Leon Trotsky* in which he not only refuted the false allegations against him but set forth his views on many important political questions.

The Dewey Commission published its findings in a book called *Not Guilty* in which it cleared both Trotsky and his son of the charges against them in the Moscow Trials. They anticipated by twenty years the revelations by Stalin's accomplice and successor Khrushchev that these trials were nothing but frame-ups.

TROTSKY's most extended treatment of the economy and politics of U.S. monopoly capitalism was given in his introduction to the *Living Thoughts of Karl Marx*, written in 1939. The full potential of American technique could not be realized, he stated, unless and until it was liberated from private ownership. This could only be accomplished through the socialist revolution.

He wrote: "The program of 'Technocracy,' which flourished in the period of the great crisis of 1929-1932, was founded on the correct premise that economy can be rationalized only through the union of technique at the height of science and government at the service of society. Such a union is possible, provided technique and government are liberated from the slavery of private ownership. That is where the great revolutionary task begins. In order to liberate technique from the cabal of private interests and place the government at the service of society, it is necessary to 'expropriate the expropriators.' Only a powerful class, interested in its own liberation and opposed to the monopolistic expro-



priators, is capable of consummating this task. Only in unison with a proletarian government can the qualified stratum of technicians build a truly scientific and a truly national, i.e., a socialist economy."

Nature of Transition

Khrushchev, making Stalin's line more explicit, has stated that new conditions in the world have made it possible for monopoly capitalism to be peacefully transformed into socialism. As though answering in advance this latest revelation of Khrushchev, Trotsky dealt with this problem along the following lines:

"It would be best, of course, to achieve this purpose in a peaceful, gradual, democratic way. But the social order that has outlived itself never yields its place to its successor without resistance. If in its day the young forceful democracy proved incapable of forestalling the seizure of wealth and power by the plutocracy, is it possible to expect that a senile and devastated democracy will prove

capable of transforming a social order based on the untrammelled rule of sixty families? Theory and history teach that a succession of social regimes presupposes the highest form of the class struggle, i.e., revolution. Even slavery could not be abolished in the United States without a civil war. 'Force is the mid-wife of every old society pregnant with a new one.' No one has yet been able to refute Marx on this basic tenet in the sociology of class society. Only a socialist revolution can clear the road to socialism."

Trotsky was fully aware of the tremendous grip traditional pragmatic habits of thought and action had upon the American people, its intellectuals and its working class. But he was convinced that the further development of the working class movement would enable it to cast off bourgeois influences and make it more susceptible to the methods and conclusions of scientific socialism.

He wrote: "The United States had Marxists in the past, it is true, but they were a strange type of Marxist, or rather, three strange types. In the first place, there were the emigres cast out of Europe, who did what they could but could not find any response; in the second place, isolated American groups, like the De Leonists, who in the course of events, and because of their own mistakes, turned themselves into sects; in the third place, dilettantes attracted by the October Revolution and sympathetic to Marxism as an exotic teaching that had little to do with the United States. Their day is over.

"Now dawns the new epoch of an independent class movement of the proletariat and at the same time of

— genuine Marxism. In this, too, America will in a few jumps catch up with Europe and outdistance it. Progressive technique and a progressive social structure will pave their own way in the sphere of doctrine. The best theoreticians of Marxism will appear on American soil. Marx will become the mentor of the advanced American workers."

AFTER our expulsion from the Socialist party we held discussions in April 1938 with Trotsky in Mexico City on the political problems and prospects of the American labor movement. Out of these discussions we concluded that the next great step in the progress of American unionism would be or have to be the formation of an independent Labor party. Trotsky believed that this step was dictated by the difficulties confronting the new industrial union movement on the one hand and the slow growth of the revolutionary forces on the other.

"The working class stands before an alternative," he observed. "Either the trade unions will be dissolved or they will join for political action. That is the objective situation, not created by us, and in this sense the agitation for a working class party now becomes not an abstract but a totally concrete step in progress for the workers organized in the trade unions in the first instance and for those not organized at all.

"In the second place, it is an absolutely concrete task determined by economic and social conditions. It would be absurd for us to say that because the new party issues from the political amalgamation of the trade unions it will of necessity be opportunistic. We will not invite the workers to make this same step in the same way as abroad."

To make sure that the projected Labor party would play a progressive role, Trotsky proposed that the measures contained in the Transitional Program of the Fourth International, which he was then formulating, should be offered as its guide. Ever since that time, our party has been the only consistent advocate of a thorough break by the organized workers with the capitalist parties

and the establishment of a Labor party along these lines.

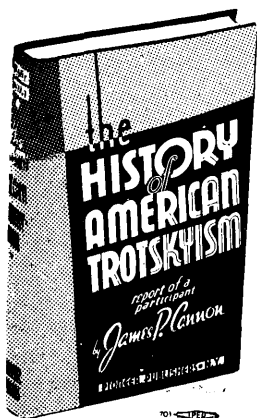
Fascism was sweeping over Europe and raising its head in the United States through such figures as Father Coughlin and Mayor Hague of Jersey City. Trotsky urged that the labor movement take the lead in independent action against this menace and not rely upon the capitalist government to eliminate the reaction upon which it rested.

At the same time he pointed out that fascism was able to conquer only in those countries where the conservative labor parties prevented the proletariat from utilizing the revolutionary situation and seizing power, as in Germany.

"Both theoretical analysis as well as the rich historical experience of the last quarter of a century have demonstrated with equal force that fascism is each time the final link of a specific political cycle composed of the following: the gravest crisis of capitalist society; the growth of the radicalization of the working class; the growth of sympathy toward the working class and a yearning for change on the part of the rural and urban petty bourgeoisie; the extreme confusion of the big bourgeoisie; its cowardly and treacherous maneuvers aimed at avoiding the revolutionary climax; the exhaustion of the proletariat, growing confusion and indifference; the aggravation of the social crisis; the despair of the petty bourgeoisie, its yearning for change, the collective neurosis of the petty bourgeoisie, its readiness to believe in miracles; its readiness for violent measures; the growth of hostility towards the proletariat which has deceived its expectations. These are the premises for a swift formation of a fascist party and its victory."

ON THESE grounds Trotsky predicted that the American workers would have their chance to take over power before the native fascists would have theirs. In any event, he declared:

"No occupation is more completely unworthy than that of speculating whether or not we shall succeed in creating a powerful revolutionary leader-party. Ahead lies a favorable perspective, providing all the just-



ification for revolutionary activism. It is necessary to utilize the opportunities which are opening up and to build the revolutionary party."

This injunction to "build the revolutionary party" is from the very last article he wrote before his assassination.

In another unfinished article on the *Trade Unions in the Epoch of Imperialist Decay*, he stressed the necessity for revolutionary militants to adapt themselves to the concrete conditions existing in the trade unions of their country in order to mobilize the members not only against the capitalists but also against the bureaucratic regime within the unions themselves and against the leaders enforcing this regime. He put forward as the primary slogan for this struggle: *Complete and unconditional independence of the trade unions in relation to the capitalist state*. Along with this went the slogan of *trade union democracy*.

"The neutrality of trade unions is completely and irretrievably a thing of the past, gone together with the free bourgeois democracy," he wrote. "The trade unions of our time can either serve as secondary instruments of imperialist capitalism for the subordination and disciplining of workers and for obstructing the revolution, or on the contrary, the trade union can become the instrument of the revolutionary movement of the proletariat."

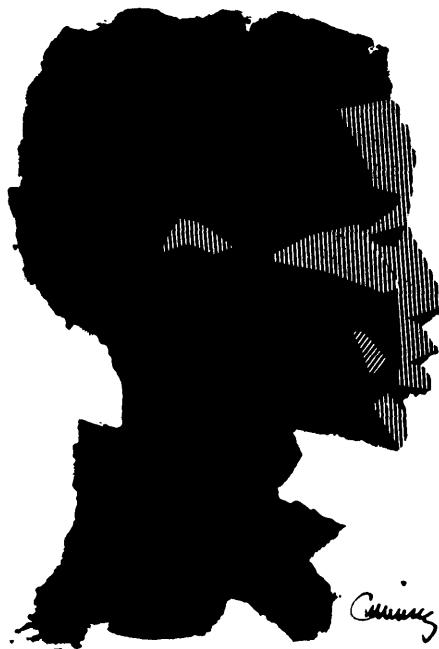
The Negro Struggle

Although he did not write at length on the question, Trotsky was extremely sensitive to the special role of the Negro struggle in the United States. In the *Militant* of July 2, 1932, he wrote of the need to get closer to the proletarians of the colored races:

"The difference in our relation to the petty bourgeois and to the proletarian groups does not require any explanation. But if the proletarian group works in a district where there are workers of various races, and in spite of this, it consists only of workers of a privileged nationality, I am inclined to regard them with suspicion: are we not dealing with the workers aristocracy? Isn't the group poisoned by slave-holding prejudices active or passive?"

"It is quite a different matter when

we are approached by a group of Negro workers. Here I am ready to consider beforehand that we are achieving agreement with them, even



though this is not yet obvious; because of their whole position they do not strive and cannot strive to degrade anybody, oppress anybody or deprive anybody of his rights. They do not seek privileges and cannot rise to the top except on the road of the international liberation.

"We can and we should find a way to the consciousness of the Negro workers, the Chinese workers, of the Hindu workers, all these oppressed colored races of the human ocean to whom belongs the decisive word in the development of humanity."

WITH the approach of the second world war it became imperative to consider what tactics could assist the struggle against the warmongers in this country. Congressman Ludlow had introduced a proposed constitutional amendment that a declaration of war be first submitted to a referendum of the voters. Our National Committee was at first disposed to turn its back on this bill but asked Trotsky for his opinion. He replied that in his view it was necessary to give critical support to the Ludlow Amendment because it attempted to give the American people a say in the life and death issue

of war or peace and thereby weakened the dictatorial war-making powers of the executives of imperialism. Since then the war-making powers have been even more tightly concentrated in a tiny group of top executives in Washington and the essential idea of the Ludlow Amendment remains fully valid.

Trotsky came into conflict with James Burnham, one of the leaders at that time of the Socialist Workers party, over the question of the Dies Committee. Trotsky planned to appear before this predecessor of the House Un-American Activities Committee in order to expose and denounce it before the public. Burnham opposed this move. Dies himself settled the question by refusing to take up Trotsky's challenge.

Replying later to Burnham's objections, Trotsky wrote: "The average worker, not infected with the prejudices of the labor aristocracy, would joyfully welcome every bold revolutionary word thrown in the very face of the class enemy. And the more reactionary the institution which serves as the arena for the combat, all the more complete is the satisfaction of the worker. This has been proved by historical experience. Dies himself, becoming frightened and jumping back in time, demonstrated how false your position was. It is always better to compel the enemy to retreat than to hide oneself without a battle."

This quotation is taken from the book *In Defense of Marxism* which was devoted to the issues brought forward in the struggle within the Socialist Workers party at the beginning of the second world war. Trotsky took the lead in the fight against the Burnham-Shachtman opposition which was seeking to overthrow the fundamental positions of the Fourth International and the method of Marxism on the question of the nature and defense of the Soviet Union. In these writings Trotsky ranged over the wide field of Marxist theory from the heights of the materialist dialectic to the building of the proletarian party. His principal preoccupation in this dispute, which culminated in a split, was to preserve the Marxist and proletarian character of our party. He was successful in both respects.

As Trotsky wrote in the founding document of the Fourth International, "The historical crisis of mankind is reduced to the crisis of the revolutionary leadership." This meant that the principal task of the workers in every country was to create a party and a leadership capable of leading mankind out of the death agony of capitalism into the new world of socialism.

