

10th Anniversary Issue

The New
INTERNATIONAL

July • 1944

Special Articles by

LENIN • ENGELS • TROTSKY

Notes of the Month

National Self-Determination

By Max Shachtman

Europe and the Revolutionary Party

By Albert Gates

Ten Years of U. S. Labor History

By David Coolidge

American People in "One World"

By J. R. Johnson

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MANAGER'S COLUMN

It took a long pull to get there, but here we are—on the threshold of our second decade of publication.

To all of our many friends and readers we take this opportunity to thank them for their long and loyal support—with the somewhat boorish reminder (the business manager's curse) that without their continued efforts to obtain new subscriptions and financial contributions all their good intentions are of little practical assistance.

If this special commemorative number seems only properly substantial in size for the occasion, consider what a tremendous asset it would be to the revolutionary socialist movement if we could print forty-eight pages every month. Unfortunately we will have to be content with the normal thirty-two in the future—unless you readers change all that.

An apology is in order to the contributors of paid greetings and congratulations to this Anniversary issue, whose generosity made possible the enlarged size of the magazine this month. Due to technical difficulties, we were forced to reduce the space allotted for their felicitary messages. Any other alternative would have forced us to cut or delete whole sections of articles. We feel sure that our friends will forgive us our reluctance to make any typographical trespasses in this regard.

As a matter of fact, the editors received or themselves prepared sufficient material to fill an issue double the size of this one. Here are some of the articles we would have been overjoyed to include, but couldn't:

Karl Marx's "Introduction to 'Herr Vogt,'" an essay almost entirely unknown to the English-speaking world, which deals with the politics of Napoleon and his Czarist ally. Engels considered it better than the *Eighteenth Brumaire*. Ryazanov wrote that "in all literature there is no equal to this book."

"Peace Plans and Historical Realities," by Douglas Ellis.

A review of Jean Malaquais' *War Diary*, by R. Fahan.

"The Middle Class Interpretation of History," by Joseph Leonard, a continuation from the May issue.

"The *Fourth International Reviews The New Course*," by Max Shachtman, a blistering reply to that magazine's blustering sophistry.

The second installment of Albert Gates' "Europe and the Revolutionary Party."

We'll try to squeeze as many of these as we possibly can into the August issue.

T. R. C.

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THE NEW INTERNATIONAL

A Monthly Organ of Revolutionary Marxism

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Editor: MAX SHACHTMAN

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THE NEW INTERNATIONAL

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VOLUME X

JULY, 1944

NUMBER 7

NOTES OF THE MONTH

The Dilemma of National Self-Determination

We concluded our Notes last month with an extensive quotation from a criticism by Mr. Emery Reves, one of the democratic world-reorganizers, of the principles proclaimed by the Atlantic Charter, particularly the one upholding the right of self-determination, sovereign rights and self-government of all peoples. In place of the "anachronism" of self-determination of nations and "absolute" national sovereignty, which "all events since 1919 plainly show . . . have failed to insure freedom, independence and peace for the peoples," Mr. Reves propounded the "basic principle" that "real independence of nations can be attained only by the regulation of their interdependence." He arrived at this conclusion after pointing out the inability, in our world, of small, weak nations escaping the role of satellites of the big powers, only three of which are (or, after an Allied victory, will be) "capable of creating and maintaining armed forces in the modern sense." Secretary Hull's recent broadcast about the Charter being "an expression of fundamental objectives toward which we and our allies are directing our policies," was therefore, based upon an assumption which—again Mr. Reves—"is precisely the fundamental fallacy of our policies."

For the sake of continuity, if not to refresh the reader's memory, we quote our own comment upon Mr. Reves' criticism of the Charter:

In his own way, Mr. Reves has reached out to the heart of the problem, not only for Europe but for the entire world. How indeed shall we reconcile the "determination" of the small, economically and politically weak nations to have full national freedom with the not lesser "determination" of the large and strong nations to deprive them of their freedom? How shall we reconcile the determination of the small nations to be independent with the economic and political forces that impel them to dependence upon the big powers? If, "in their absolute form, the principles of the Atlantic Charter lead straight to anarchy in international life," and if "real independence of nations can be attained only by the regulation of their interdependence," then in what non-absolute form should the principles of the Atlantic Charter be applied? Just how is the "regulation of their interdependence" to be organized, and who is to organize it?

These key questions Mr. Reves left unanswered, except by the generalization that "the centrifugal force emanating from the Atlantic Charter must be replaced by a system of principles exercising a powerful centripetal attraction within the United Nations and around them."

Before attempting to give answers of our own, let us restate the question more concretely.

What Is Self-Determination?

What is the right of self-determination of nations? The right of a nation—defined as a people with a common language, a common territory, a common cultural tradition, and a historical viability demonstrated by it—to decide freely its political constitution. This right is fully satisfied whether the people decides to establish a monarchy or a republic, to constitute itself as an independent nation or to incorporate itself into another nation. The right is violated when the decision is not made freely but under coercion by a foreign people or nation. It is completely abrogated when a nation is annexed ("incorporated") by another by means of force against its will. The forcible annexation of other peoples and nations, and therefore their subjugation to a foreign yoke, is a common characteristic of all imperialism, from ancient times down to modern capitalist imperialism and Stalinist imperialism, however much they may differ in motive forces, in historical consequences, and otherwise.

The establishment of the great modern nations was one of the biggest contributions to historical progress of the young capitalist class in its epochal struggle against feudalism, clericalism, national dismemberment and particularism. The newly-constituted or reorganized nations became vast arenas in which the productive forces, including, principally, the modern working class, found room for an unprecedented development. The world became a decisive reality through the world market which awakened millions and tens of millions of people from historic torpor. Capitalism wrote an unexpungeable page for itself in history. It created the conditions under which the last barrier to human freedom could be forced.

Growing capitalism, however, accentuated the unevenness of social development. It widened the disparity between the big, modern nations and the small or backward nations and peoples, between the strong and the weak. The needs of capitalist expansion began to outstrip its possibilities. The few began to consume the many. The old imperialism of plundering the weak gave way to the modern, finance-capitalist imperialism of exploiting the weak or the weaker and converting them into modern colonies. Liberating capitalism became rapacious, parasitic, reactionary, oppressive imperialism all over the world. In the course of this metamorphosis, the powerful nations which had acquired and fortified their right of self-determination, proceeded to deprive one nation after another of this right in order to subject them to exploitation.

By the beginning of the present century, there was hardly a corner of the globe not included in the new division: a half-dozen great imperialist powers on the one side, ruling over their respective colonies, vassals, protectorates, satellites and "spheres of influence" on the other side. With the further widening of the gap between needs and possibilities, this partition of the entire world was constantly threatened by attempts at redivision made by each of the powers, cramped within the limiting framework of its own share. Where "peaceful" methods (i.e., economic and political pressure) of satisfying imperialist appetites did not suffice, military methods

were employed. This, and nothing else, is the explanation of the two world wars of the twentieth century, of the rivalries and conflicts that preceded, separated and accompanied them. They have nothing at all to do with the chemical composition of a people's blood, or the shape of its head, but derive entirely from the immanent tendencies of the social system in which we live.

A False Notion

The way modern imperialism developed historically gave rise to the notion that its depredations are confined exclusively to the very old and backward world, to the darker-skinned peoples of Asia, Africa and Latin America. There were liberal thinkers who believed that as the advanced countries brought industrialism to the backward agricultural lands, the latter would be raised to the level of the former not only economically but also politically. A little firm—not violent, just firm—pressure upon the more enlightened rulers of the advanced countries would be required to accelerate this trend. The essential benevolence of imperialism was assumed.

This belief was based upon two radical errors. In the first place, imperialism did not promote the cultural (i.e., economic and political) development of the colonies, but retarded it. It operated like a brake on the modernization (industrialization) of the backward lands, and resisted the claims of the colonial peoples to political independence with every economic and military weapon at its disposal.

In the second place, it is now perfectly clear that modern imperialist expansion is not confined to backward, agricultural nations. This *seemed* to be the case in the earlier period of capitalist imperialism, when there was still room in the agricultural part of the world for *all* of the advanced industrial nations to spread out. In the First World War, each of the imperialist coalitions sought, more than anything else, to expand at the expense of the *colonies* of the enemy. In the intervening quarter-century, world capitalism has experienced the most scarifying crisis; it has decayed almost beyond belief. One of the important distinctions between the First and the Second World Wars is that today, in addition to the greatest possible control of the "backward colonies," each imperialist coalition seeks to reduce the *advanced, modern* enemy to the status of a colony or a semi-colony.

In other words, under continuing, that is, decaying, reactionary capitalism, there is room for fewer and fewer independent great powers. Just as the general tendency of capitalism is to increase the number of the exploited and decrease the number of the exploiters in each country, so the general tendency of capitalist imperialism is to decrease the number of imperialist powers and increase the number of subject nations.

Does this mean that Japan aims to reduce the United States to the same position that is occupied in the Empire by Korea? That Germany aims to reduce England to another India? That the United States aims to reduce Germany to another Puerto Rico? The wheels of history move too firmly forward to be turned backward *that far*—although it would be hard to say just how far they could be moved backward if we were to make the monstrous assumption that ahead of us lies half a century of reaction in which the international proletariat does not bring the social disintegration to a halt. But we are dealing here with the *tendency* of decaying imperialism, not with the abstract possibilities of its ultimate realization.

Under German imperialism, this tendency is manifested *differently* in Poland than it is in France, differently in Greece

than in Denmark—but in all these countries to come under German dominion, it is the *same* tendency that manifests itself. Under Anglo-American imperialism, this tendency manifests itself *differently* in its declared aims toward Italy and Germany, toward Japan and France—but again, it is the *same* tendency at work. If it manifests itself in different degrees and in different forms, this is due not to any fundamental difference in the nature of imperialist nations, but to the specific historical conditions in which they developed, and to the resistivity of the material forces they operate against—the strength of the country or people they seek to subjugate and the strength and class consciousness of their labor movement.

Lenin on Imperialism

Polemizing during the first world war against Karl Kautsky, who held a fundamentally liberalistic view of modern imperialism, Lenin wrote:

The characteristic feature of imperialism is precisely that it strives to annex *not only* agricultural regions, but even highly industrialized regions (German appetite for Belgium, French appetite for Lorraine), because (1) the fact that the world is already divided up obliges those contemplating a new division to reach out for *any kind* of territory, and (2) because an essential feature of imperialism is the rivalry between a number of great powers in the striving for hegemony, i.e., for the conquest of territory, not so much directly for themselves as to weaken the adversary and undermine *his* hegemony (Belgium is chiefly necessary to Germany as a base for operations against England; England needs Bagdad as a base for operations against Germany, etc.) (Collected Works, Vol. XIX, pp. 162f.)

Twenty-eight years since this was written, the decay of imperialism has advanced beyond what even Lenin envisaged. Countries and peoples that the big powers do not subjugate, they carve into helpless fragments. Nations which, only yesterday, were not only independent but were imperialist oppressors on their own, are now oppressed in turn, or declared bankrupt and placed in receivership. Where? At the periphery of the world? In the traditionally backward countries of ancient continents? No, not only there and not even primarily there. It now happens in Europe, and not only at the hands of the "enemy." Rumania's independence, like Italy's or Slovakia's, is threatened no less by the Anglo-American-Russian enemy than by the German ally. Poland looks now with less apprehension to the retreating German enemy than to the advancing Russian ally. When Roosevelt all-but-publicly ridicules de Gaulle's affinity for Joan of Arc, he means that American imperialism will stop before nothing less than another miracle to prevent the modern Maid of Orleans from realizing his objective of "restoring France to her just position as a great world power." Basically, the same tendency that impelled Germany to make a colony out of Poland, impels the Allies to plan to make three colonies, or semi-colonies, or protectorates—in any case, objects of plunder—out of defeated Germany.

Modern imperialism, in a word, cognizant of the interdependence of all nations, of their inability to live an isolated, autarchic life, proceeds to what Mr. Reves calls the "regulation of their interdependence" on the basis of a division of the world into an ever-smaller minority of imperialist nations, which not only enjoy but fiercely insist upon their own right of national self-determination, and an ever-increasing number of nations that are deprived of this right to one extent or another. Hence, Mr. Reves, who is right in a sense to speak of national sovereignty and nationalism as "eighteenth century

concepts," is utterly and reactionarily wrong in rejecting them so categorically for the twentieth century.

The Slogan Renewed

Rapacious capitalist-imperialism has forced new millions of people to fight for the right of national self-determination as one of the most urgent political tasks of the day. Lenin was right a hundred times over when he said: "Imperialism is the epoch of the oppression of nations on a new historical basis. . . . Imperialism renews the old slogan of self-determination." There is more to be learned from these two sentences, than from everything written by Mr. Reves, plus all the writings on the subject by Roosevelt, Churchill, Stalin, Sumner Welles, Walter Lippman, Earl Browder, and—may our readers forgive the audacious inclusion—Samuel Grafton.

What Mr. Reves considers an "anachronism," Lenin says is renewed by modern imperialism. Mr. Reves, who is in a better physical condition than Lenin to observe the facts, is nevertheless altogether wrong. Let us take the Poles. Under the German yoke, they have neither the same political, economic, social, legal or cultural rights as the rulers of the country. They are subjected to *double* exploitation, once as toilers and again as Poles. Their fight to shake off the German yoke, Mr. Reves would probably be among the first to admit (to insist!), is noble and anything but anachronistic. In Poland, the disdainful reference to "eighteenth century concepts" would surely never leave Mr. Reves' lips. By virtue of what considerations, then, would the same fight become anachronistic, "archaic," a "total fallacy" and a "mortal peril" when directed by the same Poles, animated by the same motives and ideals, against a yoke imposed upon them by Russia?

The right of self-determination implies, if it does not include, the right of people themselves deciding *not* to be uprooted from their land, jammed into cattle cars by the millions, and transported to other lands like sides of beef. The struggle of the defeated and conquered peoples of Europe against the Nazis who carried out such mass deportations, has aroused the passionate sympathy of every civilized person, not one of whom labelled the struggle "anachronistic," not even, so far as we know, Mr. Reves. Would he apply that label, however, to the people of East Prussia if they resisted attempts to uproot and deport them in mass, which Russia has announced it intends to make?