He most passionately and eloquently expressed his views on the decisive role of the party in the recorded speech he made in 1938 in celebration of the Tenth Anniversary of our party and the founding of the Fourth International:

"Dear Friends: We are not a party as other parties. Our ambition is not only to have more members, more papers, more money in the treasury, more deputies. All that is necessary, but only as a means. Our aim is the full material and spiritual liberation of the toilers and exploited through the socialist revolution. Nobody will prepare it and nobody will guide it but ourselves. The old Internationals — the Second, the Third, that of Amsterdam, we will add to them also the London Bureau — are rotten through and through.

"The great events which rush upon mankind will not leave of these out-lived organizations one stone upon another. Only the Fourth International looks with confidence at the future. It is the world party of Socialist Revolution! There never was a greater task on the earth. Upon every one of us rests a tremendous historical responsibility.

"Our party demands each of us, totally and completely. Let the philistines hunt their own individuality in empty space. For a revolutionary to give himself entirely to the party signifies finding himself.

"Yes, our party takes each one of us wholly. But in return it gives to every one of us the highest happiness: the consciousness that one participates in the building of a better future, that one carries on his shoulders a particle of the fate of mankind, and that one's life will not have been lived in vain.

"The fidelity to the cause of the toilers requires from us the highest devotion to our international party.

The party, of course, can also be mistaken. By common effort we will correct its mistakes. In its ranks can penetrate unworthy elements. By common effort we will eliminate them. New thousands who will enter its ranks tomorrow will probably be deprived of necessary education. By common effort we will elevate their revolutionary level. But we will never forget that our party is now the greatest lever of history. Separated from this lever, everyone of us is nothing. With this lever in hand, we are all."

* * *

SINCE the terrible admissions of Khrushchev and others at the 20th Congress, the thirty year arbitrary domination of American radicalism by the power of Moscow through the American Communist party has been recognized by many people as a devastating disease. That is certainly correct. But the cure that is being offered in some quarters — the proposal for a return to American isolationism, which appears to have a superficial attractiveness to unthinking people — is no better than the disease it proposes to cure.

A purely American Socialist party would be as useless for the American workers today as Hoover's "Fortress America" would be for the American bourgeoisie. We are entangled in world affairs and cannot escape from them. The problem is to establish the correct relationship. Neither isolation from foreign influences nor arbitrary foreign domination can build a revolutionary party in this country. What is needed is an international outlook and international collaboration — that is what socialist internationalism really means.

Recoiling against the cult of Stalin, which caused such devastation in the American radical movement, some people now describe all reference to the Marxist authorities as the cult of Marx, the cult of Lenin, or the cult of Trotsky. Those who used to forbid themselves to say anything until it was first said by Stalin, or even to think any thoughts which had not first been thought for them by Stalin, have suddenly decided that the cure for this mental, moral and political prostration is to listen to nothing that is said and to read nothing

that has been written outside the borders of the fifty states.

They say that henceforth we must walk on our own feet, think our own thoughts, and look neither to the right nor to the left, like a horse wearing blinkers. We for our part are firmly convinced that the repudiation of the cult of Stalin is a good thing. The repudiation of the cult of Khrushchev would be even better. But we are just as firmly convinced that isolationism, which could properly be called the cult of national idiocy, is not the right cure for the disease.

JUST as American science and technology borrow from the whole world, so in the realm of social theory and political thought the American workers must draw on the storehouse of international experience and theoretical generalization. Here the masters of Marxism will be their best teachers, with Trotsky foremost among them.

The thirty-year attitude of the American Stalinists toward Stalin, and our attitude toward Trotsky, is not the same thing. Trotsky gave us advice as a teacher and encouraged us to think independently and to take a critical attitude toward everything that was said by anybody, including what he said himself. In that way we could really assimilate the best thoughts of others and make them our own. We have tried to do that to the measure of our ability.

Stalin, however, issued orders which had to be carried out without thinking, under penalty of expulsion, slander, frame-up and murder. Trotsky, by his method, educated a cadre of independent thinking revolutionists. Stalin by his method, recruited a gang of bureaucratic lackeys who could not stand on their own feet. Our relations with Trotsky were those of disciples of a teacher of ideas, not of unthinking devotees of a cult or servile lackeys of an established power.

Just as Trotsky was a collaborator with the American revolutionists of the first world war and with the revolutionists of my generation, so will he be through his writings a collaborator of the new generation of builders of the party of the socialist revolution in this country.

Trotskyism Today

Some of Trotsky's admirers say his ideas have no current relevance. A look at the competing tendencies in today's international labor movement tells a much different story

by Murry Weiss

TWENTY years after the murder of Leon Trotsky by a Kremlin agent in Mexico, August 21, 1940, there is more reason than before his death to believe that the ideas and movement he represented will play a decisive role in the epoch in which we live, the epoch of the revolutionary transformation of society from capitalism to socialism.

The opponents of Trotskyism will, of course, vigorously object to this proposition. While many, including some who admire Trotsky as an individual, are willing to grant that he possessed a rare and magnificent genius and accomplished great works in his time, they insist that the ideas of Trotsky and the movement that survived him have little, if any, bearing on the world today.

Isaac Deutscher, for example, who has done truly brilliant and tireless work in excavating the truth about Trotsky from under a mountain of Stalinist lies, regards Trotsky's efforts to build the Fourth International, in contrast to his previous achievements, as a piece of inexplicable folly doomed in advance to failure.

Trotsky himself had a different view of the place his struggle for the Fourth International had in the totality of his life's work.

While exiled in Norway and France in 1935, the monstrous spectacle of the Moscow Trials unfolded before Trotsky's eyes. An entire generation of Russian revolutionary leaders, constituting the great majority of the Leninist cadre that led the Bolshevik revolution, was being destroyed. Trotsky understood the meaning of this better than anyone. The Stalinist bureaucracy aimed not simply at the physical extermination of the Leninist vanguard but above all at the annihilation of Leninist ideas. For the Stalinist usurpers, the ideas of Leninism, which after Lenin's death they called "Trotskyism," were a threat to their power that had to be buried along with its living representatives.

Under these conditions Trotsky re-

garded the work of building the Fourth International as preeminent. It meant nothing less than the struggle for the continuity of Marxism. In his 1935 Diary, March 25, he wrote:

"The work in which I am engaged now, despite its extremely insufficient and fragmentary nature, is the most important work of my life — more important than 1917, more important than the period of the Civil War or any other. . . . The collapse of the two internationals has posed a problem which none of the leaders of these internationals is at all equipped to solve. The vicissitudes of my personal fate have confronted me with this problem and armed me with important experience in dealing with it. There is now no one except me to carry out the mission of arming a new generation with the revolutionary method over the heads of the leaders of the Second and Third internationals."

Philistines will rub their eyes in astonishment at such a statement. How Trotsky could compare his work in small propaganda circles; the painful rebuilding of contact and correspondence with tiny, isolated and hounded groups of oppositionists; the drafting of theses and resolutions for conferences attended by a handful of people; with his celebrated role in the October insurrection and the Civil War is beyond their comprehension. Trotsky, however, knew the indispensable role of ideological preparation and the building of revolutionary cadres in preparing for socialist victories.

TREMENDOUS events have taken place since 1935: the Spanish Civil War; the general strike in France in 1936; World War II, the defeat of the Hitlerite invasion of the Soviet Union; the victory of the Chinese Revolution; the vast sweep of the anti-imperialist, colonial revolution in Asia, Africa and Latin America; the enormous growth of Soviet economy; the default of the post-

war revolutionary attempts of the working class in Western Europe; the re-creation of conservative bourgeois regimes in West Germany and France; the return of the Tories in England; the social transformation of Eastern Europe into the Soviet orbit effected by bureaucratic and military means; the independent revolutionary working class struggles for socialist democracy in East Germany, Poland and Hungary; the cold war and the nuclear arms race; the prolonged prosperity in the United States accompanied by an unprecedented witch hunt and the relative quiescence of the labor movement; the new upsurge of the Negro struggle marked by the Southern sit-in movement; the wave of revolutionary events signaled by the June movement of workers and students in Japan, the most highly industrialized country of Asia.

How does the program of Trotskyism stand up in the light of these events? Or more precisely, how does the program of Trotskyism, in comparison with the programs of other tendencies in the working class, stand up in relation to the world situation today?

An objective balance sheet of these events will show that on the whole the socialist revolution has scored major advances and that imperialism has been seriously weakened. But it has by no means been an even or unbroken process. Not a few defeats have been suffered by the working class, as the recent victory of De Gaulle in France demonstrates. Capitalism has recouped some of its losses. It is sufficient to note that as a result of the betrayal of the working class by the reformist Labor party leaders in England the golden opportunity offered by the Labor victory in 1945 for a combined movement against imperialism in the colonial countries and in an advanced capitalist country was lost. Instead of such a favorable development, the treachery of the Labor leaders, allowed the Tories to regain power and thereby give new power and

thrust to the Western imperialist drive towards World War III.

Moreover, the default of the Labor party in England reinforced the blockade of the Chinese revolution, compelling China to develop its socialist revolution while cut off from the main centers of industrial power in the world. It is only with the new developments in Japan as well as the symptoms of a left wing rebirth in England that the shifting of the center of gravity of the socialist revolution to the most advanced industrial countries is again on the order of the day, and with this comes the prospect of freeing the revolutions in the economically underdeveloped areas from the terrible bureaucratic deformations and distortions imposed upon them by inherited poverty and backwardness.

In our view, the basic premise on which the Fourth International was formed, the need to solve the crisis of proletarian leadership, remains fully operative today. To bring about the definitive victory of the socialist revolution and thereby avert the catastrophe capitalism threatens to inflict on humanity, the working class requires a revolutionary program and leadership. The program of Trotskyism, which is essentially the fundamental ideas of Marxism as continued by Lenin and enriched by the Russian Revolution, represents the revolutionary tendency within the working class. Trotskyism has, in our opinion, continued, applied and further developed this body of principle and experience. The Trotskyist program has been confirmed by all the successes of the socialist revolution, and the need for this program has been underscored by the failures of the revolution.

TROTSKYISM, therefore, stands in opposition to the reformist and class collaborationist tendencies in the working class which rest upon labor bureaucracies of diverse types. Since 1923, the reformist tendencies have divided into two fundamental groups — Stalinism, based on the Soviet bureaucracy, and Social Democracy, based on the bureaucracy of the labor movement in capitalist countries. We can examine the program and function of Trotskyism only in relation to the other two tendencies — Stalinism and Social Democracy.

There are two interrelated historical tasks confronting the peoples of the world: 1) The abolition of capitalism in its chief industrial centers as well as in the former colonial possessions of imperialism; 2) The democratization of economic, social and political life in the countries that have overthrown capitalism, a process which will simultaneously realize the program of socialist democracy and give enormous impetus to the economic development of these countries.

These two tremendous tasks go hand in hand. Every victory against capitalism relieves the pressure of hostile

imperialist encirclement of the workers states. This pressure, and the inherited economic backwardness are the chief causes for the growth of bureaucracy and the stifling of workers democracy. And every victory of the Soviet orbit workers against the bureaucracy and for socialist democracy helps to clear the way for the revolutionary regroupment of the working class in capitalist countries and thereby promotes the socialist revolution.

If the existing tendencies predominating in the working class were carrying through these tasks or have shown capabilities for this, then there would be no historical necessity for a separate Trotskyist program, movement and leadership. However, since Trotsky's death, neither the Social Democracy nor Stalinism has so changed their characteristics as to eliminate the necessity for a genuine Marxist leadership. In the advanced industrial countries the Social Democracy, seconded by the Stalinists, do not mobilize the workers in the struggle against capitalism. On the contrary, they are in league against the working class in their search for alliances with "peaceful and progressive" capitalists.