Similar questions could be asked without end. The only intelligible answer Mr. Reves could make would be couched in the language of present German imperialism, elegantly translated into English and lightly perfumed. His very answers, however elegant, would indicate why the people of the weaker and smaller nations fight for independence against the big power who seek to "regulate their interdependence," and why their fight is a just one.

The fight, so far as the overwhelming majority of the little people are concerned, is not a matter of national chauvinism, or national vanity, or an expression of national or racial superiority. That's the case with the big oppressor nations. With the people of the oppressed nations, the struggle is for *equality*. With them, the struggle is for *democracy*. With them, the struggle is for *freedom*. At one time, the struggle for national freedom, for the sovereign national state, was directed against feudalism, principal obstacle to social progress. If that is what Mr. Reves means by his reference to "eighteenth century concepts," he is right. Nowadays, the struggle for national freedom is directed against capitalist imperialism, the present principal obstacle to social progress, the

present main foe of the peoples, which maintains "the oppression of nations on a new historical basis." Even the most primitive popular struggle for national freedom from foreign rule or oppression is therefore implicitly a *social struggle* against imperialism.

National Freedom and the Proletariat

Imperialism is not only the oppressor of small nations, but the deadly enemy of the working class everywhere. This class is the only one capable of defeating it. But this defeat cannot be administered without the support of the small nations and the people in them who seek equality, democracy and freedom. Indeed, it cannot be administered unless the working class shows, not only in word but in action, that it stands unhesitatingly by every people aspiring to national freedom, most particularly, by every people whom its own imperialism oppresses. It is only in this way that the working class, especially its socialist sector, can *demonstrate* that national oppression is only a form of class oppression; that it is not "Germans" or "Americans" or "British" or "Russians" who oppress other peoples, but the German, American, British and Russian ruling classes—not working classes; that the struggle for national freedom can be fought consistently and successfully only under the leadership of the proletariat whose very interest has been inseparably linked with the fight for democratic rights; and that the struggle for national freedom, as for all other democratic rights, is genuinely and supremely achieved only by the rule of the working class and the achievement of its historic goal.

Mr. Reves, who is for national independence in the eighteenth century—that is, when *his* bourgeoisie achieved it—but condemns it in the twentieth century—that is, when hundreds of millions of people are seeking to achieve it *against* his bourgeoisie—only reveals his *class* position, and emphasizes to these aspiring millions what they may expect from the most "democratic" of the imperialists. What they may expect from Mr. Reves' not so democratic opposite numbers, has been sufficiently impressed on their bodies by Hitler, Goebbels, Rosenberg, Frank and Seyss-Inquhardt.

If the working class of the imperialist countries does not become the militant champion of the right of self-determination for the oppressed or about-to-be-oppressed nations, the struggle of the latter is not only doomed, but must inevitably degenerate into futile chauvinism. Sheer national hatreds would then be directed not only against the ruling Germans but against all Germans, not only against the ruling British, Russians, Americans or Japanese, but against the whole of the British, Russian, American or Japanese peoples. From such a struggle, chaos or stagnation can come, reaction can come, but little else. Here, as in every great problem of our time, the solution depends upon the working class. Mr. Reves has involuntarily drawn another line under what has so often been underscored.

If Mr. Reves stands on the class position of American imperialism, how account for his criticism of Secretary Hull's declaration that "The Charter is an expression of fundamental objectives toward which we and our allies are directing our policies"—a declaration scored by Reves as "precisely the fundamental fallacy of our policies"? The answer is that Mr. Reves not only does not understand modern imperialism in general—and this is surely putting a charitable construction on his article—but fails altogether to understand American imperialism and its policies in particular.

The Role of the U. S. in Europe

The United States rose as an imperialist power late in life. Except for Latin America, the rest of the world was already substantially partitioned among such older imperialist powers as England, France, Italy, Belgium, Holland, Spain, Portugal, Germany and Russia. In Latin America, the United States was able, with considerable success, to hold off the European imperialisms with the warning "Keep Out!" written at the bottom of the Monroe Doctrine. From the days of the Mexican Wars down to the present, the United States has insisted on a "Closed Door" in Latin America for everyone but itself. In Asia, however, where European imperialism had already closed the doors to the United States, the latter has always insisted on the "Open Door" policy. American imperialism is for closing other people's doors to intruders only after it has established itself as master of the house; otherwise, it is for opening both doors, so that it may enter through the front and push its competitors out through the rear.

America's developed European policy is somewhat different. To become master of the old world is a task that cannot be accomplished by American military occupation or by annexation. It cannot be accomplished if there is a powerful state dominant on the continent. For generations, England was the arbiter of Europe by means of her notorious "balance of power" policy. Her European policy was so constructed as to make it impossible for any continental nation to take decisive steps without England's approval. The foundation of this policy was England's preeminent economic position—she was the "workshop" and banker of the world. The opening up of America's real possibilities in Europe dates from the end of the first World War, when England yielded this preeminent position to the United States.

But it is not yet the full truth to say that the United States has replaced England as the principal world-imperialist power. What has happened is that the United States has acquired a power in world economics and politics that *exceeds* anything England ever possessed. In the period of England's sway, there was still enough "living space" for other countries to remain or to become great powers without basically altering her own outstanding position. The present period of American sway not only does not permit a weak country to become a great power but prevents the great powers from holding their own. The United States, that is, has grown to its international strength in a period of the contraction of the world market. As Trotsky put it so brilliantly about two decades ago, the United States has put Europe on rations by allocating to the countries of the Old World—which is as good as saying the entire world—a constantly diminishing share of the market. The latecomer has become *the* world colossus.

The key lies in the word "latecomer." With no territorial or colonial holdings in the sense of the British or French or even Dutch empires, the United States must first proceed by separating from their imperialist motherlands the countries dependent upon them—colonies, vassals and protectorates. What Mr. Reves so blindly interprets as the "fundamental fallacy" in American foreign policy, is nothing less than the fundamental axe with which American imperialism seeks to hack off the colonial or vassal members of the older imperialist powers in order to graft them onto Washington and Wall Street. The American "principle" of "self-determination" which Mr. Reves regards as a "centrifugal force" which "must

be replaced by a system of principles exercising a powerful centripetal attraction within the United Nations and around them"—is in reality calculated to exert a centrifugal force only so far as the existing, non-American, empires are concerned, and to exercise "a powerful centripetal attraction within the *United States* and around them."

Conflict Between England and the United States

The difference between England and the United States on the right of self-determination of small nations is anything but a difference in principle. The difference merely expresses the fact that England seeks to maintain an old world-imperial position to which her economic strength no longer corresponds, whereas the United States seeks to acquire and consolidate a new world-imperial position more in correspondence with its (comparatively) tremendous economic strength.

Churchill proposes (in his May, 1944, report to Commons) a "world-controlling council . . . comprising the greatest states," and "a world assembly whose relations to the world executive or controlling power for the purpose of peace I am in no position to define." In his March 28 address to the Free Church Federal Council, Anthony Eden made it clear that "when it comes to deciding on action which only certain states by their military power are in a position effectively to take, we cannot simply count heads. The great powers have and must have special responsibilities in the field of security." As for the small countries, Eden firmly insists on their undisputed right to be "free to declare their opinions and their grievances." Whatever else is to be amputated from them, their tongues are to be left intact.

In pursuance of the "fundamental fallacy," Mr. Hull, on the contrary, keeps pointing out, as he did in his Pan-American Day address, that "it was agreed at Moscow that membership in the world security organization must be on the basis of the sovereign equality of all nations, weak as well as strong, and the right of every nation to a government of its own choice." At his somewhat sensational June 1, 1944 press conference, the Secretary of State went even further: "We have for 150 years preached liberty to all nations of the earth, to all the peoples of the earth, and we have practised it. We have encouraged all nations to aspire to liberty, and to enjoy it." A subversive statement? Not at all, noted the *New York Times*: "The Secretary of State expresses the traditional American attitude when he refers to our interest in the full participation and equality of all nations, great and small in the creation of a new world order." Yet, subversive it is! To attest this, we call upon the Washington correspondent of the *United Press*, R. H. Shackford. His testimony is quite adequate:

The diplomats considered Mr. Hull's statement direct invitation to India's 390,000,000 people, as well as the colonial subjects in the East Indies, Africa and other parts of the world, to continue their long struggle for liberty.

Although Mr. Hull's statement started out as reassurance to small nations of sovereign equality with the big ones in the post-war world, it appeared on analysis to be directed more to the subject people of the British, Dutch and French empires.

Those people were reminded that Americans have not forgotten their ancestors, who were subject people and fought a long and bloody war for freedom. They were assured that the same spirit of freedom for others prevails in the United States today.

The statement was in sharp contrast to some of the ideas expressed by Prime Minister Churchill, who once said he did not be-

come Prime Minister to preside over the liquidation of the British Empire. (New York World-Telegram, June 2.)

True about Mr. Churchill, who only "expresses the traditional British attitude." The "Prime Minister" who *does* seek to "preside over the liquidation of the British Empire" and all other rival empires, operates out of Washington. The "traditional American attitude" proceeds very "dialectically" from empire (of rivals), to liquidation of empire, to reconstitution of empire—on a "higher," that is, on an American plane. Britain's pleas for a world-ruling triumvirate is an anguished plea for equality with towering America. The American insistence on "sovereignty" and "equality" for the small nations is a demand for the monopolistic superiority of the United States over all its big rivals. That is all there is to it. The "fundamental fallacy" is Mr. Reves'. He is non-plussed by the insistence of democratic Washington on the "independence of small nations." He is probably staggered and stupefied by the demand of totalitarian Tokyo for the "independence" . . . of India, not, God forbid, of Korea.

The Secret of the "Fundamental Fallacy"

Does this imply that American imperialism is really for the independence and sovereign equality of these small nations? Certainly—up to the point of breakaway from their *present* masters and liege-lords. From that point on, the United States counts on its stupendous economic power to take all these countries in tow, directly or indirectly. The United States is now in a position to wield the biggest economic-political blackmailing axe in history over the heads of almost all countries, the weaker ones in particular. There lies the secret-behind-the-secret of its "fundamental fallacy."

Europe will be a wreck at the end of the war. Where is the capital, the money, the food, the machinery, to come from to restore the world to a semblance of order? The economic and political life of all these countries, if it is not dictated outright, will be decisively influenced by the possessors of this capital. The helpless little nations, sitting in the "world council" with "freedom" and "sovereign equality," will vote the way the money jumps. Whose money, England's or the United States'?

England will emerge from the war, not a creditor but a debtor nation, and probably a heavy debtor. The heavy imports needed for her own reconstruction program will be a serious enough factor; added to it will be England's need to pay off the blocked sterling credits due countries which have

been supplying her merchandise outside of American lend-lease. Without substantial backing from the United States, she would have to depreciate her currency in short order. The result would only be greater dependence upon Washington and Wall Street. Contrast this to the position of the United States. In his report on "The Trend in World Economics," Dr. Adolph Lowe, a professor in the New School for Social Research, says of this country:

Her unique status of combining the largest share in world exports with the smallest export ratio of all industrial countries even makes it possible for her to couple a policy of self-sufficiency with economic imperialism; by exchanging her export surplus for property titles in the importing countries.

There being no other source of large capital exports, no economic power will exist in the post-war world which could break so despotic a rule by the United States over the world market. (Our emphasis.—Ed.)

What can the "sovereignty" of the small—and the not so small—nations mean in reality, in face of this impending economic dependency, except a high-sounding cover for vassal-dom? In a *declining* world, in the *imperialist* world, there is less and less room for an independent and flourishing *many*. There is room only for a tinier group of the ultra-powerful few ruling over a growing number of the many who enjoy neither political independence nor economic security.

The indispensable precondition for the freedom and prosperity of the countries of Europe is: Union. Short of the unification of the continent, it is doomed to stagnation and servitude, under American, British, or Russian domination, or under a combination of all three. It would be hard to find anyone who seriously questioned the need of some sort of unification of Europe "in general." The real problem, as indicated earlier, is *how* is it to be done and *who* is to do it? Hitlerite Germany also "united" Europe, but the "who" and "how" of the unification meant neither peace, freedom nor security for the continent. The Allied plans for the "unification" of Europe hold forth nothing more promising.

For a solution to the thorny problem, we must take leave of Hitler and Reves, Eden and Hull, de Gaulle and Tito, and proceed to Lenin and the Bolsheviks. On an all-Russian scale, they faced in practise the same problem we now face on an all-European scale, and eventually on a world scale, namely, the reconciliation of the centralist need of unification with the apparently decentralizing aspiration of different peoples to national freedom.

Lenin's Solution of the Problem

The Czar was not only the despotic overlord of the Russians, but of a score of other nationalities. The empire was a Russian prison for Poles, Letts, Lithuanians, Estonians, Finns, Ukrainians, Georgians, Armenians, Turkish, Tartar and Iranian peoples, and a dozen others (after the revolution it was revealed that the Czar had ruled over many dozens of more or less distinctive peoples whose very existence had been obliterated by Russian chauvinism). The upper-class minority ruled and exploited the lower-class majority; the Russian minority ruled and exploited the non-Russian majority—class exploitation was joined with national oppression.

From the very beginning, as an obscure political minority with no immediate prospects for power, Lenin and the Russian

Bolsheviks who, like all Marxists, were fundamentally federalists (in the American and not the European sense, i. e., centralists), incorporated into their program the militant demand for the right of national self-determination including the right of secession. Lenin's writings in defense of this position alone would make up several fat volumes. In supporting this right, Lenin did not at all put forth the condition that the separatist struggle of an oppressed nation had to be led by the socialist proletariat. As in China, so in Poland, Lenin was prepared to support a popular struggle to overthrow the foreign yoke *even if* this struggle were headed by the proletariat's class enemy, the national bourgeoisie. No people, no nation, has the right to oppress another, to annex or rule it against its

will, he repeated, and it is the socialist working class, especially of the ruling and oppressing country, that must inscribe this principle upon its banner.

But perhaps this was merely a demagogic trick, aimed at creating difficulties for Lenin's main enemy, the Russian Czar, something on the order of Hitler's call for freedom of the Arabs . . . from English rule, or Hull's call for freedom of peoples ruled . . . by others? Perhaps this was meant merely to aid Lenin to power, after which the right of national self-determination was discarded as a superfluous political device?