In the Soviet bloc countries, despite all the progressive changes and reforms since Stalin's death, the Stalinist bureaucracy remains the principal obstacle to the introduction of socialist democracy into Soviet life. And the Social Democracy, which is completely subservient to the cold-war Western imperialist alliance, serves to promote the continued power of the Soviet bureaucratic caste by helping to prolong the pressure of capitalist encirclement on the workers states.

The Trotskyist movement, on the other hand, exerts all its efforts to promote the independent action of the working class against the rule of the monopolists in capitalist countries and above all in its central strongholds. And it supports by all its efforts the working class, the youth and the intellectuals in their fight to gain democratic control over the economy and political institutions of the Soviet orbit.

Despite the indubitable disparity in their official influence, the existence of the three main tendencies in the working class movement, in which Trotskyism stands opposed to the other two, is generally recognized. This is confirmed by the fact that our opponents are compelled, at least tacitly, to accept this framework, since in their opposition to Trotskyism they invariably take up positions ranging themselves behind Stalinism or Social Democracy. Conversely, those who break with Stalinism are constrained to move towards Trotskyism, or, in the opposite direction — towards Social Democracy. The same holds true for currents breaking away from Social Democracy — they move either towards Stalinism or Trotskyism.

The point is that each of the three

tendencies represent classes and social strata deeply rooted in the social relations of our times and are not arbitrarily designated on the basis of some superficial and secondary distinguishing characteristics.

IN THE tradition of Marxism, the central idea of the Trotskyist program is that the working class can gain its emancipation and free humanity from the degradation of class society only through its own revolutionary action and organization. This simple though profound principle means that the working class must at all times fight for its political independence from the parties of the capitalists and middle class. At the summits of the workers movement, however, the enormous economic, social and cultural pressure of capitalism operates daily to produce and reproduce a privileged crust of bureaucrats which systematically separates itself from the class interests, ideology and political needs of the working class it is supposed to represent. The fact is that capitalism continues to rule in the greater part of the world today only by virtue of the fact that it maintains its domination over the working class, directly and indirectly, through these bureaucratic formations.

The forward march of the socialist revolution, therefore, depends on the capacity of the working class to throw off the bureaucracy, free itself from the bureaucratic ideology of subservience to capitalism and forge its own authentic instruments of struggle.

The argument against Trotskyism turns chiefly on this question: Must the working class create its own party and its own program in order to win the struggle for socialism? Or can it be done at a cheaper price as the ideologists of Stalinism and Social Democracy assure us, namely, through reliance on one or another section of the labor bureaucracy?

Those in the orbit of Social Democracy, in the U.S. for example, will say: Look at the power of the labor movement with its seventeen million members and all the gains it has won under its present leadership of Meany and Reuther. Who are you Trotskyists to say that further social progress cannot be made, including bringing about socialism, through this type of leadership? Those in the orbit of the Stalinists argue: Look at the power of the Soviet Union, its industrial and technological progress. All this was accomplished under the leadership of Stalin and his successors. Who are you Trotskyists to say the full victory of socialism throughout the world cannot be achieved under this leadership?

There are a number of flaws in this type of argument. It operates on the assumption that the officials "in charge" of a union or a workers state are obviously responsible for all progressive

achievements of the working class. Plausible as this formal view may be to middle class mentality, it is far from being a fact. Very often the given officialdom had little to do with the basic struggles of the working class that achieved progressive results. Often the officials of today were the most zealous opponents of the struggles that led to progress. After the opposition of these officials had been broken by the mass action of the workers and after the wave of militant struggle has receded, the officials, old and new, swarm into the places of power, organize the privilege-seeking apparatus men and, taking advantage of a period of lull and passivity "take charge" by ousting the militant leadership that stood at the head of the struggle. This cycle is familiar to everyone who has experienced the ebbs and flows of the mass movement — whether on the scale of strikes and unions or revolutions and workers states.

Furthermore, history is replete with examples of how the most powerful organizations of the working class were utterly destroyed and all past achievements wiped out because of the false policies of the allegedly all-wise and all-powerful officials. The example of how fascism destroyed the German working class organizations while its leadership floundered helplessly should forever be a reminder to shun the dogma that those currently at the head of the movement must know best.

THE basic reason for the defeat in Germany was the people's front policy of the Social Democracy which led the majority of the working class. According to this policy, called the "Iron Front," the German workers were told to rely on the bourgeois liberals to stop fascism. The Stalinists on the other hand led the revolutionary workers into the blind alley of its then ultra-left sectarian policies of "social fascism" (which declared the Social Democracy and not fascism to be the main danger) and the "united front from below" (which ultimately demanded in effect that the Social Democratic workers leave their party if they wanted united action with the Communist workers).

The Stalinist policy proved incapable of winning the German workers from the disastrous course of the people's front. The liberals buckled in the face of Hitler's drive to power. The Social Democratic leaders, to the very end refused to turn from its reliance on parliamentary deals with the liberal capitalists; they refused to heed Trotsky's insistent warnings and his urgent proposal that the Communist and Social Democratic parties form a working class united front of action from top to bottom in order to stop the Hitlerites. The Stalinists likewise turned a deaf ear to the Trotskyist united front proposal and dubbed it "left social fascism." Thus the German working class was paralyzed by its leadership and Hitlerism triumphed.

Few today will dispute the correctness of the Trotskyist program for Germany. Few will deny the fact that the false



policies of both the Stalinists and Social Democrats led to the greatest catastrophe in history. The point is, however, that the very policy that led to the downfall of the German labor movement is today still promulgated not only by the Social Democracy but also by the Stalinists.

In every capitalist country in the world the Stalinists assist the Social Democracy in saddling the working class with the treacherous policy of relying on the liberal bourgeoisie in the struggle against the threat of war, reaction and fascism. Even the cold war has not broken this common front. Where the Social Democrats refuse to admit the Stalinists into the sacred precincts of its coalition with the liberals, the Stalinists base their whole policy on the hope of persuading the Social Democrats to relax their adherence to the cold war sufficiently to allow them to become partners in the reformist class collaboration game.

Meanwhile the Communist parties led by the Stalinists are educated in the spirit of parliamentary reformism and are utterly incapable of revolutionary action. The rise to power of De Gaulle in France, without any effective opposition from the working class is an ominous warning signal.

IF WE shift our attention from the current political to the theoretical plane, matters are, if possible, even worse. Both the Social Democrats and Stalinists have, each in their own way, completely abandoned even a pretense of adhering to the revolutionary Marxist doctrines. The Social Democrats of Germany have gone so far as to explicitly renounce the goal of socialism and include private capitalist ownership of the means of production in their new program. The right wing British Laborites are maneuvering to attain the same end.

Stalinist "theory" has fared no better.

Beginning with the invention of the theory of "socialism in one country" by Stalin himself in 1924, the barrier to a formal renunciation of the revolutionary class struggle program of Marxism was removed. The latest theoretical expression of this process took place at the Twentieth Congress of the Soviet Communist party where Khrushchev's proposals to scuttle Lenin's concept of imperialism and the revolutionary road to power were adopted.

The theoretical bankruptcy of Stalinism and Social Democracy is strikingly manifested in the fact that neither of them even professes to offer any theory of the nature and function of labor bureaucracies. The Stalinist theoreticians don't even recognize the fact that a labor bureaucracy exists in capitalist countries. There are only "progressive" and "conservative" labor officials and unhealthy bureaucratic practices are occasionally mentioned. But the Leninist concept of the Social Democratic bureaucracy as a privileged social caste resting on the relatively satisfied and corrupted labor aristocracy, directly and indirectly bribed by some of the super profits of imperialism, has long ago been abandoned in the interests of partnership with the labor bureaucracy.

At the same time the Stalinists are, of course, incapable of countenancing a theory of the Soviet bureaucracy. In his secret speech to the Twentieth Congress, Khrushchev admitted a whole number of monstrous crimes of the Stalinist regime. But he attributed these crimes to Stalin's falling victim to the "cult of personality." He didn't dare answer the question: what kind of a regime would support such unspeakable crimes? To tackle such a question Khrushchev would first of all have to admit the existence of a bureaucratic caste in the Soviet Union. This would lead to uncovering the fact that Lenin himself was a "Trotskyist"; that before his death he was preparing an open struggle in his own name against the bureaucracy in the Soviet State and Communist party; that he insistently urged Trotsky to open the fight when illness prevented him from carrying out his plan; and that Trotsky continued the struggle after Lenin's death.

Khrushchev preferred to repeat the Stalinist lies about Trotskyism. "We must affirm that the party fought a serious fight against the Trotskyists. . . ." he said, "and that it disarmed ideologically all enemies of Leninism. The ideological fight was carried on successfully. . . . Here Stalin played a positive role."

IT ISN'T true that Trotskyism was defeated ideologically in the Soviet Union. It was crushed by force. How else explain the fact that the struggle against Trotskyism employed the almost unlimited resources of the Soviet state under Stalinism to organize a massive

slander campaign, falsify history, imprison and exile thousands of oppositionists, expel tens of thousands of Trotskyist supporters from the factories, the schools and the party, and then organize assassinations of Trotsky, his secretaries and members of his family? If Trotskyism was defeated ideologically why was it necessary to organize the infamous Moscow Trial frame-ups?

To answer these questions Khrushchev would be opening the dykes to a torrent of critical reexamination of the whole history of Stalinism, its social roots and its theoretical premises. Better keep silent even if it leads to such ludicrous consequences as are evident in the latest revised edition of the *History of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union* where the old lies about Trotskyism are partly retained up to the point when the Moscow Trials took place. The Khrushchev historians then introduce a quaint innovation. They simply don't mention the Moscow Trials! Such a glaring omission eloquently discloses how the specter of Trotskyism haunts the consciousness of the Soviet bureaucracy today. And for good reason. Trotskyism represents the inevitable program and banner of the gigantic struggles for socialist democracy that lie ahead. We have only seen the faint anticipation of such struggles in East Germany, Poland and Hungary. When the industrial workers of the Soviet Union, who are imbued with a socialist consciousness, begin to raise their demands for equality and democracy, they will find in Trotskyism the explanation of the bureaucratic regime and the guide to a revolutionary socialist struggle against it.

Naturally, the Social Democracy is

likewise incapable of offering a theory of labor bureaucracy since such a theory would only explain the social and economic basis for its own birth, growth and imminent death. It has no more need for such a theory than capitalism has for the Marxist theory. Nor can the Social Democrats accept the Trotskyist theory of the Soviet bureaucracy. If the Social Democrats viewed the Stalinist power in the Soviet Union as based on a bureaucracy, they would have to answer a bureaucracy of what? This would lead to the "danger" of understanding that Stalinism is a bureaucratic growth on a workers state and that despite Stalinism this workers state must be defended against imperialism. The Social Democratic theorists resolve the problem by designating the Soviet bureaucracy as a "class" possessing features more reactionary than capitalism. They thereby justify their allegiance to Western imperialism in the cold-war "crusade for freedom."

Thus neither in political program nor in theory do the Social Democrats and Stalinists offer the working class an explanation of the world today or the way to achieve socialism.

HERE we must deal with a recurrent challenge to Trotskyism by critics who demand to know: Don't the revolutionary transformations in Eastern Europe and the leadership of successful revolutions by the Yugoslav and Chinese Communist parties disprove the Trotskyist thesis that Stalinism is incapable of leading the socialist revolution? Walter Kendall, a writer for the British Independent Labor party paper, *Socialist Leader*, offers a typical state-

ment of this challenge October 31 in an article, "The Crisis of Trotskyism":

"In the China of the late twenties and early thirties Stalin's policy, the Comintern thesis (of supporting Chiang Kai-shek) went down to utter ruin. Trotsky's conclusion that the Chinese Revolution could triumph only under the leadership of the proletariat with the Communist party at its head seemed proven beyond all doubt. [In] 1948-49 the Chinese Communist party IN DEFIANCE OF STALIN'S EDICTS [emphasis W. K.] carried the long drawn out civil war to a triumphant conclusion. A largely peasant army occupied China's proletarian centers and established a revolutionary government in which a statized economy controlled by the Communist party replaced the old regime. . . . The Trotskyists whose critique of Stalinism had previously seemed watertight now found themselves in a dilemma. The Chinese Communist party had achieved the impossible . . . under Stalinist rule it had conquered power. The economy was statized. How then characterize Chinese society? China, replied the Trotskyists, is a workers state. . . . Yet if a workers' revolution can be carried out by peasants without the workers lifting a finger to help themselves, not just Stalinism but also orthodox Trotskyism collapses. China poses a problem which Trotskyism has so far been unable to solve."

Let us see. The Chinese Communist party did *not* act according to Stalinist theory and practice when it led the revolution to power. Why then should this create an insoluble dilemma for Trotskyism? If, by *following* the Stalinist program the Chinese Communist party had overthrown imperialism, landlordism and capitalism, then indeed it would be necessary to reexamine the Trotskyist theory of Stalinism. But what are the facts? Kendall himself indicates them. The Chinese CP "in defiance of Stalin's edicts" took the power. According to the recently "leaked" records of the July 1945 Potsdam Conference, published in the Minneapolis Tribune August 22, 1960, Stalin, in his meeting with Churchill and Truman, referred to Chiang Kai-shek as "the best of the lot." Stalin said, he "saw no other possible leader and that, for example, he did not believe that the Chinese Communist leaders were as good or would be able to bring about the unification of China."

Clearly the Kremlin wanted the Chinese CP to continue its ruinous policy of working for a coalition with the Chiang regime. It was only when the situation became so rotten ripe for the overthrow of the inwardly decomposing and demoralized Nationalist government, and when the elemental movement of the agrarian revolution swept the Chinese CP leaders along with it that they could no longer abide by Stalin's directives. This is the simple fact about how and why the Chinese CP took power.

A similar process obtained in the Yugoslav revolution. The Yugoslav CP conquered power despite the Kremlin's repeated efforts to change its course away from the formation of Proletarian Brigades, away from the struggle against the Michaelovitch forces supported by



By Chen Yen-chia

British imperialism, and away from all social revolutionary measures where the Communist partisans held power. As a matter of fact in Yugoslavia the Kremlin gave military aid to the bourgeois



forces that were shooting at the partisans. Thus the world headquarters of Stalinism was on the opposite side of the class barricades of a Stalinist party leading a revolution.

The unique combination of contradictory processes in these revolutions has upset — not Trotskyism — but the schematic concept our critics impute to Trotskyism. They argue, for example, that the working class didn't stand at the head of the Chinese revolution as it did in the Russian. And doesn't this upset all of Marxism? No. The basic norms of the Marxist theory are never realized in ideal form. The Russian Revolution also appeared to violate Marxist norms when the socialist revolution took place first in the most backward country of Europe instead of the most advanced. Lenin rejected the Menshevik injunction that the October Revolution was an impermissible adventure because it violated this schema. He explained how the norm is realized through an extended process and above all by revolutionary struggle. We shall see how the Chinese revolution while masking and distorting the role of the working class, gave expression to it in the distorted form of its Stalinized party.

The Trotskyist movement never envisaged that the breakup of the world Stalinist monolith would follow some preconceived blueprint. The fact that the Yugoslav and Chinese Communist parties had to tear loose from their Stalinist moorings in order to lead socialist revolutions did more than prove that Stalinism is incompatible with revolutionary leadership. These events served to profoundly deepen the crisis of world Stalinism, a crisis that has been developing in direct proportion to the progress of the world socialist revolution.

To be sure, neither the Yugoslav nor the Chinese Communist parties ceased to be Stalinist. But they did contribute

profoundly to the eventual negation of Stalinism. Trotskyists have never claimed a franchise on revolutionary theory and practice. On the contrary, all of our work is directed toward convincing the working class and its parties to take the revolutionary road. It is to be noted, however, that in order to take such a road, a Communist party is compelled to defy the Kremlin, the basic policy of Stalinism, and its own entire ideology and tradition. This is one important aspect of the contradictory nature of the process whereby Stalinism will be removed as a barrier to the socialist revolution.

THE reaction of the Kremlin itself to the Yugoslav and Chinese revolutions is the best proof of the basically anti-Stalinist character of these events. World Stalinism cannot embrace new revolutions and independent workers states. In Eastern Europe, where the capitalists were expropriated by bureaucratic and military means under the direction of the Kremlin while the independent workers revolution was brutally suppressed, the Kremlin can tolerate only regimes completely subservient to its command. As for Yugoslavia, Moscow was compelled to open a savage campaign against Titoism when the Yugoslav CP, having led a revolution to victory, refused to act like the pliant creatures of the Moscow-appointed regimes in Eastern Europe.

The intolerable contradiction introduced within Stalinism by the victory of the Chinese revolution is likewise quite evident — only on a larger scale and with higher stakes. It occurs, moreover, in a world setting favorable to deepening the revolutionary factors that are upsetting the equilibrium of the Stalinist monolith. For the last few years Peking has increasingly manifested an open break with the Kremlin on at least three basic questions of Marxist theory: 1) It has defended important aspect of Lenin's analysis of imperialism and the struggle against imperialist war as against Moscow's theory of peaceful coexistence; 2) It has likewise invoked Lenin's teachings on the revolutionary road to power in capitalist countries as against Moscow's open abandonment of the revolutionary class-struggle theory; 3) It has taken issue with Moscow's directive to Communist parties to enter coalition governments with the bourgeoisie of the former colonial countries.

These sharp differences with the Kremlin have developed despite the fact that the Mao regime is beset by bureaucratic deformations of its own and is saddled with the Stalinist theory of socialism in one country. These points in common are apparently insufficient to offset the obvious fear Peking has that the Kremlin will sacrifice the interests of the Chinese revolution in order to make a deal with Western imperialism. Such a fear is based on reality. The Chinese CP leaders know they came to

power despite the Kremlin's readiness to sacrifice the Chinese Communist party in a deal with the U.S. and Great Britain. Whatever their motives, the struggle the Chinese leaders are waging against Khrushchev's policy is bound to have far-reaching effects in helping to bring about a revolutionary rearmament of the advanced workers in all countries.

In Japan, where the mass action of workers and students last June against the imperialist pact was possible because the leaders of the movement had broken with the Stalinist line of "peaceful coexistence," the debate being waged by the Chinese CP against Moscow can only encourage the young revolutionists and reinforce the arguments they have up to now learned only from the Trotskyists.

In Cuba, the position of Peking can play a crucial role in preventing Stalinism from interposing its influence in order to halt the deepening of the socialist character of the revolution.

In England and the United States, the Trotskyists have made significant gains in the last few years in struggle with both Stalinism and Social Democracy as a result of the shattering crisis of Stalinism following Khrushchev's revelations. The opposition of Peking to Moscow's Stalinist line will likewise help to encourage a revolutionary reorientation of Communist workers and youth. Such a reorientation can only lead them to a fusion with Trotskyism.

PERHAPS the best test of the viability of each of the three tendencies in the working class movement has occurred right here in the United States. An examination of the reciprocal relations among the three, under the blows of the cold war witch hunt, the prolonged prosperity and political reaction, and the crisis of the American Communist party, discloses the fact that both Stalinism and Social Democracy have withered and suffered a sharp decline in influence. (See "Case History of an Experiment," by Murry Weiss in the Spring 1960 issue of *ISR*.)

The Trotskyist movement, on the other hand, has stood the acid test of this long period of adversity, gained in forces particularly among the youth, and is today the only one of the three tendencies with the capacity and will to offer a socialist challenge to the two capitalist parties in the 1960 elections. The Social Democrats and Stalinists have responded to the difficulties of these last years by a process of increasingly dissolving themselves into the labor bureaucracy and its fringes and into the swamp of the Democratic party. They have thereby alienated the best of the new generation of radicals that has begun to appear on the American scene. If the struggle between Trotskyism, Social Democracy and Stalinism is by its very logic a struggle for the next generation of radicals in the U.S., Trotskyism can enter the battle with confidence of victory.

Trotsky's Views on Dialectical Materialism

The practical leader in action of a revolution based his strategy in the day to day struggles on the most profound philosophical conceptions

by William F. Warde

JANUARY 10, 1937 — the day after Trotsky and his wife Natalia had landed in Mexico. His party was on the troop-guarded private train sent by the Minister of Communications to ensure their safe conduct from Tampico to Mexico City. That sunny morning Max Shachtman and I sat with Trotsky in one of the compartments, bringing the exile up to date on what had happened during his enforced voyage from Norway.

Our conversation was animated; there was so much to tell, especially about developments around the Moscow trials. (This was in the interval between the first and second of Stalin's stage-managed judicial frame-ups.) At one point Trotsky asked about the philosopher John Dewey who had joined the American committee set up to obtain asylum for him and hear his case.

From there our discussion glided into the subject of philosophy in which he was informed I had a special interest. We talked about the best ways of studying dialectical materialism, about Lenin's *Materialism and Empirio-Criticism*, and the theoretical backwardness of American radicalism. Trotsky brought forward the name of Max Eastman who in various works had polemicized against dialectics as a worthless idealist hangover from the Hegelian heritage of Marxism.

He became tense, agitated. "Upon going back to the States," he urged, "you comrades must at once take up the struggle against Eastman's distortion and repudiation of dialectical

materialism. There is nothing more important than this. Pragmatism, empiricism is the greatest curse of American thought. You must inoculate younger comrades against its infection."

I was somewhat surprised at the vehemence of his argumentation on this matter at such a moment. As the principal defendant *in absentia* in the Moscow Trials and because of the dramatic circumstances of his voyage in exile, Trotsky then stood in the center of international attention. He was fighting for his reputation, liberty and life against the powerful government of Stalin, bent on his defamation and death. After having been imprisoned and gagged for months by the Norwegian authorities, he had been kept incommunicado for weeks aboard their tanker.

Yet, on the first day after reunion with his co-thinkers, he spent more than an hour explaining how important it was for a Marxist movement to have a correct philosophical method and to defend dialectical materialism against its opponents!

He proved how serious he was about this question three years later by the manner of his intervention in the struggle which convulsed the Socialist Workers party at the beginning of the second world war. By this time Shachtman had switched philosophical and political fronts. He was aligned directly with James Burnham and indirectly with Eastman and others against Trotsky, breaking away from the traditional positions of Marxism and the Fourth

International on issues extending from the role of philosophy to the class nature of the Soviet Union and its defense against imperialist attack.

The Burnham-Shachtman opposition sought to separate philosophy from politics in general and the principled politics of the revolutionary working class movement from Marxist theory in particular. In the spirit of pragmatism Burnham demanded that the issues in dispute be confined to "concrete questions." "There is no sense *at all*," he declared in *Science and Style*, "in which dialectics (even if dialectics were not, as it is, scientifically meaningless) is fundamental in politics, none at all." (*In Defense of Marxism*, p. 196.)

In an *Open Letter to Burnham* Trotsky had pointed out that the experience of the labor movement demonstrated how false and unscientific it was to divorce politics from Marxist sociology and the dialectic method. "You seem to consider apparently that by refusing to discuss dialectic materialism and the class nature of the Soviet state and by sticking to 'concrete' questions you are acting the part of a realistic politician. This self-deception is a result of your inadequate acquaintance with the history of the past fifty years of factional struggles in the labor movement. In every principal conflict, without a single exception, the Marxists sought to face the party squarely with the fundamental problems of doctrine and program, considering that only under this condition could the 'concrete' questions find their

proper place and proportion." (*In Defense of Marxism*, pp. 78-79.)