No, Lenin fought for it under the Czar, fought for it under the Provisional Government of Kerensky, and carried it out in fact under the Government of the Soviets.

The February Revolution gave a tremendous impulsion to the national movements all around the periphery of Russia proper. The non-Russian peoples demanded of the "democratic" regime that succeeded the autocracy: "If you are not Russians of the Czarist stripe, if you are democratic Russians, if you are not oppressors, then grant us the right of national freedom denied us by the Romanovs. Then we will be able to and we shall live side by side with you not as slaves but as comrades and friends, in peaceful cohabitation."

Kerensky, and the Mensheviks and Social-Revolutionists supporting him, rejected the demand, either with a blunt No! or with stalling promises never meant to be kept. The Bolsheviks stuck to their principles. To the peasants they said: "You want the land? Take it! We will support you in the taking of it!" To the non-Russian peoples they said: "You want national freedom, the right to determine your own constitution? Take it! We are not Russians like the Czarists or the spurious democrats. We do not aim to oppress you in a new guise. We will support you by word and deed. You will learn from this concrete experience that the proletarian Russians are not like the Russian magnates, that they do not aim to rule and oppress you but to live in brotherly peace with you. We would prefer as revolutionary socialists, to see your struggle for freedom led by those who hold our political views. But we will support your struggle even if it is led by your own landlords or bourgeois politicians or priests and mullahs."

The Bolsheviks in Power

But once in power? Let us see. A week after the Bolshevik uprising, the new Soviet of People's Commissars proclaimed "1. Equality and sovereignty of the peoples of Russia. 2. Their free right of self-determination including secession and the formation of an independent state. 3. Abolition of any and every national-religious privilege and limitation. 4. Free development of the national minorities and ethnographic groups populating the territory of Russia." The words became deeds. On December 3, 1917, the Soviet of People's Commissars recognized the Ukrainian People's (not yet Soviet!) Republic and "its right to separate completely from Russia or to enter into negotiations with the Republic of Russia on federative reciprocal relations . . . Everything relating to the national rights and the national independence of the Ukrainian people is immediately recognized by us, the Soviet of People's Commissars, without limitations and unconditionally." In January, 1920, despite the fact that eight months earlier the Polish bourgeoisie and landlords had overthrown the Soviet power in Lithuania and White Russia and was dreaming of an annexationist campaign to extend its territories "to the frontiers of 1772," the All-Russian Central Executive Committee reiterated its recognition of the independence of the

(reactionary!) Polish Republic, "proceeding not from accidental, episodic, military or diplomatic considerations, but from the unshakeable principle of national self-determination."

The Case of Finland

The case of Finland was particularly interesting. A personal account of what happened in the Council of People's Commissars as early as December, 1917, is given us in the memoirs, not of a Bolshevik, but of the Social-Revolutionary Commissar of Justice, Steinberg (the Left SR's were then in a coalition government with the Bolsheviks). The narrative is faithful and most illuminating, especially from the pen of an adversary whose memoirs are filled with vigorous criticism of the Bolsheviks and Bolshevism.

... Upon the table was laid a big, thick document decorated with emblems and ribbons. Eyes opened wide. What was that?—It was the decree on the emancipation of Finland! For centuries Finland had fought for its independence; both the Czarist and the Kerensky governments had thrown rocks in the road. The scholars of political science declared that only the National Assembly of Russia could proclaim this independence. The Finns based themselves on their own national right. Now their revolutionary [bourgeois] government came to us and asked if they were to receive their right of self-determination. What a question!—"Certainly! Right on the spot!—Here, read the decree adopted by the ZIK [Central Executive of the Soviets]: 'In reply to the request of the Finnish government for recognition of the independence of the Finnish Republic, the Council of Commissars decides in complete accord with the principle of the right of self-determination of nations, the following: State independence for the Finnish Republic.'"

Brief and clear words! Now the decree was to be undersigned. We stood up one after the other and wrote our signatures with special satisfaction. We were fully aware that the present hero of Finland, Svinhufvud, who was once banished by the Czar, was our open social foe and that he would spare none of us in the future. Nevertheless, we emancipate the Finnish people from Russian oppression, and there is one historic injustice less in the world.

But as Lenin was putting the decree aside, the Secretary [of the Council] Bontch-Bruevich came in and said in some embarrassment: "They want to thank you for the decree... we must go out to them..."

It was Svinhufvud himself who had come to Petrograd with a small delegation to negotiate the affair, and who now, on leaving the city, wanted to greet the government personally. But who should go out to see him? Lenin shrugged his shoulders, laughed a little embarrassedly, and declined. "What should I say to this bourgeois?"

We looked around: Trotsky was asked to welcome the dear guest. He too refused with an energetic shake of the head. An idea occurred: "The Commissar of Justice ought to go. He signed the decree formally."—"What shall I say to him?" I evaded laughingly. "In my official capacity all I can do is arrest them!"—"Yes," said Trotsky, with a wry smile, "all the arresting you're going to do..."—"But this will not do," said Bontch-Bruevich excitedly. "they're waiting for you." And in his shabby clothes, with head bent forward, Lenin finally did walk out. We laughed and cracked jokes, and after a while he came back bashfully: "Now you see. I said right away I can't do it... The first word out of my mouth was 'Comrade!'—"Doesn't matter," Trotsky reassured him laughingly, "if we ever fall into their hands, they'll count it in your favor."—(I. Steinberg, *Als ich Volkskommissar war*, Munich, 1929, pp. 18f.)

An utterly unprecedented story! Search high and low through the history of any bourgeois government in the world and you will not find a story like it! Right of self-determination? Secession? Independence? "What a question! Certainly! Right on the spot!" How could such an action fail to make the deepest and most lasting impression: upon the Russian people, as part of their education in the spirit of true internationalism, socialist democracy; upon the Finnish people, who were shown that the Bolsheviks were not like "the Russians" (i. e., the Czar or Kerensky) but were revolutionary socialists in Russia to whom all forms of oppression are re-

pugnant, with whom another people can live in peace and harmony despite political differences; upon *all* people, who were shown that if any conflict thereafter arose between Russia and Finland, the responsibility would lie exclusively with the rulers of the Finns.

Results of Bolshevik Policy

At one stroke almost, the Bolsheviks accumulated a tremendous capital, not only for the Russian people, but for world socialism. The capital yielded great dividends, so to speak. Lenin pointed this out more than a year later at the first Congress of Toiling Cossacks, when he recalled how the Entente powers sought to drive all the nations bordering on Russia into armed intervention against the Soviets with the cry that they, Finland included, would thereby save freedom, civilization and culture throughout the world!

In this manner they tried to drive all these small states to the struggle against the Bolsheviks. But this also failed twice, because the peace policy of the Bolsheviks was seriously meant and was deemed more sincere even by their enemies than the peace policy of all the other countries; because a whole series of states said to themselves: no matter how much we hate the Great Russia that oppressed us, we nevertheless know that it was Yudenich, Koltchak and Denikin who oppressed us, but not the Bolsheviks. The former head of the White Guardist Finnish government did not forget that he personally received from my hands in November, 1917, a document in which we unhesitatingly declared that we recognize unconditionally the independence of Finland.

At that time it seemed to be a mere gesture. It was thought that the uprising of the Finnish workers would wipe it out. No, such things are not forgotten, especially when they are confirmed by the entire policy of a given party. And even the Finnish bourgeois government said to itself: "Let us think it over. We have learned a good deal in the 150 years of oppression by the Russian Czars. If we fight against the Bolsheviks, we will thereby bring Yudenich, Koltchak and Denikin to the helm. But who are these gentlemen? Don't we know them? Aren't they the same Czarist generals who oppressed Finland, Latvia, Poland and a whole series of other peoples? So, shall we stand by our enemies against the Bolsheviks? No, we will wait!"

They did not dare to refuse directly; for they are dependent upon England. They did not support us directly, they daltied, they tergiversated, wrote notes, sent delegations, set up commissions, took part in conferences and—conferred so long till Yudenich, Koltchak and Denikin were beaten and the second campaign of the Entente had failed. We remained the victors.

If all these little states had marched against us—they would have been given hundreds of millions of dollars, the best cannons, the best equipment, English instructors who have experience in war—if they had marched against us, we would undoubtedly have suffered defeat. Everybody can see this perfectly. But they did not march against us, because they had to acknowledge that the Bolsheviks were more honest than the others. When the Bolsheviks declare that they recognize the independence of all peoples, that the policy of Czarist Russia was built upon the oppression of other peoples and that they never supported this policy, nor will they ever support it, that they will never conduct a war for the oppression of a people—when they say this, they are believed. We have found this out not from the Lettish or Polish Bolsheviks, but from the Polish, Lettish and Ukrainian bourgeoisie. (*Collected Works* [German edition], Vol. XXV, pp. 61f.)

How far Lenin was from the idea that the right of national self-determination was a "mere gesture" or demagoguery for the "public," may be judged from his remarkable speech at the Eighth Congress of the Bolshevik Party in March, 1919, where, in the privacy of the closed sessions of his comrades, he once more defended the principle with the greatest resoluteness, not only for small colonial lands, but even for such countries as Poland and Germany. The Stalinist regime has squandered all the capital accumulated in this field by Lenin and the Bolsheviks—every last cent of it—and the Finnish,

Polish or German people who regard its advance as the herald of enslavement, and not of emancipation, are entirely right.

The unhesitating accordance of national freedom, the right of secession, to all the peoples and nationalities who formerly made up the Czarist Empire, may seem at first to be in harmony with the "abstract principles of democracy," but to harmonize badly with the basic need of economic and political union of peoples. But only at first blush. Lenin understood that the first prerequisite, under the concrete circumstances, of union was—separation! The *Russian* Bolsheviks had to demonstrate in practise to all these peoples, firstly, that they were Bolsheviks and not "Russians like the Czar"; and secondly, that they had no intention of "imposing Communism by force" upon other peoples. They took into account the terrible national suspicions, prejudices and hatreds that national oppression under the Czars had generated among the non-Russian peoples, both inside and outside the old Empire. They knew that it did not suffice to prove on paper, by mere wordy argument, the advantages and superiority of union over self-enclosure within a large number of weak, helpless, unviable little states. The only way to prove it was by deeds. The deeds began with the acknowledgment in practise of the right of national self-determination. Only thereby would the non-Russian peoples come to the conclusion that with "these Russians," that is, with the socialist state of Russia, it is both possible and desirable to live in peace and harmony and prosperity; and finally, that even if they moved under one roof with "these Russians" their national feelings, traditions and culture would not be offended, that they would enjoy exactly the same rights, benefits and privileges as the Russians themselves, and that the benefits would be great by virtue of the pooling, under joint and planned direction, of the resources and labors of all.

That is *how* the Soviet Union came into existence, and it was the socialist proletariat, that is, the working class led by the Bolsheviks *who* achieved it.

The Formation of the Soviet Union

At first, it should be recalled, there was only the *Russian* Socialist Federated Republic. Even within this republic there were established as many as eight Autonomous Republics and thirteen Autonomous Regions. Then came the Ukrainian and White Russian Soviet Republics, and the Transcaucasian Federation of Socialist Soviet Republics (Georgia, Azerbaidjan, Armenia). How intimately all these Soviet republics cooperated from their inception, is common knowledge. Yet, as each new one was established, it did not automatically enter into a *single union* with those already in existence. The Ukrainian, White Russian and Transcaucasian republics were allied with the Russian republic by numerous pacts and treaties, but they were formally independent from it.

Sheer formality! it may be said. Even if that were to be granted for a moment, it would still leave the "formality" unexplained. The Bolsheviks, who controlled all four republics, had all the "physical" strength they needed to decree a single union from the very first day. From a bureaucratic standpoint, all that was needed was the adoption of such a decision by the Communist Party, after which its adoption by the (equally communist) Councils of People's Commissars of the four republics would have required no more than five minutes. Yet the Bolsheviks refrained. Even after the victory of the Bolsheviks in all four territories, after the establishment of Bolshevik-controlled Soviet regimes, they still took the old national hatreds and suspicions against "Russians" into ac-

count. They still waited for a considerable time, during which living experience would demonstrate to Ukrainian, White Russian, Georgian and Armenian that incorporation into a single union would not mean for them, as it meant in the past, the oppressive rule of the Great Russians.

The Bolsheviks took power in Russia in November, 1917. The congress at which the four republics formally decided to establish the Union of Socialist Soviet Republics took place in December, 1922—more than five years later!

When we speak of the triumph of Lenin's policy, we do not mean to imply that it was always carried through faultlessly or even consistently, and certainly not that Lenin's policy toward the national question was the sum and substance of revolutionary bolshevism. After all, it was the first time in history that anyone had the opportunity to practice so revolutionary an idea, and that in a backward country which had difficulties enough as it was without the extremely complex and difficult national problem. That it succeeded to the extent that it did will go down in history as one of our mundane miracles, not less. Nothing like it, nothing that can be mentioned in the same breath, is to be found anywhere else.

Lenin's policy saved the lands and the peoples of the old Czarist Empire from dismemberment, particularism and disintegration. It made possible a strong union, *without* violating the right of peoples and nations, no matter how small or weak, to self-determination and freedom. It confirmed in life the theory that the road to genuine freedom—national freedom included—lies only in the leadership of the working class fighting for the socialist society. It confirmed also the old Marxian theory that the road to socialist freedom lies in the proletarian class struggle for democracy.

What Russia alone learned, all Europe has to learn now. It is not accidental that the fight of the European working class, the fight of socialism in Europe today, is more tightly linked up than ever before with the fight for democracy and democratic rights, of which the right of national self-determination is outstanding. It is not accidental, it is a direct result of the decay of capitalist-imperialist society which can maintain itself at all only by denying its own revolutionary part ("eighteenth century concepts"), wiping out the remaining vestiges of political democracy, and replacing them with the new barbarism into which it is plunging humanity. The revolutionary proletariat only emphasizes more heavily the liberating role the class struggle and socialism play for *all* the oppressed—not the workers alone—by proclaiming itself the most consistent champion of the fight for democracy. It relentlessly unmasks the "democratic" pretensions of all the imperialists and all their apologists. It shows the genuineness of its own claim by word and deed.

A Variant of Reformism

The idea that one fine day fifty-one per cent of the working class will decide that proletarian dictatorship or socialism is superior to capitalism and then rise in insurrection for these two ideas, is a howling absurdity. It is only an "insurrectionary" variation of the old reformist idea that socialism will be assured when fifty-one per cent of the electors drop the right vote into the ballot box.

The rule of the working class becomes possible only when the masses of the people, fighting not for abstractions like "socialism," but for what they need immediately to make life possible, find that they can obtain these things only by establishing a regime of their own in place of the regime that will not or cannot satisfy them.

In Europe today, those sections of the people who think and act in revolutionary terms—that is, in violent and even armed struggle against the ruling class and the ruling state—are fighting for democratic rights, above all the right of national freedom. It is not for imperialist democracy they are fighting, but, if tautology may be permitted, for democracy for the people. They are fighting for democratic rights which neither the Axis nor the Allied imperialists can or will grant, as Hitler and Mr. Reves, among others, have testified.

In Italy, for example, the masses want a national constituent assembly not in order to have a talking-shop for windy parliamentarians. They want it in order to decide their own rule by themselves, without imperialist coercion. They want the right to vote. They want the right to a free press, to free assembly, to free speech, so that they may speak their minds to each other without having to get unobtainable permission from an Anglo-American martinet, without having to hide in a cellar or in the woods from the Gestapo and the Ovla. They want the right to organize as they see fit. With these rights they can not only submit the bourgeois politicians to their control, but they can begin enforcing their demands for such urgent necessities as fair distribution of food and lodgings, as better wages and working conditions, as control of the factories. The revolutionists who become the most vigorous champions of these aspirations will gain the ear of the masses, and will be able in the end, as were the Russian Bolsheviks in 1917, to prove to the masses that these aspirations are to be realized effectively only if they set up their own class power.

To counterpose against such a struggle for democracy (not only in Italy, but almost everywhere in Europe) such an abstraction as a "United Europe," or the "Socialist United States of Europe," as the self-sterilized "radicals" of the Socialist Workers Party do, is to have learned nothing and to have forgotten everything. Without unity, Europe will die. Without socialist power, there will be no fruitful unity. But the road to the Socialist United States of Europe lies through the victory of the socialist proletariat in the countries of Europe (which, we note once more, is not the same thing at all as the victory of the "Red" Army). And the road to the victory of the socialist proletariat lies through the struggle, abandoned or resisted by all the enemies of the people, for democratic rights, the outstanding of which today is the right of national self-determination.

**May Your 20th Anniversary
Be Celebrated by a
Socialist World!**

**BUFFALO BRANCH
OF THE
WORKERS PARTY**

Light is Beginning to Dawn

We have frequently criticized the position of the SWP, if rolling around in the dark with your tail in your mouth can be called a position. However, it is good to report that light is dawning. The need facing revolutionists of taking a position for the struggle for democratic rights in Europe and against the danger of Stalinism has finally penetrated into the party of smug sectarianism. It is expressed in a document called "The First Phases of the Coming European Revolution, a Criticism of the International Resolution of the Fifteenth Anniversary Plenum" (toward the end of 1943). It is written by Felix Morrow, who speaks for himself and for Morrison, another party leader.

A Strange Secret

The document, we must admit, is marked "For National Committee Members Only." Why? What fearful secrets does it reveal that may not be shared even by party members, to say nothing of the radical public? A plan to stuff up some senator's drainpipe? To call a strike at the candy shop near the party headquarters? To issue another article by Hansen? No, nothing so spectacularly sinister, as can be seen by a most scrupulous reading. It may be argued that it does reveal the fact that the party leadership knows very little about Marxian politics and that its internal regime is decidedly less than democratic. But surely these are not secrets—at least, not any longer and not to very many! We therefore feel quite free to quote from it. In any case, it will increase the dimensions of information of the SWP membership, from whom the very existence of the document, to say nothing of its contents, has been rigorously concealed. Morrow points out, and rightly, that "the membership . . . had a right to know what the Plenum discussion consisted of," and that "it would aid the education of the party to make a practice of publishing in the internal bulletin the important material rejected or modified by a plenum."

Here is not the place to dwell upon those sections of the document which deal with the chicanery, small tricks and demagoguery with which the leadership operated in treating the critics who had the impertinence to question its view, and the deceptions practiced upon the membership by those officially charged with reporting to it on the plenum proceedings. They are characteristic and familiar; we have known them in the past. Wretched as they are, they pale by comparison with the fact that in a party like the SWP, functioning in a country like the United States, the membership is not even permitted to discuss, or even to know about, a dispute over the employment of democratic slogans in Europe, over the "tactics" of American imperialism in Europe, over the place of the slogan of the Socialist United States of Europe, over the role of Stalinism in Europe, and so on. This fact alone suffices to answer a whole book which appeared not long ago, written around the shy claim that the SWP is the most democratic party in the world. We will deal instead with the main points in the dispute.

SWP and Democratic Demands

The original draft of the plenum sub-committee's resolution on the European revolution, we learn, *completely ignored* the problem of democratic demands. The Morrow-Morrison amendments to this draft were aimed at correcting this slight

omission, equal, in a resolution on such a theme, to a history of the Russian Revolution which omits reference to nine-tenths of the slogans with which the Bolsheviks gained power. In the ensuing discussion, the importance of democratic slogans in the coming revolution was dismissed as "episodic," "incidental," "subordinate." Obviously, these are not people who can be forced to take an interest in such trivia as concern only a couple of hundred million Europeans; their eyes, like the religious DeLeonite's, are firmly fixed on the higher astral planes. Morrow tries in vain to focus the eyes of the leaders a few planes lower:

The absurdity of their position should become clear when we answer the question: what are democratic slogans "incidental" or "subordinate" to? Democratic slogans are subordinate to transitional slogans and to programmatic fundamentals; democratic slogans must be constantly connected, in our agitation, to transitional slogans and programmatic fundamentals. That is all that is meant by "incidental" and "subordinate." Obviously, then, it follows that at any time this side of the successful insurrection democratic slogans still have an important place in our agitation. The fact that tactics (democratic slogans) are subordinated to strategy (dictatorship of the proletariat) does not absolve us from the responsibility of outlining the character of the tactics necessary for the coming period in Europe. The fact that democratic slogans are "incidental" and "episodic" does not do away with the fact that more than one revolutionary party has broken its neck by its failure to understand the crucial rôle of democratic slogans—that before it could make the revolution it first had to win a majority of the proletariat, and that this majority could be won in part only through a phase, "episodic" but indispensable, of democratic demands. That was the terrible lesson we should have learned for all time from the abortive Spartacist uprising of January, 1919.

Morrow confuses the relationship between "democratic" and "transitional" slogans, and "programmatic fundamentals," implying that each is in a distinctive category from the other two. There is no such wall of separation. However, what he means to say is clear enough, and is a thousand times more correct than the position of those he criticizes. Let him continue:

In a revolutionary situation, a democratic demand may be of enormous importance—the way to win the masses to the revolutionary party. To name but one example—the demand for the immediate convocation of the Constituent Assembly, which played such an enormous rôle in the Russian Revolution and is certain to play an equally important rôle in one or more of the European revolutions. Let me remind the comrades that the Bolshevik withdrawal from and boycott of the pre-Parliament, which was the curtain-raiser to the insurrection, was carried out under the slogan of immediate convocation of the Constituent Assembly. One has only to cite such a concrete example of a democratic demand to indicate the empty—ultra-leftist—radicalism of the resolution's emphasis on "the limitations and subordinate character of democratic slogans as a means of mobilizing the masses for revolutionary action."

A second point of dispute, related to the above, occurs on the question of the "tempo of the coming revolution." At bottom, the question is simply put: Following the defeat of Nazi totalitarianism in Europe, what will follow directly (at least in Western Europe): the seizure of power by the revolutionary proletariat? The replacement of Nazi fascism by substantially the same regime under Allied aegis? Or a more or less bourgeois-democratic interlude, at the end of which lies again the direct choice between fascism and proletarian revolution? The answer given by the Workers Party is that the bourgeois-democratic period is most likely to follow, and every

passing day puts this answer further and further beyond debate. Morrow's answer is basically the same, although it is not stated with the desirable clarity and firmness, or adequately and properly motivated. But it is lucidity and wisdom itself compared with what he describes with such restraint as

... the ambiguities and evasions of the plenum resolution (which straddle between (1) maintaining the false conception of the original draft resolution of the subcommittee which explicitly denied the possibility that the bourgeoisie would resort to democratic governments and (2) making verbal but not real concession to the Morrow-Morrison amendments which insist that the bourgeoisie will probably resort to democratic governments.

The Slogan of the SUSE

The third point in dispute is the "function of the slogan on the Socialist United States of Europe." The press and the documents of the SWP have done no little to convert this valuable slogan into a meaningless shibboleth. It is put forward regardless of time, place and circumstance. It is put forward as though that aim, and that aim above all others, is the one that is moving and will move millions of European workers into action for the proletarian revolution. Compared with it, the living democratic slogans, if they are tolerated at all, are "episodic," "incidental" and "subordinate." Morrow, in the past, contributed his share to this sectarian muddleheadedness. But light is dawning on this "misunderstanding," too.

To such misunderstandings I must admit that I myself have contributed. In a discussion article (against the "Three Theses" of a group of European comrades, on which **The New International** commented at the time), I criticized those who define the slogan of the Socialist United States of Europe "as a propaganda slogan, i.e., not at present suitable for immediate agitation." The essential criticism I sought to make I still think correct: it was aimed against those who do not accept the slogan of the European movement. However, I did not serve to clarify the question when I indicated that the only correct estimate is that it is an agitation slogan and not a propaganda slogan.

The apology for contributing to "such misunderstandings" is not very gracious, but it is an apology and that, in the given case, is progress. Morrow proceeds to perform gymnastic exercises over this slogan: it is not agitational and not quite propagandistic, but, it turns out, it is "the central slogan of our epoch for Europe," although it is "unlikely"—there is restraint for you!—"to be the slogan under which the masses will be rallied for the direct struggle for power"; to which we would add, with less restraint, "most unlikely." It would have been much simpler to write: "As compared with the authors of the 'Three Theses,' which I abused so liberally, I was dead wrong." However, this is in the realm of "method," which is not our first concern here. Morrow continues:

The best and most thoughtful of the European workers—and this means not merely cadres but hundreds of thousands and even millions—will understand that the socialist unification of Europe is the only way out. But the best and most thoughtful workers will not be enough to make the revolution by themselves. They will succeed only by rallying behind them not merely millions but tens and hundreds of millions. And these will not be rallied by the relatively abstract conception of the Socialist United States of Europe.

The direct struggle for power will in all probability arise out of the question of which institutions shall have the authority to rule the country or the army at a given moment—bourgeois institutions like a provisional government and perhaps a revived parliament, or the representative bodies thrown up by the workers, peasants and soldiers, which will be essentially Soviets, whatever their actual name....

Let us not cavil. Yet, it is necessary to make two modifica-

tions of Morrow's otherwise correct presentation. First, the "best and most thoughtful" workers will get nowhere among the "tens and hundreds of millions" merely because they understand the need of socialist unification. It is imperative for the vanguard to understand the need of putting in the forefront, and becoming the most aggressive combatant for, the democratic demands which the masses themselves are already fighting for in their own way. Without this, any "understanding" of socialist union as the only way out for Europe isn't worth six months' supply of the *Weekly People*. Second, the "direct struggle for power" will not simply arise out of a conflict between the two bodies over "authority to rule"—that sounds juridical enough!—but out of a conflict between the Soviets (or semi-Soviets) seeking to enforce a popular program and the bourgeois power seeking to prevent its enforcement. Morrow shows by his reference to the Bolshevik revolution that he understands the kind of program involved: bread, land, peace, national freedom, workers' control of production, etc.—all democratic and transitional slogans that masses can grasp and fight for, not "socialism" or the "Socialist United States of Europe."

A Step Forward on Russia

The final point in dispute deals with Russia. Morrow has made one tiny but significant step forward. The advances of the Stalinist armies into Europe no longer produce only exultant thrills in him, as they continue to do in the SWP leadership.* He makes the ritualistic obeisance to the victories, "and of course we all agree that this power expresses the prodigious vitality of the October revolution despite Stalin's strangulation of the revolution. But," he continues,

... from a short-term perspective, we must also realize that this Soviet industry and this Red Army are, and are quite likely to remain for a time, in the hands of Stalin. That means that he will throw this power—which is greater than we had dreamed of—on the side of the European counter-revolution.

The Morrow-Morrison amendments attempted to indicate this Stalinist danger but they received short shrift in the final resolution. As in the draft resolution, the section entitled, "Significance of the Soviet Victories" consists merely of reiteration of programmatic fundamentals and of one reassuring repetition after another that Stalinism will not succeed in its counter-revolutionary plans.

Isn't it always so with frightened and disoriented opportunists who face events which they refuse to see because they did not foresee them and do not know how to cope with? So they reassure themselves with consoling words and try to escape the problem by the "reiteration of programmatic fundamentals." (By the way, is not this phrase lifted directly from our criticism of the SWP leadership during the dispute over the "Russian question" in 1939-40?)

*Not only there, but among the Oehlerites, too, who parrot **The Militant** almost word for word. Here is a sample from their paper, **The Leninist** (not less!) of February, 1944:

"Now that the Soviet Union has formally annexed Eastern Poland, we can anticipate the usual cries from the ultra-lefts, syndicalists, and others of 'Red Imperialism.' (Do the 'others' perchance include such well known ultra-lefts and syndicalists as Roosevelt and Churchill?)

"For the Marxist the matter is only an incident in the whole war. The Soviet Union today, as yesterday, must prepare buffer states to defend itself from invasion by its supposed Allies. The strategy of taking parts of Finland, Poland, Rumania and the Baltic States proved itself most wise when Hitler turned on his erstwhile 'ally.' The same will be true of the present annexations, when the 'Allies' turn upon Russia."

Lenin, replying to some comrades who criticized him for making certain territorial concessions to Finland because he surrendered "excellent fisheries there," said (see his speech in this issue): "Scratch some communists and you will find Great-Russian chauvinists."

Oehler doesn't even have to be scratched.

At one point or another the Fourth International will be compelled to say frankly to the workers what I said in my plenum report, that the Soviet victories are not a one-sided matter of progressive consequences, even though we give the main weight to the progressive consequences.