On the other hand opportunists and revisionists of every shade avoided discussion of principles and counterposed superficial and misleading episodic appraisals of events to revolutionary class analysis of the scientific socialists. Trotsky cited examples from the history of German social democracy and from the disputes of the Russian Marxists with the "Economists," the Social Revolutionists and the Mensheviks. The



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Narodnik terrorists, bomb in hand, used to argue: "*Iskra*, (Lenin's paper) wants to found a school of dialectic materialism while we want to overthrow Czarist autocracy. . . . It is historical experience," Trotsky observed with characteristic irony, "that the greatest revolution in all history was not led by the party which started out with bombs but by the party which started out with dialectic materialism." (*In Defense of Marxism*, p. 79.)

Trotsky attached such great importance to the generalized theory incorporated in Marxist philosophy because of its utility in political practice. "The question of a correct philosophical doctrine, that is, a correct method of thought, is of decisive importance to a revolutionary party, just as a good machine shop is of decisive significance to production," he wrote. (*In Defense of Marxism*, p. 74.) The tools of thought for investigating and analyzing reality were fabricated by the great philosophers before entering into common

use. In dialectical materialism, he asserted, Marx and Engels had forged the theoretical tools and weapons required by the workers in their struggle to get rid of the old order and build a new one.

TROTSKY never claimed originality for his philosophical views. He was an orthodox Marxist from his conversion to its doctrines in 1898 to his death in 1940. However, he did enrich and extend the teachings of the masters by his far-ranging applications of their method to the complex problems presented by the transition of humanity from capitalism to socialism. His insight and foresight in this field equalled that of any other disciple, Lenin included.

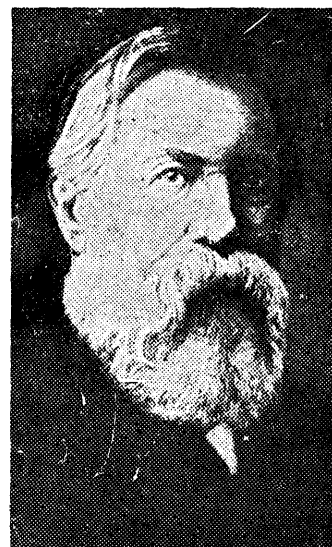
In his writings of four decades he touched upon almost all the principal aspects of materialism from its insistence upon the primordial reality of nature to its explanation of the supreme products of human thought, feeling, imagination and invention. The basis of all life, of all human action and thought, and the object of knowledge, was the being and becoming of the independently existing material world. This universal evolutionary process of material nature was dialectical in character. It proceeded through the conflict of antagonistic forces which at a certain point in the slow accumulation of changes exploded the old formations which contained them, bringing about a catastrophic upset, a revolution.

"We call our dialectic, materialist," he explained, "since its roots are neither in heaven nor in the depths of our 'free will,' but in objective reality, in nature. Consciousness grew out of the unconscious, psychology out of physiology, the organic world out of the inorganic, the solar system out of nebulae. On all the rungs of this ladder of development, the quantitative changes were transformed into qualitative. Our thought, including dialectic thought, is only one of the forms of the expression of changing matter. There is place within this system for neither God, nor Devil, nor immortal soul, nor eternal norms of law and morals. The dialectic of thinking, having grown out of the

dialectic of nature, possesses consequently a thoroughly materialist character." (*In Defense of Marxism*, p. 51.)

To clarify the operation of dialectical laws in nature he cited two examples from nineteenth century science, one from biology, the other from chemistry. "Darwinism, which explained the evolution of species through quantitative transformations passing into qualitative, was the highest triumph of the dialectic in the whole field of organic matter. Another great triumph was the discovery of the table of atomic weights of chemical elements and further, the transformation of one element into another."

Materialism provided the only solid theoretical foundation for progress in the sciences, even though many natural scientists might be unaware of



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this truth or even deny it. "The task of science and technique," Trotsky said in 1926, "is to subjugate matter to man, as well as space and time which are inseparable from matter. Certain idealistic writings — not religious but philosophical — actually exist where you can read that time and space are categories emanating from our spirit, that they are the result of the demands of our thought but nothing in reality corresponds to them. It is difficult to sustain such views, however. If, instead of arriving on time to take the train at nine

o'clock, some idealist philosopher lets two minutes more slip by, he will see the rear end of his train and ought to be convinced with his own eyes that time and space are inseparable from material reality. Our task is to contract this space, conquer it, economize time, prolong human life, record the past, raise life to a higher level and enrich it. That is the reason for our struggle with space and time, based upon the struggle to subjugate matter to man — matter which constitutes the foundation, not only of every really existing thing, but also of all thought. . . .

“Every science is an accumulation of knowledge based upon an experience relating to matter and its properties, on a generalized understanding of subjugating this matter to the interests and needs of man.” (From a speech on *Radio, Science, Technique and Society* delivered March 1, 1926 to the opening of the First Congress of the Society of the Friends of Radio in the Soviet Union.)

TROTSKY made many such penetrating observations on the materialist approach to the problems of the natural sciences. But his principal contributions to scientific knowledge came from his studies of contemporary society. These were all illuminated and directed by the Marxist method.

Trotsky became engrossed in the problems connected with the materialist conception of history at the early age of eighteen when he was already involved in the illegal workers' movement of South Russia. From that time on these two sides of his activity — the theoretical investigation of social reality and the practical urge to transform it with the masses along revolutionary lines — went hand in hand.

Trotsky tells in *My Life* how he at first resisted the unified outlook of historical materialism. He adopted in its stead the theory of “the multiplicity of historical factors,” which even today is the most widely accepted theory in social science. (Compare the school of Max Weber in Europe or C. Wright Mills in the United States.) His reading of two essays by the Italian Hegelian-Marx-

ist Antonio Labriola convinced him of the correctness of the views of the historical materialists. They conceived of the various aspects of social activity as an integrated whole, historically evolving in accord with the development of the productive forces and interacting with one another in a living process where the material conditions of life were ultimately decisive. The eclectic proponents of the liberal school, on the



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other hand, split the diverse aspects of social life into many independent factors, endowed these with super-historical character, and “then superstitiously interpreted their own activity as the result of the interaction of these independent forces.”

During his first prison sentence Trotsky wrote a study of Freemasonry, which was later lost, as an exercise in the materialist conception of history. “In the writings of Marx, Engels, Plekhanov and Mehring, I later found confirmation for what in prison seemed to me only a guess needing verification and theoretical justification. I did not absorb historical materialism at once, dogmatically. The dialectic method revealed itself to me for the first time not as abstract definitions but as a living spring which I had found in the historical process as I tried to understand it.” (*My Life*, p. 122.)

Trotsky employed the newly acquired method to uncover the “living springs” of the class struggle in modern society and, first of all, in Czarist Russia at the turn of the twentieth

century where a revolution was being prepared. The development of his celebrated theory of the permanent revolution was the first result of his researches. This was one of the outstanding triumphs of dialectical analysis applied to the social tendencies and political prospects of prerevolutionary Russia and, in its further elaboration, to the problems confronting backward countries in the imperialist epoch.

Marxists are often accused by their critics of dogmatism, of obsession with abstract schemes of historical development. Some would-be Marxists have been guilty of this fault. Not so Trotsky. He was a consistent practitioner of historical materialism but within those principled boundaries he was the least formalistic and the most flexible of thinkers.

The materialistic dialectic is based upon the existence of conflicting movements, forces and relations in history whose contradictions as they develop expose the shortcomings of all fixed formulas. As Trotsky wrote in 1905 in an article entitled *Summaries and Perspectives* “Marxism is above all a method of analysis — not analysis of texts but analysis of social relations.”

Trotsky undertook to apply the Marxist method in this materialist manner to the specific conditions of Czarist Russia. He pointed out that the social structure of Russia at the beginning of the Twentieth century was a peculiar blend of extremely backward and advanced features. The predominant political and religious backwardness embodied in the Asiatic despotism of the all-powerful monarchy and its servile state church was rooted in the historical and economic backwardness of the country. In Russia there had been no Reformation, no successful bourgeois revolutions, no strong Third Estate (bourgeoisie) as in Western Europe. The boundless spaces and wind-swept climate had given rise to nomadic existence and an extensive agriculture, a thin population, a belated and meager feudal development and an absence of commercial-craft productive centers. Peasant agriculture and home industry in small self-contained villages, large landed estates and the administrative-military-consuming

cities had restricted markets and led to dependence upon foreign capital and culture.

However, with the entry of modern industry, this Asiatic backwardness became complemented and combined with the most up-to-date products of western European development. Large scale industry not only brought with it the fusion of industrial with banking capital and the domination of Russian economy by foreign finance but a concentrated proletariat in the major industrial centers, a modern labor movement engaging in political strikes and mass demonstrations, and scientific socialism. These exceptional conditions set the stage for the revolutionary events which were to explode in 1905 and culminate in 1917.

The schematic thinkers among the Russian social democrats, who had learned the letter but not the essence of Marx's method and were more or less under bourgeois influence, asserted that Russia would have to follow the trail blazed by Western Europe.

The older capitalist nations had passed from feudalism through a prolonged period of capitalist evolution toward socialism; in politics they had proceeded from rule by the monarchy and landed aristocracy to bourgeois parliamentarism before the workers could bid for supremacy. From this the Mensheviks concluded that the rulership of the bourgeoisie in a democratic republic on a capitalist basis was the logical successor to feudalized absolutism and the workers would have to wait a long while for their turn.

The attempt to impose such a pre-fabricated sequence upon twentieth century Russia was arbitrary and false, according to Trotsky. The powerful peculiarities of Russia's past and present made possible, and even inevitable, an unprecedented path of development which opened up immense new prospects for the labor movement. The rottenness of Czarism, the weakness of the bourgeoisie and its institutions, the strategic position of the industrial workers and the revolutionary potential in the peasantry springing from the unsolved but urgent problems of the land question would enable the pend-

ing revolution to compress and leap over stages. The workers could place themselves at the head of the insurgent people and lead the peasantry in overthrowing the old order and establishing democracy in a higher form under the government of the working class, which would quickly pass over from bourgeois-democratic to revolutionary socialist measures. Thus the belated bourgeois-democratic revolution would clear the way and be a direct introduction to the first steps of the socialist revolution.

The political force of the working class could not be viewed in isolation but had to be judged in relation with all the other factors at work within the country and the world. Although "the productive forces of industry in the United States are ten times higher than ours, the political role of the Russian proletariat, its influence upon the policy of the country, and the possibility of its coming influence upon world politics, is incomparably higher than the role and significance of the American proletariat," wrote Trotsky in 1905. From all these considerations he drew the conclusion that "the Russian revolution, according to our view, will create conditions in which the power may (and with the victory of the revolution must) pass to the proletariat before the politicians of bourgeois liberalism get a chance to develop their statesmanly genius to the full."

This was the first form of his theory of the permanent revolution. Upon the basis of Russian experience he subsequently extended it to cover the problems and prospects of the revolution in other underdeveloped countries where the workers and peasants must struggle against imperialism and its native agents to extricate themselves from precapitalist barbarism and acquire the benefits of modern economy and culture.

From 1904 to 1917 Trotskyism was identified with the conception that the Russian revolution could end only in the dictatorship of the proletariat, which, in its turn, must lead to the socialist transformation of society, given the victorious development of the world revolution. This outlook was opposed by the Mensheviks who could not see beyond the

bourgeois-democratic republic and was even unacceptable to the Bolsheviks. However, the young Trotsky was able to see farther than all the others among the brilliant constellation of Russian Marxists thanks to his precocious mastery of the materialistic and dialectical sides of Marx's method and his exceptional boldness and keenness of thought. He was the Columbus of the most extraordinary event in modern history: the first successful proletarian revolution in the most backward country of Europe.