Audacity is a comparative term. In the SWP, this shrivelled, timid, droopy-mouthed, apologetic, don't-slug-me-for-it formula is undoubtedly audacity incarnate. "At one point or another," you understand, we should tell the workers that the advance of the Stalinist counter-revolution and the reduction to slavery of the people over whom it establishes the dominion of the GPU or whom it feeds into the maw of Allied im-

perialism—are not entirely progressive, although, mind you ("don't-slug-me-for-it"), they remain mainly progressive. "The plenum resolution," says Morrow, "provides merely reassuring anodynes." Morrow provides a squeak. In comparison with the anodynes, we would like to "give the main weight to the progressive consequences" of the squeak, in the hope that it encourages the author, and if not him then others, to speak later in a clear, firm, revolutionary voice.

An understanding of the problems of the day is beginning to pierce the SWP. As we said, light is dawning. When will the sun rise?

Bolshevism and Self-Determination

Two Speeches by Lenin

Lenin's speech was published for the first time in English in *The Liberator* (New York) in 1919, but in abbreviated form and unsatisfactory translation. The full text in English is to be found in the American edition of Lenin's *Selected Works*, Volume VIII, pp. 335 et seq. The text includes his introductory report on the party program delivered at the Eighth Congress of the Russian Communist Party (Bolsheviks) on March 19, 1919, and his concluding remarks on the question the same day. We print from these two speeches those parts of it which Lenin devoted to the national question and the slogan of the right of self-determination. As may be seen, Lenin's remarks were directly mainly against N. I. Bukharin, who opposed Lenin's position on the disputed question as early as the first days of the World War, and continued his opposition in the first years of the Bolshevik Revolution, abandoning it later. Obviously, Lenin's speech is of particularly topical interest today. We reprint it here not only in the interests of the general theoretical education of the Marxian movement, but because of the special need today of emphasizing Lenin's position on the national question in the Fourth International, where so much confusion, if not downright ignorance, prevails on this score.—Ed.

The old "economism" of the years 1894-1902 argued thus: The Narodniki [Populists] are refuted. Capitalism has triumphed in Russia. Therefore there is no point in thinking of political revolutions. The practical conclusion was: either "the economic struggle for the workers, the political struggle for the liberals." This was a curvet to the right. Or—instead of the political revolution, a general strike for the socialist overturn. This was a curvet to the left, as represented in a—now forgotten—brochure of a Russian "Economist" at the end of the Nineties.

A new "economism" is now arising, which argues with two analogous curvets: "To the right"—we are against the liberation of the oppressed peoples, against the struggle against annexations—although this is not yet thought out to the end or expressed to the end. "To the left"—we are against the minimum program (i.e., against the struggle for reforms and democracy), because it "contradicts" the socialist revolution.

More than a year has already elapsed since this incipient tendency made its appearance before some comrades, at the Berne Conference in 1915. Fortunately, only one single comrade, who encountered general disapproval, insisted upon these ideas of "imperialist economism" to the very end of the conference, and formulated them in writing in the form of special "Theses." Nobody adhered to these Theses.

Later two other comrades associated themselves with the theses of this comrade against self-determination (without recognizing the inseparable connection of this question with the general position of the "Theses" mentioned above). And the appearance of the "Dutch Program"* in February, 1916, which was published in No. 3 of the *Bulletin of the International Socialist Commission*, revealed this "misunderstanding" immediately and prompted the author of the original "Theses" once more to resurrect his whole "imperialist economism" all over again in its entirety and not as applied to one single, allegedly "partial" point.

It seems absolutely necessary again and again to call the attention of the comrades in question to the fact that they have fallen into a swamp, that their "ideas" have nothing whatever in common either with Marxism or with revolutionary social democracy. To leave the matter "in secret" any longer is inadmissible: that would mean to aid and abet ideological confusion and to turn it in the worst direction, namely, of muteness, of "partial" conflicts, of endless "friction," etc. On the contrary, it is our duty to insist absolutely and quite categorically that the questions raised must be thought out and finally brought to a close.

A Fundamental Question

The editorial board of the *Sotsialdemokrat*, in the theses on self-determination (which appeared in German as a reprint from No. 2 of *Vorbote*), purposely brought the matter out in the press in an *impersonal* form, yet very amply, emphasizing especially the connection of the question of self-determination with the general question of the struggle for reforms, for democracy, the inadmissibility of ignoring the political side, etc. In his comments on the theses of the editorial board on self-determination, the author of the original Theses (of "imperialist economism") *solidarizes himself with the Dutch program* and shows with particular clearness by this very fact that the question of self-determination, as it is put by the founders of the incipient tendency, is not at all a "partial" but rather a general and fundamental question.

The representatives of the Zimmerwald Left received the program of the Dutch some time between February 5 and 8,

*This was the draft program of the Dutch Revolutionary-Socialist Union (chairman, Roland-Holst) and the Social-Democratic Party of Holland (SDP—Wynkoop, etc), distributed at the enlarged Conference of the International Socialist Commission in February in Berne and reprinted in No. 3 of the Bulletin of the ISC of February 29, 1916, under the title, "A Draft of the RSV and the SDAP (SDP?) of Holland." (Note of the Lenin Institute.)

1916, at the Berne session of the ISC. No member of this Left, Radek also not excepted, expressed himself in favor of this program, for it unites promiscuously points like "expropriation of the banks" and "abolition of customs duties," "dissolution of the upper chamber (Senate)" and more of the same. All the representatives of the Zimmerwald Left, with hardly a word being uttered—yes, almost without a word, with only a shrug of the shoulders—unanimously turned a cold shoulder to the Dutch program as being, taken altogether, notoriously unsuitable.

The author of the original Theses written early in 1915, on the other hand, liked this program so much that he declared: "In essence, I said no more than this myself" (early in 1915), "the Dutch thought it out to the end": "They have the economic side—expropriation of the banks and the big factories, the political—the republic, etc. Quite right!"

In actuality the Dutch thought nothing "out to the end," but supplied a very much un-thought-out program. It is the sad fate of Russia that many people among us snatch up precisely the un-thought-out, if only it is the latest thing. . . .

The author of the Theses of 1915 believes that the editorial board of the *Sotsialdemokrat* has fallen into a contradiction when it "itself" raised in § 8 ("Concrete Tasks") the "expropriation of the banks" and even added the word "immediate" (plus "dictatorial measures"). "And how they ran me down in Berne because of this!" exclaims the author of the Theses of 1915 indignantly, thinking back upon the discussions in Berne early in 1915.

This author has forgotten and overlooked a "trifle": the editorial board of the *Sotsialdemokrat* analyzes clearly two cases in § 8: first case—the socialist revolution has begun. Then, it says there, "immediate expropriation of the banks," etc. Second case: the socialist revolution does not begin—then the talk about these fine things must be set aside.

Inasmuch as presently the socialist revolution in the sense mentioned has admittedly not yet begun, the program of the Dutch is absurd. The author of the Theses, however, "deepens" the matter when he returns (each time at the same spot) to his old mistake: to convert political demands (like "dissolution of the upper chamber?") into a "political formulation of the social revolution."

After the author has moved around in a circle for a full year, he reaches his old mistake. Here is the "salient point" of his misfortune: he cannot get clear on the question of how intervening imperialism should be linked with the struggle for reforms and with the struggle for democracy—just the same way that "economism" of blessed memory did not understand how to link intervening capitalism with the struggle for democracy.

Hence the complete confusion in the question of the "unrealizability" of democratic demands under imperialism.

Hence the ignoring of the political struggle now, today, immediately, as at all times, which is inadmissible for a Marxist (and it fitting only on the lips of an "Economist," a supporter of *Rabochaya Mysl*).

Hence the stiff-necked characteristic of "falling" from the recognition of imperialism into an apology of imperialism (as the "Economists" of blessed memory fell from the recognition of capitalism into the apology of capitalism).

And so forth and so on.

To analyze in all detail the mistakes of the author of the Theses of 1915 in his comments on the theses of the editorial board of the *Sotsialdemokrat* on self-determination, is quite impossible, for every sentence is wrong! After all, you cannot

write brochures or books in refutation of "comments" when the initiators of "imperialist economism" move around in a circle for a whole year and pertinaciously refuse to concern themselves with what ought to be their downright party duty if they wanted to take a serious attitude toward political questions, namely, with a thought-out, rounded-out presentation of what they describe as "our differences of opinion."

Bukharin's Basic Error

I am compelled to confine myself to brief indications of how the author applies his basic error or how he "supplements" it.

The author believes I contradict myself: In 1914 I wrote (*Prozveshchenye*)* that it is absurd to seek self-determination "in the programs of the Western European socialists," and in 1916 I declare that self-determination is especially urgent.

The author did not think of the fact (!!) that these "programs" were written in 1875, 1880 and 1890!

Further, according to the paragraphs (of the theses of the editorial board of the *Sotsialdemokrat* on self-determination):

§1. The same "economistic" refusal to see and to pose political questions. Inasmuch as socialism will create the economic foundation for the abolition of national oppression in politics, therefore our author refuses to formulate our political tasks in this field! This is simply funny!

Inasmuch as the victorious proletariat does not reject wars against the bourgeoisie of other countries, therefore the author refuses to formulate our political tasks in the field of national oppression! All examples of continual violations of Marxism and of logic: or, if you will, the expression of the logic of the basic mistakes of "imperialist economism."

§2. The opponents of self-determination have fallen into frightful confusion with their references to "unrealizability."

The editorial board of the *Sotsialdemokrat* explains to them two possible meanings of unrealizability and their mistake in both cases.

The author of the Theses of 1915, however, who does not even attempt to give his conception of "unrealizability," that is, accepts our explanation that two different things are being mixed up here, continues this confusion!

He ties up crises with "imperialist politics"; our political economist has forgotten that there were crises before imperialism! . . .

To speak of the economic unrealizability of self-determination means to create confusion—the editorial board explained. The author does not reply, does not explain, that he deems self-determination economically unrealizable; he evacuates the disputed position by shifting to politics ("nevertheless" unrealizable), although he was told quite clearly that under imperialism the republic is politically just exactly as "unrealizable" as self-determination.

Driven into a corner here, the author makes a "leap" again: he acknowledges the republic as well as the entire minimum program only as a "political formulation of the social revolution"!!!

The author abandons the defense of the "economic" unrealizability of self-determination by shifting over to politics. He transfers the political unrealizability to the question of the entire minimum program. Here again there is not an iota of Marxism, not an iota of logic, apart from the logic of "imperialist economism."

*The article referred to was written by Lenin in the Bolshevik periodical, *Prozveshchenye* (Enlightenment), Nos. 4, 5 and 6, April, May and June, 1914: "On the Right of Self-Determination of Nations." English translation in Selected Works, Vol. IV.—Trans.

The author wants (without having reflected and without offering anything coherent, without making the effort to work out a program of his own) imperceptibly to expunge the minimum program of the Social Democratic Party! No wonder he has not budged an inch for a whole year!!

Kautskyanism and Democratic Demands

The question of the struggle against *Kaukskyanism* is again not a partial but a *general and fundamental* question of the present day. The author has *not understood* this struggle. Just as the "Economists" transformed the struggle against the Narodniks into an apology for capitalism, the author transforms the struggle against Kautskyanism into an apology for imperialism (this applies also to §3).

The mistake of Kautskyanism consists in this, that it poses in a reformist way such demands and in such a moment as cannot be posed otherwise than in a revolutionary way (the author, however, has the notion that the mistake of Kautskyanism consists in putting up these demands in general, just as the "Economists" "conceived" the struggle against Narodnikism in the sense that "down with absolutism" was Narodnikism).

The mistake of Kautskyanism consists in this, that it directs *correct* democratic demands backward, to peaceful capitalism, instead of forward, to the social revolution (the author, however, has the notion that these demands are incorrect).

§3. See above. The question of "Federation" is *likewise* evaded by the author. The same basic mistake of the same "economism": the inability to pose *political* questions.*

§4. "From self-determination flows the defense of the fatherland," stubbornly repeats the author. His mistake here consists in this, that he wants to convert the rejection of defense of the fatherland into a *stereotype*, wants to derive it *not* from the historico-concrete peculiarity of the *given* war, but "in general." This is not Marxism.

The author was told long ago, and he has not refuted it: Just you try to discover such a formulation of the struggle against national oppression or civil inequality, a formulation as would *not* justify "defense of the fatherland." You will not be able to.

Does this then mean that we are opponents of the struggle against *national oppression* because defense of the fatherland can be derived from it?

No, for we are not against "defense of the fatherland" "in general" (see the resolutions of our party), but against the *glossing over* of the given *imperialist* war by means of this deceitful slogan.

The author wants (but he cannot; here too nothing but spasms for a whole year...) to put the question of the "defense of the fatherland" falsely *down to the very ground, unhistorically*.

Monism and Dualism

The chatter about "dualism" shows that the author *does not understand* what monism is and what dualism is.

If I "unite" a shoebrush and a mammal, will that be "monism"?

If I say that to reach goal A you must
(C)——(A)——(B)

*"We do not fear dissolution," writes the author, "we do not defend state frontiers." Just try to give an exact political formulation on this point! That's the salient point, that you *cannot* do it; you are prevented from doing it by "economistic" blindness toward the questions of *political democracy*. (Note by Lenin.)

go left from point B and right from point C, will that be "dualism"?

Is the position of the proletariat of the oppressor and the oppressed nations toward national oppression the same? No, it is not the same, neither *economically* nor *politically* and *ideologically, spiritually, etc.*

Therefore?

Therefore to reach one goal (amalgamation of the nations) some will proceed *so* and others *otherwise* from *different* points of departure. To deny this is a "monism" that unites a shoebrush with a mammal.

"The proletarians of the oppressed nation must *not* say that" (come out *for* self-determination)—that is how the author of the Theses "understood" the editorial board.

That's a curious thing! *Nothing of the kind* is said in the theses. The author either did not read to the end, or else he did not reflect at all.

§5. See above on Kautskyanism.

§6. The author was told of three *types* of countries in the world as a whole. The author "replies" by snatching at a "case." This is—casuistry, but not politics.

You want to know a "case": "and Belgium"?

See the brochure of Lenin and Zinoviev: it says there that we would be *for* the defense of Belgium (even by means of *war*) if the concrete war were different.

Do you not agree with this?

Then say so!

You have *not reflected* on the question of *why* the Social Democracy is against the "defense of the fatherland."

We are not against it for the reason you think we are, for your way of putting the question (spasm, but not putting) is unhistorical. That is my answer to the author.

To call it "sophistry" when we who *justify a war for shaking off* the national yoke, do not justify the given imperialist war which is carried on *by both sides for the sake* of strengthening national oppression, means to employ a "strong" word, but not to *reflect in the slightest*.

The author *would like* to pose the question of "defense of the fatherland" in a "more left" manner, and what emerges (after a whole year) is—one single confusion!

§7. The author *criticizes*: "not touched on at all is the question of 'peace conditions' in general."

That is called criticism: a question is not touched on that we do not even pose!!

But the question of *annexations*, in which the "imperialist economists" have landed in confusion, this time *together with* the Dutch and with Radek, is "touched on" here and posed.

Either you reject the immediate slogan, Against the Old and New Annexations—(which is not less "unrealizable" under imperialism than self-determination; in Europe as in the colonies)—and then your apology for imperialism becomes open instead of concealed.

Or you acknowledge this slogan (as Radek did in the press)—and then you have acknowledged the self-determination of nations under another name!!

"Western European Bolshevism"

§8. The author proclaims a "Bolshevism on a Western European scale" ("not its position," he adds).

I attach no importance to the desire to cling to the word "Bolshevism," because *some* of the "old Bolsheviks" I know—may God have mercy! I can only say that the "Bolshevism on a Western European scale" which the author proclaims is,

I am profoundly convinced, no Bolshevism and no Marxism, but only a small variant of the same very old "economism."

In my opinion, it is in the highest degree inadmissible and unserious, not in the spirit of the party—to proclaim a *new Bolshevism* for a whole year and to let the matter rest there. Is it not high time to *reflect* and to provide the comrades with a coherent and systematic presentation of this "Bolshevism on a Western European scale"?

The author has not demonstrated the difference between the colonies and the oppressed nations in Europe, nor will he be able (as applied to the given question) to demonstrate it.

* * *

With the Dutch and the PSD,* the denial of self-deter-

*The former were the left-wing Dutch social-democrats (Wijnkoop, Pannkoek, Gorter, Roland-Hoist) who split from the official Social-Democratic Party (SDAP) in 1909 and formed the Social-Democratic Party of Holland (SDP). The

latter was the Social-Democratic Party of Poland whose outstanding spokesman, particularly on the national question, was Rosa Luxemburg.

**A declaration signed at the First International Socialist Conference in Zimmerwald in 1915 by the representatives of the Polish Social-Democracy and the left wing of the Polish Socialist Party (PPS), protesting against the German and Austrian governments for robbing the Polish people of the "possibility of determining its destiny."

N. LENIN.

On the Program of the Party

I have to say the same thing with regard to the national question. Here too the wish is father to the thought with comrade Bukharin. He says that it is impossible to admit the right of nations to self-determination. A nation implies the bourgeoisie together with the proletariat. And are we, the proletarians, to recognize the right to self-determination of the despised bourgeoisie? That is absolutely incompatible! Pardon me, it is compatible with what actually exists. If you eliminate this, the result will be sheer fantasy. You refer to the process of differentiation which is taking place in the depths of nations, the process of separation of the proletariat from the bourgeoisie. But let us look at the way this differentiation is proceeding.

Take, for instance, Germany, the model of an advanced capitalist country, which, in respect to the organization of capitalism, finance capitalism, was superior to America. She was inferior in many respects, in respect to technical development and production and in respect to politics, but in respect to the organization of finance capitalism, in respect to the conversion of monopoly capitalism into state monopoly capitalism, Germany was superior to America. She is a model, it would seem. But what has taken place there? Has the German proletariat become differentiated from the bourgeoisie? No! Why, it was only of a few towns that it was reported that a majority of the workers are opposed to the Scheidemannites. How was this? It was owing to the alliance between the Spartacists and the thrice-accursed German Menshevik-Independents, who make a muddle of everything and want to wed the system of Soviets to a Constituent Assembly! And this is what is taking place in Germany! And she, mark you, is an advanced country.

Comrade Bukharin says, "Why do we need the right of nations to self-determination?" I must repeat what I said in objection to him in the summer of 1917, when he proposed to delete the minimum program and to leave only the maximum program. I then retorted, "Don't shout until you're out of the wood." When we have conquered power, and even then after waiting a while, we shall do this. We have conquered power, we have waited a while, and now I am willing to do it. We have fully launched into socialist construction, we have beaten off the first assault that threatened us—now it will be in place. The same applies to the right of nations to self-

determination. "I want to recognize only the right of the toiling classes to self-determination," says Comrade Bukharin. That is to say, you want to recognize something that has not been achieved in a single country except Russia. That is ridiculous.

Case of Finland

Look at Finland; she is a democratic country, more developed, more cultured than we are. In Finland a process of separation, of differentiation of the proletariat, is proceeding, proceeding in a peculiar way, for more painfully than was the case with us. The Finns have experienced the dictatorship of Germany; they are now experiencing the dictatorship of the Entente. And thanks to the fact that we recognize the right of nations to self-determination, the process of differentiation has been facilitated there. I very well recall the scene when, at the Smolny, it was my lot to hand an act to Svinhufvud—which in Russian means "swinehead"—the representative of the Finnish bourgeoisie, who played the part of a hangman. He amiably shook my hand, we exchanged compliments. How unpleasant that was! But it had to be done, because at that time the bourgeoisie was deceiving the people, was deceiving the toilers by declaring that the Muscovites, the chauvinists, the Great Russians, wanted to stifle the Finns. It had to be done.

And yesterday, was it not necessary to do the same thing in relation to the Bashkir Republic? When Bukharin said, "We recognize this right in some cases," I even wrote down that he had included in the list the Hottentots, the Bushmen and the Indians. Hearing this enumeration, I thought, how is it that comrade Bukharin has forgotten a small trifle, the Bashkirs? There are no Bushmen in Russia, nor have I heard that the Hottentots have laid claim to an autonomous republic, but we have Bashkirs, Kirghiz and a number of other peoples, and to these we cannot deny recognition. We cannot deny it to a single one of the peoples living within the boundaries of the former Russian Empire. Let us even assume that the Bashkirs have overthrown the exploiters and we have helped them to do so. But this is possible only where a revolution has fully matured. And it must be done cautiously, so as not to restrain by one's interference the process of differentiation of the proletariat which we ought to expedite.

What, then, can we do in relation to such peoples as the Kirghiz, the Sarts, who to this day are under the influence of their mullahs? In Russia the population, having had a long experience of the priests, helped us to overthrow them. But you know how badly the decree on civil marriage is still being put into effect. Can we approach these Sarts and say, "We shall overthrow your exploiters"? We cannot do this, because they are entirely under the influence of their mullahs. In such cases we have to wait until the given nation develops, until the differentiation of the proletariat from the bourgeois elements, which is inevitable, has taken place.

Comrade Bukharin does not want to wait. He is possessed by impatience: "Why should we? When we have ourselves overthrown the bourgeoisie, proclaimed a Soviet government and the dictatorship of the proletariat, why should we act thus?" This has the effect of a rousing appeal, it contains an indication of our path, but if we were to proclaim only this in our program, it would not be a program, but a proclamation. We may proclaim a Soviet government, and the dictatorship of the proletariat, and utter contempt for the bourgeoisie, which it deserves a thousand times over, but in the program we must write absolutely and precisely just what actually exists. And then our program will be irrefragable.

We hold a strictly class standpoint. What we are writing in the program is a recognition of what has in fact taken place since the period when we wrote of the self-determination of nations in general. At that time there were still no proletarian republics. It was when they appeared, and only as they appeared, that we were able to write what is here written: "A federation of states of the *Soviet type*." The Soviet type is becoming international. And this is all we can say. To go farther, one step farther, one hair's breadth farther, would be false, and therefore unsuitable for a program.

Self-Determination and Soviets

We say that account must be taken of the stage at which the given nation finds itself on the way from mediaevalism to bourgeois democracy, and from bourgeois democracy to proletarian democracy. That is absolutely correct. All nations have the right of self-determination—there is no need to speak especially of the Hottentots and the Bushmen. The vast majority, most likely nine tenths of the population of the earth, perhaps ninety-five per cent, come under this description, since all countries are on the way from mediaevalism to bourgeois democracy or from bourgeois democracy to proletarian democracy. This is an absolutely inevitable course. More cannot be said, because it would be wrong, because it would not be what actually exists. To cast out the self-determination of nations and insert the self-determination of toilers would be absolutely wrong, because this statement of the question does not reckon with the difficulties, with the zigzag course which differentiation within a nation takes. In Germany it is not proceeding in the same way as in our country: it is proceeding in certain respects more rapidly, and in other respects in a slower and more bloody way. Not a single party in our country adopted so monstrous an idea as a combination of Soviets and a Constituent Assembly. Why, we have to live side by side with these nations. The Scheidemannites are already saying that we want to conquer Germany. That is of course ridiculous, nonsensical. But the bourgeoisie has its own interests and its own press, which is shouting this to the whole world in hundreds of millions of copies; and Wilson is supporting this in his own interests. The Bolsheviks, they declare, have a large army, and they want by means of conquest

to implant their Bolshevism in Germany. The best people in Germany—the Spartacists—told us that the German workers are being provoked against the Communists: See, they are told, how bad things are with the Bolsheviks! And we cannot say that things with us are very good. And there they influence the masses with the argument that the proletarian revolution in Germany would result in the same disorders as in Russia. Our disorders are a protracted malady. We are striving against desperate difficulties in creating the proletarian dictatorship in our country. As long as the bourgeoisie, or the petty bourgeoisie, or even part of the German workers, are under the influence of this bugbear—"the Bolsheviks want to establish their system by force"—so long will the formula "the self-determination of the toilers" not help matters. We must arrange things so that the German social-traitors will not be able to say that the Bolsheviks are trying to impose their universal system, which, as it were, can be introduced into Berlin by Red Army bayonets. And this is what may happen if the principle of the self-determination of nations is denied.

Our program must not speak of the self-determination of the toilers, because that would be wrong. It must speak of what actually exists. Since nations are in different stages on the road from mediaevalism to bourgeois democracy and from bourgeois democracy to proletarian democracy, this thesis of our program is absolutely right. With us there have been very many zigzags on this road. Every nation must secure the right to self-determination, and that will make the self-determination of the toilers easier. In Finland the process of separation of the proletariat from the bourgeoisie is proceeding with remarkable clarity, force and profundity. At any rate, things will proceed there not as they do in our country. If we were to declare that we do not recognize the Finnish nation, but only the toiling masses, that would be sheer banality. We cannot refuse to recognize what actually exists; it will itself compel us to recognize it. The demarcation between the proletariat and bourgeoisie is proceeding in different ways in different countries. Here we must act with great caution. We must be particularly cautious with regard to the various nations for there is nothing worse than lack of confidence in a nation. Self-determination of the proletariat is proceeding among the Poles. Here are the latest figures on the composition of the Warsaw Soviet of Workers' Deputies: Polish social-traitors—333, Communists—297. This shows that, according to our revolutionary calendar, October there is not very far off. It is somewhere about August or September, 1917, there. But, firstly, no decree has yet been issued stating that all countries must live according to the Bolshevik revolutionary calendar; and even if it were issued, it would not be observed. And, secondly, the situation at present is such that the majority of the Polish workers, who are more advanced than ours, better educated, share the standpoint of social-defensism, social patriotism. We must wait. We cannot speak here of the self-determination of the toiling masses. We must carry on propaganda on behalf of this differentiation. This is what we are doing, but there is not the slightest shadow of a doubt that we must recognize the self-determination of the Polish nation now. That is clear. The Polish proletarian movement is taking the same course as ours, towards the dictatorship of the proletariat, but not in the same way as in Russia. And there the workers are being scared by statements to the effect that the Muscovites, the Great Russians, who have always oppressed the Poles, want to carry their Great-Russian chauvinism into Poland in the guise of communism. Communism cannot be imposed by force. When I said to

one of the best comrades among the Polish Communists, "You will do it in a different way," he replied, "No, we will do the same thing, but better than you." To such an argument I had absolutely nothing to object. We must give them the opportunity of fulfilling a modest wish—to create a better Soviet government than ours. We have to reckon with the fact that things are proceeding in rather a peculiar way, and we cannot say, "Down with the right of nations to self-determination! We grant the right of self-determination only to the toiling masses." This self-determination proceeds in a very complex and difficult way. It exists nowhere but in Russia, and, while foreseeing every stage of development in other countries we must decree nothing from Moscow. That is why this proposal is unacceptable in principle.

Reply to the Discussion

Further, I must dwell on the question of the self-determination of nations. This question has acquired an inflated significance in our criticism. Here the weakness of our criticism was expressed in the fact that this question, which essentially plays a less than secondary part in the general structure of the program, in the sum total of program demands—this question has acquired a special significance in our criticism.

When comrade Pyatakov spoke I wondered: What is this, a discussion of the program, or a dispute between two organization bureaus? When comrade Pyatakov said that the Ukrainian Communists act in accordance with the instructions of the Central Committee of the Russian Communist Party, I could not understand in what tone he was speaking. Was it a tone of regret? I do not suspect comrade Pyatakov of that, but the idea of his speech was as follows: What is the good of all this self-determination when there is a fine Central Committee in Moscow? This is a childish point of view. The Ukraine was separated from Russia by exceptional circumstances, and the national movement did not take deep root there. In so far as it did manifest itself it was knocked out by the Germans. This is a fact, but an exceptional fact. Even with the language there, the position is such that it has become uncertain whether the Ukrainian language is the mass language or not. The toiling masses of other nations were imbued with distrust for the Great-Russians, as a kulak and oppressing nation. That is a fact. A Finnish representative told me that among the Finnish bourgeoisie, who hated the Great Russians, voices are to be heard saying, "The Germans turned out to be vile beasts, the Entente turned out to be vile beasts, we had better have the Bolsheviks." This is a tremendous victory we have gained over the Finnish bourgeoisie in the national question. This in no way prevents us from fighting it as a class enemy, selecting suitable methods for the purpose. The Soviet Republic, which has been formed in a country whose

czarism used to oppress Finland, must declare it respects the right of nations to independence. We concluded a treaty with the Red Finnish government, which existed for a short time, we consented to make certain territorial concessions, on account of which I have heard not a few purely chauvinistic objections, such as, "There are excellent fisheries there, and you have surrendered them." There are the kind of objections of which I have said: Scratch some Communists and you will find Great-Russian chauvinists.