In working out his prognosis of the Russian revolution, Trotsky utilized the law of uneven and combined development which he was later to formulate in general terms. This generalization of the dialectical intertwining of the backward and advanced features of the historical process is one of the most valuable instruments for deciphering the complex relations and contradictory trends of civilized society.*

THE laws of the class struggle constitute the essence of historical materialism applied to civilized society. Liberals and conservatives find this part of scientific socialism impossible to accept; reformists and Stalinists are unable to carry it through in the day by day struggle against capitalism. The recognition of the class struggle in its full scope and ultimate consequences was the very nerve center of Trotsky's thought and action.

"The history of the development of human society is the history of the succession of various systems of economy, each operating in accordance with its own laws," he wrote. "The transition from one system to another was always determined by the growth of the productive forces, i.e., of technique and the organization of labor. Up to a certain point, social changes are quantitative in character and do not alter the foundations of society, i.e., the prevalent forms of property. But a point is reached when the matured productive forces can no longer contain themselves within

* For a fuller exposition of this subject see "The Irregular Movement of History" by William F. Warde.

the old forms of property; then follows a radical change in the social order, accompanied by shocks. The primitive commune was either superseded or supplemented by slavery; slavery was succeeded by serfdom with its feudal superstructure; the commercial development of cities brought Europe in the sixteenth century to the capitalist order, which thereupon passed through several stages." (*Marxism in the United States*, p. 9.)

This historical process was propelled forward by the action and reaction of one class upon another. The material stake in their struggles was the acquisition and distribution of the surplus product — that portion of the total social product beyond the minimum required for the survival and reproduction of the working force. Possessing and oppressing classes, from the slaveholders to the capitalists, have been distinguished primarily by the different methods of exploitation they have used to extract this surplus from the laboring masses. "The class struggle is nothing else than the struggle for surplus-product. He who owns surplus-product is master of the situation — owns wealth, owns the state, has the key to the church, to the courts, to the sciences and the arts." (*Marxism in the United States*, p. 13.)

Each society forms an organic whole. The bones of the social organism consist of its productive forces; its muscles are its class (property) relations. The functions and reflexes of all other social organs can be understood only in their connections with the skeletal and muscular systems (the productive forces and property forms) which make up the general structure of the social organism. Since civilized society is split up into classes, the critical point of analysis in scientific sociology has to be "the class definition of a given phenomenon, e.g. state, party, philosophic trend, literary school, etc. In most cases, however, the mere class definition is inadequate, for a class consists of different strata, passes through different stages of development, comes under different conditions, is subjected to the influence of other classes. It becomes necessary to bring up these second and third

rate factors in order to round out the analysis, and they are taken either partially or completely, depending upon the specific aim. But for a Marxist, analysis is impossible without a class characterization of the phenomenon under consideration." (*In Defense of Marxism*, p. 129).

In order to ascertain the decisive tendencies and the main course of development of any given social formation or nation, the scientific sociologist, according to Trotsky, has to examine its structure and the dynamics of its social forces in their connections with world historical conditions. He must find specific answers to the following questions: What classes are struggling in a country? What are their interrelations? How, and in what direction, are their relations being transformed? What are the objective tasks dictated by historical necessity? On the shoulders of what classes does the solution of these tasks rest? With what methods can they be solved?

During his revolutionary career Trotsky analyzed the situations in many major countries at critical turning points in their evolution according to this procedure. These included Russia, Germany, France, England, Austria and Spain in Europe; China and India in Asia; and the United States. The results of his inquiries are contained in a series of works which are models for any aspiring scientific historian or sociologist.

EVER since Marxism stirred up the academicians, much dust has been raised about its conception of the relations between the economic foundations and the rest of the social structure in the process of historical evolution. Trotsky not only tried to clear up the misunderstandings spread around this question in general but also to show by example how the material substructure of society, crystallized in the relations of production and its property forms, reacted with other social and cultural phenomena.

"The opinion that economics presumably determines *directly and immediately* the creativeness of a composer or even the verdict of a judge, represents a hoary caricature of

Marxism which the bourgeois professions of all countries has circulated time out of end to mask their intellectual impotence," he declared. (*In Defense of Marxism*, pp. 118-119.) The dialectical approach of Marxism has nothing in common with this crude "economic determinism," so often practiced by the Stalinist school.

The economic foundation of a given society is organically interrelated and continuously interactive with its political-cultural superstructure. But the relations between them can be harmonious or inharmonious, depending upon the given conditions of historical development and the specific combinations of historical factors. In some cases the political regime can be in stark contradiction with its economic basis. Indeed, this is the source of deepening class antagonisms which generate the need for revolutions. This can hold true not only for capitalist but for postcapitalist political structures in the period of transition to socialism. In the Soviet Union under Stalin, for example, the economic basis of nationalized property and planned production was increasingly at odds with the autocratic system of bureaucratic rule.

In the long run economics takes precedence over politics. Political regimes, institutions, parties and leaders are defined by the roles they play in upholding or changing the existing relations of production. "Although economics determines politics not directly or immediately, but only in the last analysis, nevertheless *economics does determine politics*," Trotsky affirmed. Capitalist property relations determine the nature of the bourgeois state and the conduct of its representatives; nationalized property determines the nature of the workers states, however deformed and bureaucratic they may be.

THE controversy around "the cult of the individual" provoked by the de-Stalinization campaign in the Soviet bloc has raised again for consideration the question of the role of the individual in history. This much-debated issue has long divided one tendency from another in the social sciences.

Nonmaterialists make one or another of the subjective factors in so-

cial life, from ideas to the actions of individuals paramount in the determination of events. For a historical materialist like Trotsky, the social takes precedence over the individual, the general over the particular, the law over the fact, the whole over the part, the material over the intellectual. The individual is important in history. But the extent of his influence depends upon broader historical factors. The strictly personal elements are subordinate to objective historical conditions and the major social forces of which they are a product, a part, and an exemplar.

The Russian Marxists from Plekhanov to Lenin gave considerable attention to this question. In arguing against the Narodnik school of subjective sociology, which in its most extreme expression upheld terrorism as a political means of struggle, the Marxists pointed out that social and political power was not simply an individual attribute; it was at bottom a function of the relations between people and, in the last analysis, between classes. The most prominent personages wield power, not solely on their own account, but on behalf of social forces greater than themselves. Even kings, tyrants, dictators represent the material interests of a specific class or combination of classes.

No political institution, for example, fuses the superpersonal forces in history with the personal more than the monarchy. "The monarchy by its very principle is bound up with the personal," wrote Trotsky in the *History of the Russian Revolution*, (p. 52). Under czarism the royal family appeared to count as everything, the rest of the nation as nothing. Yet this was only the outward semblance of things.

"The king is king only because the interests and prejudices of millions of people are refracted through his person," (*What is National Socialism? Fourth International*, Feb. 1943, p. 59.) The king cannot rule without the tacit consent of nobles, landlords and other class forces which he serves nor even in the end without the acquiescence of the mass of his subjects. When these refuse any longer to recognize or abide by the royal authority, it is in danger or done for. The

first act of the Russian Revolution, the overthrow of the monarchy, verified this social basis of personal power.

The Russian Revolution led by the Bolshevik party of Lenin and Trotsky abolished both czarism and capitalism and instituted a workers' and peasants' democracy. This was smashed and then a new despotism came to flourish under Stalin. What was the social basis for Stalin's absolute one-man rule?

Trotsky is often severely con-



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demned for "permitting" Stalin to outwit him in the contest for supremacy after Lenin's death. Critics of this superficial stamp do not understand that the most intelligent individuals with the most correct ideas and strategy are necessarily subordinated to the historical tides of their time and to the prevailing relations of class forces. Power is not a personal possession which can be transported at will like any commodity from one owner to another.

The fundamental factors at work in the world which decide the turn and outcome of great events were then ranged against the cause for which Trotsky fought while they favored and facilitated the advance of Stalin. On the basis of the defeats of the working class in Europe, the isolation of the Soviet Union and the weariness of the Soviet masses, Stalin was being lifted up and pushed

to the fore during the 1920's by the increasingly powerful Soviet bureaucrats and labor aristocrats, backed up and egged on by an acquisitive peasantry. The Left Opposition, headed by Trotsky, which spoke for the revolutionary movement of the world working class and fought for the interests of the Soviet poor, was being pushed aside.

Trotsky explained over and over again that Stalin's triumph and his own defeat did not signify the mere displacement of one individual by another, or even of one faction by another, but the definitive transfer of political power from the socialist working class to the privileged Soviet bureaucracy. He consciously tied his own fate and the fortunes of the Communist Left Opposition to the situation of the international and the Russian working class.

Trotsky had thought profoundly on the dialectical interplay between the individual and the great impersonal driving forces of history. The purely personal characteristics of the individual, he stated, have narrow limits and very quickly merge into the social conditions of his development and the collectivity to which he belongs. "The distinguishing traits of a person are merely individual scratches made by a higher law of development." (*The History of the Russian Revolution*, p. 52.)

"We do not at all pretend to deny the significance of the personal in the mechanics of the historic process, nor the significance in the personal of the accidental. We only demand that a historic personality, with all its peculiarities, should not be taken as a bare list of psychological traits, but as a living reality grown out of definite social conditions and reacting upon them. As a rose does not lose its fragrance because the natural scientist points out upon what ingredients of soil and atmosphere it is nourished, so an exposure of the social roots of a personality does not remove from it either its aroma or its foul smell." (*The History of the Russian Revolution*, p. 95.)

The Czar, as the head of his dynastic caste resting upon the Russian bureaucracy and aristocracy, was a product of its whole historical development and had to share its des-

tiny. The same law held good for his successors at the helm of the Russian state after February 1917. Each of the leading individuals from Kerensky through Lenin and Trotsky to Stalin represented and incarnated a different correlation of social forces both national and international, a different degree of determination by the working class, a different stage in the development of the Russian Revolution and the state and society which issued from it.

Trotsky was as thoroughgoing a materialist in his psychological observations as in his sociological and political analyses. Stalin as a "man," he explained, acquired his definitive historical personality as the chosen leader of the Soviet aristocratic caste. "One can understand the acts of Stalin only by starting from the conditions of existence of the new privileged strata, greedy for power, greedy for material comforts, apprehensive for its positions, fearing the masses, and mortally hating all opposition," Trotsky told the Dewey Commission in 1937. Stalin's depravity, confirmed two decades afterward by Khrushchev, was not uniquely his own. "The more precipitate the jump from the October overturn — which laid bare all social falsehood — to the present situation, in which a caste of upstarts is forced to cover up its social ulcers, the cruder the Thermidorian lies. It is, consequently, a question not simply of the individual depravity of this or that person, but of the corruption lodged in the position of a whole social group for whom lying has become a vital political necessity.

In the struggle for its newly gained positions, this caste has reeducated itself and simultaneously reeducated — or rather, demoralized — its leaders. It raised upon its shoulders the man who best, most resolutely and most ruthlessly expresses its interests. Thus Stalin, who was once a revolutionist, became the leader of the Thermidorian caste." (*The Case of Leon Trotsky*, p. 581.)

Conversely, the revolutionary essence of the principles, positions and social interests that Trotsky consistently embodied and expressed throughout his lifetime made him what he was and placed him where he had to be at each stage. He worked at the side of the Russian working class while it was preparing its first revolution; he rose to its head during the Soviets of 1905. He remained with its active vanguard during the subsequent reaction. When the revolution surged up to the heights he led the October insurrection and the Red Army to the close of the Civil War.