Great-Russian Chauvinism

It seems to me that this example of Finland, and of the Bashkirs, shows that in the national question you cannot argue that economic unity is necessary at all costs. Of course it is necessary! But we must endeavor to secure it by propaganda, by agitation, by a voluntary alliance. The Bashkirs distrust the Great-Russians because the Great-Russians are more cultured and used their culture to rob the Bashkirs. That is why in these remote places the name Great-Russian for the Bashkir is tantamount to oppressor, swindler. This must be reckoned with, it must be combated. But, after all, this is a prolonged process. You cannot eliminate it by a decree, you know. In this matter we have to be very cautious. Caution is particularly necessary on the part of a nation like the Great-Russian nation, which aroused furious hatred among all the other nations, and we have only now learned to correct the situation, and that badly. For instance, there are in the Commissariat of Education, or connected with the Commissariat of Education, Communists who say: There is a unified school, and therefore don't dare to teach in any language but Russian! In my opinion such a Communist is a Great-Russian chauvinist. He lurks in many of us, he must be combated.

That is why we must declare to the other nations that we are out-and-out internationalists and are striving for a voluntary union of the workers and peasants of all nations. This in no way precludes wars. War is another question, and arises out of the very nature of imperialism. If we are fighting Wilson, and Wilson makes a small nation his instrument, we say that we shall oppose this instrument. We have never declared ourselves against this. We have never said that a socialist republic can exist without military force. War may be a necessity under certain conditions. But now the essence of the question of self-determination is that various nations are following a similar historical road, but by zigzag and footpaths differing extremely, and that the more cultured nations are obviously moving in a different way from the less cultured nations. Finland moved in a different way. Germany is moving in a different way. Comrade Pyatakov is right a thousand times when he says that we need unity. But we must strive for it by means of propaganda, by party influence, by the creation of trade unions. However, here too we cannot act in one stereotyped way. Just try to extend this to Germany now! We have conquered the trade-union movement, but the German comrades say, "In our country the leaders in all the trade unions are so yellow that our slogan is to liquidate the trade unions." We tell them, "You have national peculiarities, you are absolutely right." If we suppressed this point, or formulated it a different way, we should be deleting the national question from the programme. This might be done if there were people without national peculiarities. But such people do not exist, and we cannot build a socialist society in any other way.

N. LENIN

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The Working Class of Poland

Engels Comments on a Modern Problem

The interest of Marx and Engels in the Polish question goes back to the earliest days of their political activity. They never swerved from a passionate insistence on the establishment of Poland's independence, believing, as Marx once said, that "without Poland's independence, no liberty can be established in Europe." We print here the uncompleted series of articles on Poland written by Engels for *The Commonwealth*, beginning with the issue of Saturday, March 24, 1866. The paper, successor to the *Workman's Advocate*, served for a time as the official organ of the First International, and many of the members of its editorial board were likewise members of the International. Engels contributes here not only an important page of the history of his time, and a model of the views he shared with Marx on the struggle in Europe for revolutionary democracy and national freedom, but also a penetrating criticism of the Napoleonic "principle of nationality," on one side, and of Czarist foreign policy, on the other. The reader will recognize the kinship between the Court of Catherine II which "was made the headquarters of the enlightened men of the day" and where "the most enlightened principles was professed by the Empress and her Court," and the "court" of the present Kremlin autocrats. He will also note Engels' ironical remarks about the old Russia which need few modifications to apply to the present: "Talk about a war of class against class as something extremely revolutionary;—why, Russia set such a war on foot in Poland nearly 100 years ago, and a fine specimen of a class war it was, when Russian soldiers and Little Russian serfs went in company to burn down the castles of Polish lords, merely to prepare Russian annexation, which being once accomplished the same Russian soldiers put the serfs back again under the yoke of their lords." The Stalin régime is certainly in the grand tradition! Engels wrote *The Commonwealth* articles in English. We print them here from the collection, "Karl Marx und Friedrich Engels über die Polenfrage," which the late Bolshevik scholar, Ryazanov, published in 1915 in Volume VII, Part 1, of Dr. Carl Grünberg's *Archiv für die Geschichte des Sozialismus und der Arbeiterbewegung*, issued in Leipzig.—Ed.

I. What Have the Working Classes to Do with Poland?

To the Editor of *The Commonwealth*:

Wherever the working classes have taken a part of their own in political movements, there, from the very beginning, their foreign policy was expressed in the few words—restoration of Poland. This was the case with the Chartist movement so long as it existed; that was the case with the French working men long before 1848, as well as during that memorable year, when, on the 15th of May, they marched on to the National Assembly to the cry of "*Vive la Pologne!*"—Poland forever! This was the case in Germany, when, in 1848 and '49, the organs of the working class demanded war with Russia for the restoration of Poland. It is the case even now;—with one exception—of which more anon—the working men of Europe unanimously proclaim the restoration of Poland as a part and parcel of their political programme, as the most comprehensive expression of their foreign policy. The middle class, too, have had, have still, "sympathies" with the Poles; which sympathies have not prevented them from leaving the Poles in the lurch in 1831, in 1846, in 1863, nay, have not even prevented them from leaving the worst enemies of Poland, such as Lord Palmerston, to manage matters so as actually to assist Russia while they talked in favor of Poland. But with the working classes it is different. They mean intervention, not non-intervention; they mean war with Russia while Russia meddles with Poland; and they have proved it every time the

Poles rose against their oppressors. And recently, the International Workingmen's Association has given a fuller expression to this universal instinctive feeling of the body it claims to represent, by inscribing on its banner, "Resistance to Russian encroachments upon Europe—Restoration of Poland."

This programme of the foreign policy of the working men of Western and Central Europe has found a unanimous consent among the class to whom it was addressed, with one exception, as we said before. There are among the working men of France a small minority who belong to the school of the late P. J. Proudhon. This school differs *in toto* from the generality of the advanced and thinking working men; it declares them to be ignorant fools, and maintains, on most points, opinions quite contrary to theirs. This holds good in their foreign policy also. The Proudhonists, sitting in judgment on oppressed Poland, find the verdict of the Staleybridge Jury, "Serves her right." They admire Russia as the great land of the future, as the most progressive nation upon the face of the earth, at the side of which such a paltry country as the United States is not worthy of being named. They have charged the Council of the International Association with setting up the Bonapartist principle of nationalities, and with declaring that magnanimous Russian people without the pale of civilized Europe, such being a grievous sin against the principles of universal democracy and the fraternity of all nations. These are the charges. Barring the democratic phraseology at the wind-up, they coincide, it will be seen at once, verbally and literally with what the extreme Tories of all countries have to say about Poland and Russia. Such charges are not worth refuting; but, as they come from a fraction of the working class, be it ever so small a one, they may render it desirable to state again the case of Poland and Russia, and to vindicate what we may henceforth call the foreign policy of the united working men of Europe.

But why do we always name Russia alone in connection with Poland? Have not two German powers, Austria and Prussia, shared in the plunder? Do not they, too, hold parts of Poland in bondage, and, in connection with Russia, do they not work to keep down every national Polish movement?

It is well known how hard Austria has struggled to keep out of the Polish business; how long she resisted the plans of Russia and Prussia for partition. Poland was a natural ally of Austria against Russia. When Russia once became formidable, nothing could be more in the interest of Austria than to keep Poland alive between herself and the newly-rising Empire. It was only when Austria saw that Poland's fate was settled, that with or without her, the other two powers were determined to annihilate her, it was only then that in self-protection she went in for a share of the territory. But as early as 1815 she held out for the restoration of an independent Poland; in 1831 and in 1863 she was ready to go to war for that object, and give up her own share of Poland, provided England and France were prepared to join her. The same during the Crimean war. This is not said in justification of the general policy of the Austrian government. Austria has shown often enough that to oppress a weaker nation is congenial work to her rulers. But in the case of Poland the instinct of self-preservation was stronger than the desire for

new territory or the habits of government. And this puts Austria out of court for the present.

As to Prussia, her share of Poland is too trifling to weigh much on the scale. Her friend and ally, Russia, has managed to ease her of nine-tenths of what she got during the three partitions. But what little is left to her weighs as an incubus upon her. It has chained her to the triumphal car of Russia, it has been the means of enabling her government, even in 1863 and '64, to practice unchallenged, in Prussian Poland, those breaches of the law, those infractions of individual liberty, of the right of meeting, of the liberty of the press, which were so soon afterward to be applied to the rest of the country; it has falsified the whole middle-class Liberal movement which, from fear of risking the loss of a few square miles of land on the eastern frontier, allowed the government to set all law aside with regard to the Poles. The working men, not only of Prussia, but of all Germany, have a greater interest than those of any other country in the restoration of Poland, and they have shown in every revolutionary movement that they know it. Restoration of Poland, to them, is emancipation of their own country from Russian vassalage. And this, we think, puts Prussia out of court, too. Whenever the working classes of Russia (if there is such a thing in that country, in the sense it is understood in Western Europe) form a political programme, and that programme contains the liberation of Poland—then, but not till then, Russia as a nation will be out of court, too, and the government of the Czar will remain alone under indictment.

FREDERIC ENGELS.

II. The "Principle of Nationalities"

Sir:

It is said that to claim independence for Poland is to acknowledge the "principle of nationalities," and that the principle of nationalities is a Bonapartist invention concocted to prop up the Napoleonic despotism in France. Now what is this "principle of nationalities"?

By the treaties of 1815 the boundaries of the various states of Europe were drawn merely to suit diplomatic convenience, and especially to suit the convenience of the then strongest continental power—Russia. No account was taken either of the wishes, the interests, or the national diversities of the populations. Thus, Poland was divided, Germany was divided, Italy was divided, not to speak of the many smaller nationalities inhabiting Southeastern Europe, and of which few people at that time knew anything. The consequence was that for Poland, Germany and Italy, the very first step in every political movement was to attempt the restoration of that national unity without which national life was but a shadow. And when, after the suppression of the revolutionary attempts in Italy and Spain, 1821-33, and again, after the revolution of July, 1830, in France, the extreme politicians of the greater part of civilized Europe came into contact with each other, and attempted to mark out a kind of common programme, the liberation and unification of the oppressed and subdivided nations became a watchword common to all of them. So it was again in 1848, when the number of oppressed nations was increased by a fresh one, viz., Hungary. There could, indeed, be no two opinions as to the right of every one of the great national subdivisions of Europe to dispose of itself, independently of its neighbors, in all internal matters, so long as it did not encroach upon the liberty of the others. This right was, in fact, one of the fundamental conditions of the internal liberty of all. How could, for instance, Germany aspire to

liberty and unity, if at the same time she assisted Austria to keep Italy in bondage, either directly or by her vassals? Why, the total breaking-up of the Austrian monarchy is the very first condition of the unification of Germany!

This right of the great national subdivisions of Europe to political independence, acknowledged as it was by the European democracy, could not but find the same acknowledgement with the working classes especially. It was, in fact, nothing more than to recognize in other large national bodies of undoubted vitality the same right of individual national existence which the working men of each separate country claimed for themselves. But this recognition, and the sympathy with these national aspirations, were restricted to the large and well defined historical nations of Europe; there was Italy, Poland, Germany, Hungary. France, Spain, England, Scandinavia, were neither subdivided nor under foreign control, and therefore but indirectly interested in the matter; and as to Russia, she could only be mentioned as the retainer of an immense amount of stolen property, which would have to be disgorged on the day of reckoning.

After the *coup d'état* of 1851, Louis Napoleon, the Emperor "by the grace of God and the national will," had to find a democratized and popular sounding name for his foreign policy. What could be better than to inscribe upon his banners the "principle of nationalities"? Every nationality to be the arbiter of its own fate—every detached fraction of any nationality to be allowed to annex itself to its great mother-country—what could be more liberal? Only, mark, there was not, now, any more question of nations, but of nationalities.

There is no country in Europe where there are not different nationalities under the same government. The Highland Gaels and the Welsh are undoubtedly of different nationalities to what the English are, although nobody will give to these remnants of peoples long gone by the title of nations, any more than to the Celtic inhabitants of Brittany in France. Moreover, no state boundary coincides with the natural boundary of nationality, that of language. There are plenty of people outside of France whose mother tongue is French, the same as there are many people of German language outside of Germany; and very likely it will ever remain so. It is a natural consequence of the confused and slow-working historical development through which Europe has passed during the last thousand years, that almost every great nation has parted with some outlying portions of its own body, which have become separated from the national life, and in most cases participated in the national life of some other people; so much so, that they do not wish to rejoin their own main stock. The Germans in Switzerland and Alsace do not desire to be reunited to Germany, any more than the French in Belgium and Switzerland wish to become attached politically to France. And after all, it is no slight advantage that various nations, as politically constituted, have most of them some foreign elements within themselves, which form connecting links with their neighbors, and vary the otherwise too monotonous uniformity of the national character.

Here, then, we perceive the difference between the "principle of nationalities" and the old democratic and working-class tenet as to the right of the great European nations to separate and independent existence. The "principle of nationalities" leaves entirely untouched the great question of the right of national existence for the historic peoples of Europe, nay, if it touches it, it is merely to disturb it. The principle of nationalities raises two sorts of questions; first of all, questions of boundary between these great historic peoples; and

secondly, questions as to the right to independent national existence of those numerous small relics of peoples which, after having figured for a longer or shorter period on the stage of history, were finally absorbed as integral portions into one or the other of those more powerful nations whose greater vitality enabled them to overcome greater obstacles. The European importance, the vitality of a people, is as nothing in the eyes of the principle of nationalities; before it, the Roumans of Wallachia, who never had a history, nor the energy required to have one, are of equal importance to the Italians who have a history of 2,000 years, and an unimpaired national vitality; the Welsh and Manxmen, if they desired it, would have an equal right to independent political existence, absurd though it would be, with the English. The whole thing is an absurdity, got up in a popular dress in order to throw dust in shallow people's eyes, and to be used as a convenient phrase, or to be laid aside if the occasion requires it.