Later when the workers again became politically passive and prostrate under Stalin's regime he still stood firmly with them. Throughout this period of reaction he did his utmost to stem the decline of the revolution, rally and educate its forces, and prepare the best conditions for its revival. Trotsky was too much the Marxist to desire or exercise power for any purpose other than to promote socialist aims.

TROTSKY's forecast of the Russian Revolution was the first triumph of his application of the method of dialectical materialism; his analysis of its degeneration was his final and greatest achievement.

Here Trotsky was confronted with an unprecedented historical phenomenon. To be sure, previous revolutions had mounted to great heights and then receded. But these relapses had taken place within a class society where a new and more progressive, but nevertheless exploiting and oppressing ruling class had been installed in power. He was familiar with leaderships of other workers' movements which had succumbed to the temptations of privilege and of-

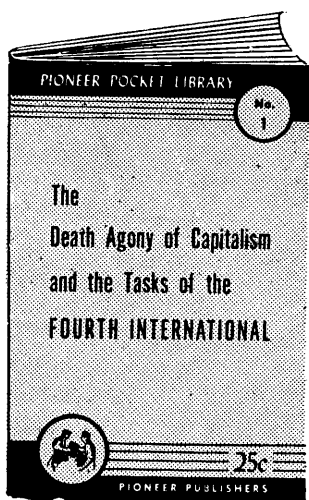
fice, abused their authority, become bureaucratized. But these, too, had been beneficiaries and appendages of imperialist capitalism.

The situation in the young Soviet Republic appeared fundamentally different. The workers and peasants, led by the most conscious revolutionary party in history, guided by the scientific doctrines of Marxism, had taken state power and begun to reconstruct society in their own image. For years the leaders and members of the Bolshevik party had distinguished themselves in battle by their ideas and their program, showing their readiness to sacrifice everything for the cause of socialism.

And yet the viruses of bureaucratism and privilege — "the professional dangers of power," as Rakovsky designated them — had attacked the new rulers of Russia and weakened their resistance to alien class influences. The inroads of infection had been manifest during Lenin's last years and he had asked Trotsky to join him in combating their spread.

For someone like Trotsky, who had been so wholly and intimately identified with the Revolution and its leadership, it required the utmost objectivity to detach his personal fate from this situation and cope with the problems it presented. He was like a medical scientist who has detected the presence of a wasting disease in his nearest and dearest companion, notes its symptoms, makes a diagnosis and prognosis, understanding all the while that the disease may not be arrested and can prove fatal. He followed the unfolding of the bureaucratic reaction step by step, analyzing its causes, pinpointing its results — while prescribing the necessary therapeutic measures to alleviate and cure the disease.

The basic conditions for the growth of bureaucratism, he said, were first of all lodged in the world situation. The failure of the Russian Revolution to be matched by the workers in the more advanced industrialized countries of the west and the temporary stabilization of international capitalism left the first workers' state in an exposed and weakened position. In the Soviet Union, a small working class, exhausted after enormous and sustained exertions, surrounded by a



sea of peasantry and poverty, lacking culture and an adequate economic basis, even the elementary necessities of life, had to relinquish the powers and positions it had won to a layer of bureaucratic specialists in administration who wanted rest and the enjoyment of the fruits of the previous revolutionary efforts. The material privileges and narrow political views of this upstart caste came into ever greater conflict with the interests of the masses.

This was the source of the factional conflicts which tore apart the Russian Communist party and were extended into the Communist International. With the deepening and strengthening of world reaction during the 1930's this process reached its climax with the consolidation of the Stalinist autocracy and the total erasure of Soviet democracy. The ascendancy of Stalinism in the Soviet Union and of fascism in western Europe were symmetrical historical phenomena. The destruction of bourgeois democracy under the decadence of capitalist imperialism and the destruction of workers democracy in the Soviet Republic were parallel products of the defeats of the working masses by reaction.

These totalitarian states had, however, completely opposite and historically different economic bases. The fascist dictators, Hitler, Mussolini and Franco, ruled over states which defended capitalist property relations. Stalin's government, the uncontrolled agent of Soviet bureaucratism, rested upon nationalized property.

Trotsky gave a dialectical, historical and materialist definition of the Soviet Union. By virtue of its nationalized property, planned economy, monopoly of foreign trade and the socialist consciousness and traditions in the working class, it remained a workers state. But it was a special type of workers state in which the political structure contradicted the economic foundations. The policies and activities of Stalinist tyranny not only trampled upon the rights, feelings and welfare of the masses in whose interests the Revolution was made but injured the development of Soviet economy itself which required democratic administration by the workers to function most efficiently.

The conflict between Stalin's one-man rule and workers democracy, between the totalitarian political structure and the economic foundation was the prime motive force in Soviet society, however much it was repressed and hushed up. The tension between these contending social forces could not endure indefinitely. Either the workers would clean out the bureaucratic usurpers — or the bureaucrats would extrude a wing which would strike at the last remaining achievements of the Revolution and clear the way for the return of capitalism from within or from abroad.

Trotsky was no defeatist; he did not declare in advance that the worst would happen. On the contrary, he threw all his forces and resources into the balance to help the favorable outcome prevail.

Now, twenty years after his death, his struggle and foresight have been vindicated. While imperialism tore itself to pieces for the second time and was further weakened by the second world war, the Soviet state survived, despite all the crimes of Stalinism. After revealing its powers of resistance to Hitlerism, it has displayed amazing capacities for recuperation and swift growth in the postwar years. The socialist revolution itself broke through to new ground, extending into eastern Europe and eastern Asia and scuttling Stalin's theory of "Socialism in One Country" as a by-product.

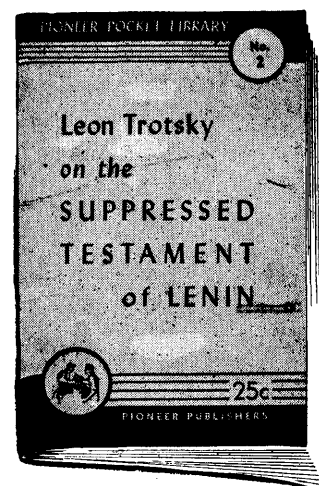
These international and national developments have elevated the Soviet working class to a higher cultural and material level and impelled the most progressive elements in Soviet society to press hard upon the bureaucrats to relax their dictatorship and grant concessions. The drive for deStalinization breaks through with such irresistible force that — up to a certain limited point — it has even carried along elements among the bureaucracy. Its momentum testifies to the growing powers and impatience of the socialist elements in Soviet society and confirms Trotsky's analysis of its main motive forces and trends.

Thus far we have seen only the opening events in this new chapter of internal Soviet development which is heading toward an all-out conflict

between the self-appointed successors of Stalin and the resurgent masses. The Soviet workers, intellectuals, peasants will have to throw off all their overlords and restore democracy on an incomparably higher basis.

The reevaluation of values which has been started under the slogan of "Return to Lenin," will be supplemented and completed by the slogan of "Return to Trotsky." The new leaders of the people in the coming antibureaucratic revolution will reinstate Trotsky's achievements to their proper place and honor him as the initiator, herald and guide in the fight for socialist freedom and the preservation of the heritage of Marxism and Bolshevism.

TROTSKY probed more deeply than any other Marxist thinker into the problems of materialist psychology. In the controversies which counterposed Pavlov's school of conditioned reflexes to the Freudian school of depth analysis he took a third position. While he observed that their respective approaches to the formation of consciousness were different, he did not believe there was an insuperable materialist-idealist conflict between them, as the Stalinists have contended. Both Pavlov and Freud considered that physiology constituted the basis of the higher functions of thought. Trotsky compared Pavlov to a diver who descends to the bottom of the well of the human mind to inspect it from there upwards while Freud stood above peering through the obscure and troubled waters of the psyche to dis-



cern what was at work within its depths.*

The characteristic traits of people were elicited, formed and perfected by their social environments; even the oddest quirks of the individual soon passed over into the behavior and psychology proper to his epoch, group or class. Certain common characteristics are imposed on people by the mighty forces of historical conditions; similar conditions call forth similar responses and produce similar personality traits. "Similar (of course, far from identical) irritations in similar conditions call out similar reflexes; the more powerful the irritation, the sooner it overcomes personal peculiarities. To a tickle, people react differently, but to a red-hot iron, alike. As a steam-hammer converts a sphere and a cube alike into sheet metal, so under the blow of too great and inexorable events resistances are smashed and the boundaries of 'individuality' lost." (*The History of the Russian Revolution*, p. 93.)

In this way he explained the puzzles of what bourgeois psychologists call "the behavior of crowds," or, more precisely, mass consciousness. People subjected to similar conditions of life exhibit uniform reactions, despite all their individual differences and peculiarities; individuals placed in similar settings and faced with similar problems behave alike, despite their separation in time and place.

The so-called "faculty psychologists" of the nineteenth century split up the human personality and psyche into different factors such as instinct, will, intuition, consciousness, the unconscious, etc., elevating one or another of these elements of human behavior into predominance. Trotsky viewed all these various functions as interpenetrating aspects of a single unified physiological-psychological process, materially conditioned and subject to development and change.

Inspiration and intuition are usual-

ly regarded as the special province of idealists and mystics. However, Trotsky did not hesitate to come to grips even with these obscure and elusive phases of psychic activity. He noted that the conscious and unconscious coexist in the historical process just as they do within the individuals who compose it. He gave an incomparable definition of their interaction in *My Life*.

"Marxism considers itself the conscious expression of the unconscious historical process. But the 'unconscious' process, in the historico-philosophical sense of the term — not in the psychological — coincides with its conscious expression only at its highest point, when the masses, by sheer elemental pressure, break through the social routine and give victorious expression to the deepest needs of historical development. And at such moments the highest theoretical consciousness of the epoch merges with the immediate action of those oppressed masses who are farthest away from theory. The creative union of the conscious with the unconscious is what one usually calls 'inspiration.' Revolution is the inspired frenzy of history.

"Every real writer knows creative moments, when something stronger than himself is guiding his hand; every real orator experiences moments when someone stronger than the self of his everyday existence speaks through him. This is 'inspiration.' It derives from the highest creative effort of all one's forces. The unconscious rises from its deep well and bends the conscious mind to its will, merging it with itself in some greater synthesis.

"The utmost spiritual vigor likewise infuses at times all personal activity connected with the movement of the masses. This was true for the leaders in the October days. The hidden strength of the organism, its most deeply rooted instincts, its power of scent inherited from animal forebears — all these rose and broke through the psychic routine to join forces with the higher historico-philosophical abstractions in the service of the Revolution. Both these processes, affecting the individual and the mass, were based on the union

of the conscious with the unconscious; the union of instinct — the mainspring of the will — with the higher theories of thought." (*My Life*, pp. 334-335.)

TROTSKY had absorbed the materialist attitude into every fiber of his being; it permeated all his thought and action from his outlook upon human life to his appraisals of the individuals around him. As a consistent materialist he was a proud and avowed atheist. He would not permit himself to be degraded or mankind to be subjugated to any of its own fictitious creations issuing from the barbarous past.

His humanistic profession of faith was frankly stated in the testament he set down a few months before his assassination: "For 43 years of my conscious life I have remained a revolutionist; for 42 of them I have fought under the banner of Marxism. . . . I shall die a proletarian revolutionist, a Marxist, a dialectical materialist, and consequently an irreconcilable atheist." (*Trotsky's Diary in Exile* — 1935.)

He felt no need for the fictitious consolations of personal life after death. Cramped and contaminated though it was by class society, life on earth was enough because of the potential for human enjoyment and fulfillment latent within it. "I can see the bright green strip of grass beneath the wall, and the clean blue sky above the wall, and sunlight everywhere. Life is beautiful. Let the future generations cleanse it of all evil, oppression, and violence, and enjoy it to the full."

A few days later he added: "Whatever may be the circumstances of my death, I shall die with unshaken faith in the communist future. This faith in man and in his future gives me even now such power of resistance as cannot be given by any religion."

Such was the final testimony of the most gifted exponent of the 2,500-year-old materialist philosophy in our time. Let young people harken to his words. They can learn from them how to face the whirlwinds of the space age and conquer them for the good of mankind.

* A more complete account of Trotsky's views on this controversy and on other cultural, scientific, artistic and literary matters, is given by Isaac Deutscher in Chapter III of *The Prophet Unarmed* entitled 'Not By Politics Alone . . .' Apart from a single misleading reference to the theory of 'substitutism,' which the youthful Trotsky suggested and the mature Marxist repudiated, Deutscher's review is both accurate and eloquent.

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Key to Abbreviations: AM—From the Arsenal of Marxism; BR—Book Review; PR—Periodicals in Review

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Periodicals in Review

by Tim Wohlforth

Again the Youth

Since writing our last column on the response of the radical and liberal press to the new activity on the campus we have come across two articles that must be commented on. The first is the editorial in the second issue of *Studies on the Left* entitled: *Civil Rights and the Birth of Community*.

After reading the editorial we re-read it three times to be sure the authors were in earnest. Were they not possibly satirizing tongue-in-cheek the academic world which they both are part of and in rebellion against? Upon the fourth reading we are convinced the editors really meant it and thus are only unconsciously satirizing themselves.

Thousands of young Negroes in the South defy white terror and for what — so that they can hold up their heads in equality? No.

Our young academicians say they seek a "new sense of community!" So the mass struggle of the Negro people becomes a community welfare project to these budding sociologists. No matter that most of the students involved were attending colleges away from home and therefore in communities strange to them. No matter that the communities in which these struggles were held were torn asunder by the most profound conflicts — between white and Negro; between the older conservative and the younger militant Negro. Oh well, we lose patience!

What really excites the editors is not the possibilities that the Southern struggle opens up for a real breakthrough in the fight for equality. It is rather the opportunities it affords for academic analysis. "Now the sociologist and historians have an opportunity to study social change. . . . The economists can analyze. . . the Southern economy. . . . The political scientist can dissect the two party system. . . . The sociologists and psychologists can study leadership. . . ." The vision of these poor Negro students asking for a cup of coffee only to be pounced upon by an army of professors accompanied by graduate students carrying the professors' briefcases is too much for us. We need a cold beer at some working-class bar outside the university gates.

* * *

The other article is somewhat more

refreshing — *The Students Take Over* by Kenneth Rexroth in the July 2 *Nation*. In this extremely well written piece Rexroth once again shows his ability to grasp the mood of a generation far removed from his. "In the thirties they were joining up, giving one last try to the noble prescriptions of their elders. During the McCarthy epoch and the Korean War, they were turning their backs and walking away. Today they are striking back. This is news. Nobody else is striking back. Hardly a person over thirty in our mass societies believes it is possible to strike back, or would know how to go about it if he did."

However, for all his admonitions to members of his generation to refrain from imposing their views on the new generation he can't quite take his own advice. He sees the current student battles as "non-violent direct action," thus imposing his own pacifist ideology on the new generation. What he ignores is that precisely what is *unique* about the new outbursts is that they are *not* pacifist in ideology. The day when most protests against war were conducted by the small pacifist groups has passed. Many students are now in motion and it is not a disciplined pacifist motion. It is a genuinely militant struggle much like the strikes of the thirties were, though on a much smaller scale. The exact political nature of the movement has not been settled. The new generation will test all programs, including Mr. Rexroth's, in the course of the struggle itself.

The New Revisionism

Relatively little attention has been given in the American radical or liberal press to an extremely important political development in Europe — the extreme rightward shift in the programs of the Social Democratic parties. The *Antioch Review*, a liberal academic quarterly staffed heavily with former Social Democrats, has performed a needed service, therefore, by devoting a large section of its Summer 1960 issue to a symposium on "The Crisis of European Socialism."

The symposium consists of a series of articles on English, French, German, and Italian socialism. With some important exceptions a general political pattern emerges from these articles. The German Social Democracy is typical. The article by Edinger and Chamlers. *Overture or Swan Song: German Social Democracy Prepares for a New Decade*, gives us this picture of the recent congress of the German party: "A gigantic sign, proclaiming 'Geh mit der Zeit' ('Be up-to-date') dwarfed the sole red flag, the symbol of tradition, which has stood on the rostrum of every Party convention since the founding of the SPD. Over feeble opposition, one after another time-honored principle of German socialism was jettisoned. Anti-militarism? The new program pledges support

to the military establishment. Anti-clericalism? An attempt to retain the traditional demand of separation of church and state was overwhelmingly defeated; instead, the program calls for a 'partnership' between the churches and the SPD. Anti-capitalism? The SPD endorses 'free competition and free entrepreneurial initiative' as 'important elements of Social Democratic economic policy.'"

The Dutch and Austrian parties have adopted a similar non-socialist program. The Nenni Socialist party of Italy, at the extreme left wing of the Social Democracy and not affiliated with the Second International, has also been swinging to the right seeking rapprochement with the rightist Saragat socialists and entrance into a capitalist government (if either will have Nenni). The French party of Mollet went so far to the right in tailing De Gaulle that an offshoot was formed, now known as the PSU, which at least retains a socialist program. It contains rather disparate elements and its future is uncertain.

The pattern in England is similar, even though the result is different. The attempt of Gaitskell to jettison the socialist plank from the Labour party program is but another reflection of the rightward trend in the BLP's fraternal parties on the Continent. That Gaitskell failed proves not that the BLP has been unaffected by this trend but rather that its ranks and some of the unions resisted the trend to a greater extent than did the Continental parties.

What lies behind that rightward drift (in some cases stampede) in Social Democratic policy? Again the *Antioch Review* articles are helpful. Norman Birnbaum's article on Britain *The Year Zero of British Socialism* states: "Since 1948 the major Western European countries within NATO (Benelux, France, Great Britain, The German Federal Republic and Italy) have become increasingly prosperous." The other articles in the collection also bear this out.

European society has been moving to the right under the impact of a level of prosperity unknown in the past. All the social and political by-products of this capitalist prosperity that we are so well familiar with in our own country now plague Europe.

For instance Birnbaum pictures Britain thus: "The skilled working class . . . is experiencing 'embourgeoisement' in its style of life — if not in its position in the process of production. . . . Television teaches the entire working class how to consume. . . . The children. . . . developed their own, teen-age, consumption market, and it is they who are at present almost totally depoliticized. . . . Violence seems to be increasing: the police, once the cynosure of Europe, have become guilty of brutality. . . ." Meanwhile the ruling class is also changing its technique of rule in a way patterned after the U.S.: "The coordination of economic and political decision

by the interpenetration of business, finance and government; the strengthening of cabinet rule at the expense of the authority and integrity of Parliament; the manipulation of public opinion through control of the mass media of communications, and —not least— the provision of adequate access to the elite or its well-rewarded ancillary services for talent from below."

This process has found political expression in the solid majorities achieved year after year by the Christian Democratic parties in Continental Europe; by the Tories in England; and the coming to power of De Gaulle in France with only token opposition.

Faced with a general rightward trend the Social Democratic parties are seeking to win the elections through mimicking the approach of the capitalist parties. Birnbaum states Labour offers "a vision of Britain's future not much different from that of the Tories — a nation of cozy families, their younger members seeking 'opportunity' while everybody else acquired furniture and automobiles." Even as an opportunistic tactic this may not prove effective, for many may feel they can get the benefits of capitalist prosperity better under the direct rule of the capitalists rather than the rule of those who only pretend to be capitalists.

While it may be that a middle class appeal will not sweep the Social Democracy into power, it is just as certain that a militant working class approach may produce an even smaller vote under the above described conditions. To a vote-seeking politician this may be crucial; to a revolutionary socialist other factors are far more important than winning or losing a particular election. Revolutionary socialists are interested in the final victory of the working class. We seek to educate the working class realizing in the long run that in certain conservative periods this means relative isolation from influence and power. Birnbaum, though far from a revolutionary socialist, hints at this when he states of the Gaitskells: "Their capitulation to the present in fact precludes their dealing effectively with the future."

The present stability of Western Europe is even more precarious than that of the United States. When economic discontent again releases the forces of social protest, there is one political tendency whose bankruptcy will be more than proved — the Social Democracy.

* * *

The reaction to these serious trends in European socialism by American Social Democrats is quite revealing — in fact pathetically so. The Spring issue of that "official organ of the Socialist Party-Social Democratic Federation" which is seen about so infrequently that we sometimes suspect it is an underground publication, the *Socialist Call*, sings

paens of praise to the "New Revisionism." Herman Singer is especially pleased with the way things are going in Europe and Norman Thomas for his part, expounds the American counterpart of the "New Revisionism" by urging socialists to join the Democratic party. Echoing this point of view is Stanley Plastrik of *Dissent* (Winter and Summer 1960 issues). To him the attempt to remove the nationalization plank from the BLP platform is unimportant, though he admits "sympathy" for the left (Don't strain yourself, Mr. Plastrik!). It all brings to mind Trotsky's statement to the effect that Norman Thomas considers himself a socialist by mistake. The Gaitskells, Mollets, Willie Brandts, and Thomases seem hell bent on clearing up that mistake once and for all!

Random Notes

Our nomination for the "Articles We Never Finished Reading Dept." this quarter goes to Wm. Z. Foster for his *Browder Again Tries to Destroy the Communist Party* in the June *Political Affairs*. (It comes just before *Recovery After the Anti-Revisionist Struggle* by James S. Allen, an article we never even started). The image of this broken old man destroying anything was, almost too much for us. When we came to the following sentence we simply had to stop: "In his early years Stalin was a brilliant Leader." . . . We think the following characterization of the capitalist newsweeklies is quite apt. It comes from a misanthropic newsletter of the publishing field called *Quest*: "Time is the established behavior magazine and comfort station for the American middle class. *U.S. News* is the hardhitting magazine for big shots. *Newsweek* is for everybody and nobody. *Newsweek* is where readers go when they become fed

up with the pontificating of Henry Luce and his trained seals." . . . The June 25 issue of *Business Week* must have frightened many a businessman who opened it to find a two-page map of the major revolutions that have taken place this year — almost all directed against the U.S. in one fashion or another. It makes this rosy prediction: "Undoubtedly more changes, of the violent type particularly, are coming. Spain, Portugal, Indonesia, South Vietnam, Taiwan, Paraguay, the Dominican Republic, and others harbor dissident elements awaiting the chance to break loose." . . . For your reading list we suggest: *Elijah and the Wilderness* by jazz critic Nat Hentoff, an account of the Negro nationalist movement, to be found in the August 4 *Reporter*; *Wife of the 'Happy Worker'* by Patricia Cayo Sexton in the August 6, *Nation*; *Sitdowns — the South's New Time Bomb* in the July 5 *Look*, which verifies much of what we have been saying about this struggle.

WINTER ISSUE

MILLS

and

MARX

by

William F. Warde

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MYRA TANNER WEISS For Vice-President



Myra Tanner Weiss, 43. Born Salt Lake City, Utah. Joined socialist movement 1935 as student University of Utah. Southern California agricultural union organizer. Well-known socialist campaigner.

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WHO do you vote for if you don't hate Cuba and would like to give the Cuban people a chance to build their own country and live in freedom from the domination of the U.S. sugar and cattle monopolies?

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