Shallow as the thing is, it required cleverer brains than Louis Napoleon's invention to favour a resurrection of Poland; it is nothing but a Russian invention concocted to destroy Poland. Russia has absorbed the greater part of ancient Poland on the plea of the principle of nationalities, as we shall see hereafter. The idea is more than a hundred years old, and Russia uses it now every day. What is Pan Slavism but the application, by Russia, and Russian interest, of the principle of nationalities to the Serbians, Croats, Ruthenians, Slovaks, Czechs, and other remnants of bygone Slavonian peoples in Turkey, Hungary and Germany? Even at this present moment the Russian government have agents traveling among the Laponians in Northern Norway and Sweden, trying to agitate among these nomadic savages the idea of a "great Finnic nationality," which is to be restored in the extreme North of Europe, under Russian protection, of course. The "cry of anguish" of the oppressed Laplanders is raised very loud in the Russian papers—not by those same oppressed nomads, but by the Russian agents—and indeed it is a frightful oppression, to induce these poor Laplanders to learn the civilized Norwegian or Swedish language, instead of confining themselves to their own barbaric, half-Esquimaux idiom! The principle of nationalities, indeed, could be invented in Eastern Europe alone, where the tide of Asiatic invasion, for a thousand years, recurred again and again, and left on the shore those heaps of intermingled ruins of nations which even now the ethnologist can scarcely disentangle, and where the Turk, the Finnic Magyar, the Rouman, the Jews, and about a dozen Slavonic tribes, live intermixed in interminable confusion. That was the ground to work the principle of nationalities, and how Russia has worked it there, we shall see by-and-by in the example of Poland.

FREDERIC ENGELS.

III. The Doctrine of Nationality Applied to Poland

Poland, like almost all other European countries, is inhabited by people of different nationalities. The mass of the population, the nucleus of its strength, is no doubt formed by the Poles proper, who speak the Polish language. But ever since 1390 Poland proper has been united to the Grand Duchy of Lithuania which has formed, up to the last partition in 1794, an integral portion of the Polish Republic. This Grand Duchy of Lithuania was inhabited by a great variety of races. The northern provinces, on the Baltic, were in possession of Lithuanians proper, people speaking a language distinct from that of their Slavonic neighbours; these Lithuanians had been, to a great extent, conquered by Ger-

man immigrants, who, again, found it hard to hold their own against the Lithuanian Grand Dukes. Further south, and east of the present kingdom of Poland, were the White Russians, speaking a language betwixt Polish and Russian, but nearer the latter; and finally the southern provinces were inhabited by the so-called Little Russians, whose language is now by the best authorities considered as perfectly distinct from the great Russian (the language we commonly call Russian). Therefore, if people say that, to demand the restoration of Poland is to appeal to the principle of nationalities, they merely prove that they do not know what they are talking about, for the restoration of Poland means the re-establishment of a state composed of at least four different nationalities.

When the old Polish state was thus being formed by the union with Lithuania, where then was Russia? Under the heel of the Mongolian conqueror, whom the Poles and Germans combined, one hundred and fifty years before, had driven back east of the Dnieper. It took a long struggle until the Grand Dukes of Moscow finally shook off the Mongol yoke and set about combining the many different principalities of Great Russia into one state. But this success seems only to have increased their ambitions. No sooner had Constantinople fallen to the Turk, than the Moscovite Grand Duke placed in his coat-of-arms the double-headed eagle of the Byzantine Emperors, thereby setting up his claim as successor and future avenger, and ever since, it is well known, the Russians worked to conquer Czaregrad, the town of the Czar, as they call Constantinople in their language. Then, the rich plains of Little Russia excited their lust of annexation; but the Poles were then a strong, and always a brave people, and not only knew how to fight for their own, but also how to retaliate; in the beginning of the seventeenth century they even held Moscow for a few years.

The gradual demoralization of the ruling aristocracy, the want of power to develop a middle class, and the constant war devastating the country, at last broke the strength of Poland. A country which persisted in maintaining unimpaired the feudal system of society, while all its neighbours progressed, formed a middle class, developed commerce and industry, and created large towns—such a country was doomed to ruin. No doubt the aristocracy did ruin Poland, and ruin her thoroughly; and after ruining her, they upbraided each other for having done so, and sold themselves and their country to the foreigner. Polish history, from 1700 to 1772, is nothing but a record of Russian usurpation of dominion in Poland, rendered possible by the corruptibility of the nobles. Russian soldiers were almost constantly occupying the country, and the kings of Poland, if not willing traitors themselves, were placed more and more under the thumb of the Russian Ambassador. So well had this game succeeded, and so long had it been played, that, when Poland at last was annihilated, there was no outcry at all in Europe, and, indeed, people were astonished at this only, that Russia should have the generosity of giving such a large slice of the territory to Austria and Prussia.

The way in which this partition was brought about is particularly interesting. There was, at that time, already an enlightened "public opinion" in Europe. Although the *Times* newspaper had not yet begun to manufacture that article, there was that kind of public opinion which had been created by the immense influence of Diderot, Voltaire, Rousseau, and the other French writers of the eighteenth century. Russia always knew that it is important to have public opinion on one's side, if possible, and Russia took care to have it, too. The court of Catherine II was made the headquarters of the en-

lightened men of the day, especially Frenchmen; the most enlightened principles were professed by the Empress and her court, and so well did she succeed in deceiving them that Voltaire and many others sang the praise of the "Semiramis of the North" and proclaimed Russia the most progressive country in the world, the home of liberal principles, the champion of religious toleration.

Religious toleration—that was the word wanted to put down Poland. Poland had always been extremely liberal in religious matters; witness the asylum the Jews found there while they were persecuted in all other parts of Europe. The greater portion of the people in the Eastern provinces belonged to the Greek faith, while the Poles proper were Roman Catholics. A considerable portion of these Greek Catholics had been induced, during the sixteenth century, to acknowledge the supremacy of the Pope, and were called United Greeks, but a great many continued true to their old Greek religion in all respects. They were principally the serfs, their noble masters being almost all Roman Catholics; they were Little Russians by nationality. Now, this Russian government, which did not tolerate at home any other religion but the Greek, and punished apostasy as a crime; which was conquering foreign nations and annexing foreign provinces right and left; and which was at that time engaged in riveting still firmer the fetters of the Russia serf—this same Russian government came soon upon Poland in the name of religious toleration, because Poland was said to oppress the Greek Catholics; in the name of the principle of nationalities, because the inhabitants of these Eastern provinces were Little Russians, and ought, therefore, to be annexed to Great Russia; and in the name of the right of revolution arming the serfs against their masters. Russia is not at all scrupulous in the selection of her means. Talk about a war of class against class as something extremely revolutionary;—why, Russia set such a war on foot in Poland nearly a hundred years ago, and a fine specimen of a class war it was, when Russian soldiers and Little Russian serfs went in company to burn down the castles of Polish lords, merely to prepare Russian annexation, which being once accomplished the same Russian soldiers put the serfs back again under the yoke of their lords.

All this was done in the cause of religious toleration, because the principle of nationalities was not then fashionable in Western Europe. But it was held up before the eyes of the Little Russian peasants at the time, and has played an important part since in Polish affairs. The first and foremost ambition of Russia is the union of all Russian tribes under the Czar, who calls himself the Autocrat of all Russias (*Samodergetz vsekh Rossyiskikh*), and among these she includes White and Little Russia. And in order to prove that her ambition went no further, she took very good care, during the three partitions, to annex none but White and Little Russian provinces; leaving the country inhabited by Poles, and even a portion of Little Russia (Eastern Galicia) to her accomplices. But how do matters stand now? The greater portion of the provinces annexed in 1793 and 1794 by Austria and Prussia are now under Russian dominion, under the name of the kingdom of Poland, and from time to time hopes are raised among the Poles, that if they will only submit to Russian supremacy, and renounce all claims to the ancient Lithuanian provinces, they may expect a reunion of all other Polish provinces and a restoration of Poland, with the Russian Emperor for a king. And if at the present juncture Prussia and Austria came to blows, it is more than probable that the war will not be, ultimately, for the annexation of Schleswig-Holstein to Prussia,

or of Venice to Italy, but rather of Austrian, and at least a portion of Prussian, Poland to Russia.

So much for the principle of nationalities in Polish affairs.

IV. The Polish Question

a) Why do the workmen of Europe take up this question? In the first instance, because the middle class writers and agitators conspire to suppress it, although they patronize all sorts of nationalities on the continent, even Ireland. Whence this reticence? Because both, aristocrats and bourgeois, look upon the dark Asiatic power in the background as a last resource against the advancing tide of working class ascendancy. That power can only be effectually put down by the restoration of Poland upon a democratic basis.

b) In the present changed state of central Europe and especially Germany, it is more than ever necessary to have a democratic Poland. Without it, Germany will become the outwork of the Holy Alliance, with it, the co-operator with republican France. The working class movement will continuously be interrupted, checked and restarted, until this great European question be set at rest.

c) It is especially the duty of the German working class to take the initiative in this matter, because Germany is one of the partitioners of Poland.

FREDERIC ENGELS.

**"Labor With a White Skin Cannot
Emancipate Itself Where Labor With
a Black Skin is Branded"—Karl Marx**

**HARLEM BRANCH
OF THE
WORKERS PARTY**

Long Live "The New International"

**YOUNGSTOWN-
WARREN BRANCH
OF THE
WORKERS PARTY**

A Letter on the Italian Revolution

Trotsky's Reply to Italian Oppositionists

Trotsky's letter was written in 1930 on the occasion of one of the most encouraging developments in the history of the International Left (Trotskyist) Opposition. Three leaders of the Italian Communist Party, Blasco, Feroci and Santini, issued a public declaration of political and organizational solidarity with the revolutionary struggle for Marxian internationalism which Trotsky had so long conducted. They established the group called the New Italian Opposition (in distinction from the "old" Italian Left Opposition led by Amadeo Bordiga). The Stalinists, of course, immediately expelled them from the Central Committee to which they belonged and from the party. It is hardly necessary to call attention to the perspicuity of Trotsky's analysis of the Italian situation and of the problems and positions of the Italian revolutionists. It is sufficiently underscored by the fact that although it was written a good fourteen years ago, there is not the slightest flavor of archival mustiness about it—it reads almost as if it were written just a day ago! Trotsky, uncompromisingly intolerant of opportunism, took good care never to feed it with the verbose but dessicated radicalism of ultra-leftism. He had little patience for it in revolutionary politics, as he demonstrates again, and so ably, in his letter on the Italian situation. It is especially timely on this first anniversary of the uprising of the Italian proletariat against fascism, the past year having more than amply confirmed the wisdom of Trotsky's views on the place occupied by the fight for democratic rights in the struggle for the socialist victory. If anything, his contribution is more valuable to the Fourth International today than it could possibly have been in 1930.—Ed.

Dear Comrades:

I have received your letter of May 5. Thanks very much for this study of Italian Communism in general and of the various tendencies within it in particular. It filled a great need for me and was most useful. It would be regrettable if your work were to be left in the form of an ordinary letter. With a few changes or abridgements, the letter could very well find a place in the pages of *La Lutte de Classes*.*

If you do not mind, I will begin with a general political conclusion: I regard our mutual collaboration in the future as perfectly possible and even extremely desirable. None of us possesses or can possess pre-established political formulae that can serve for all the eventualities of life. But I believe that the *method* with which you seek to determine the necessary political formulae is the right one.

You ask my opinion concerning a whole series of grave problems. But before attempting to reply to some of them, I should formulate a very important reservation. I have never been closely acquainted with Italian political life, for I spent only a very short time in Italy, I read Italian very poorly, and during my time in the Communist International I did not have the opportunity to dig deeper into an examination of Italian affairs.

You should know this fairly well yourselves, for how explain otherwise the fact that you undertook so detailed a work to bring me up to date on the pending questions?

It follows from the foregoing that my answers, in most cases, ought to have only an entirely *hypothetical* value. In no case can I consider the reflections that follow as definitive. It is quite possible and even probable that in examining this or that other problem I lose sight of certain highly important concrete circumstances of time and place. I will therefore

await your objections, and supplementary and corrective information. Inasmuch as our method, as I hope, is common, it is in this way that we shall best arrive at the right solution.

"Republican Assembly"

1. You remind me that I once criticized the formula, "Republican Assembly on the basis of Workers' and Peasants' Committees," a formula put forward formerly by the Italian Communist Party. You tell me that this formula had only an entirely episodic value and that at present it has been abandoned. I would like nevertheless to tell you why I consider this formula to be erroneous or at least ambiguous as a political watchword. "Republican Assembly" constitutes quite obviously an organism of the bourgeois state. What, however, are the "Workers' and Peasants' Committees"? It is obvious that they are some sort of equivalent of the workers' and peasants' Soviets. Then that's what should be said. For, class organs of the workers and poor peasants, whether you give them the name of soviets or committees, always constitute organizations of struggle against the bourgeois state, then become organs of insurrection, to be transformed finally, after the victory, into organs of the proletarian dictatorship. How, under these conditions, can a Republican Assembly—supreme organ of the bourgeois state—have as its "basis" organs of the proletarian state?

I should like to recall to you that in 1917, before October, Zinoviev and Kamenev, when they came out against an insurrection, advocated waiting for the Constituent Assembly to meet in order to create a "combined state" by means of a fusion between the Constituent Assembly and the workers' and peasants' soviets. In 1919, we saw Hilferding propose to inscribe the soviets in the Weimar Constitution. Like Zinoviev and Kamenev, Hilferding called this the "combined state." As a new type of petty bourgeois, he wanted, at the very point of the most abrupt historical turn, to "combine" a third type of state by wedding the dictatorship of the bourgeoisie to the proletarian dictatorship under the constitutional sign.

The Italian formula expounded above seems to me to be a variant of this petty-bourgeois tendency. Unless I have understood it in a wrong sense. But in that case it already has the incontestable defect of lending itself to dangerous misunderstandings. I profit by it to correct here a truly unparadonable error committed by the epigones in 1924: they had found in Lenin a passage saying that we might be led to wed the Constituent Assembly with the soviets. A passage saying the same thing may likewise be discovered in my writings. But what exactly was involved? We were posing the question of an insurrection that would transmit the power to the proletariat in the form of soviets. To the question of what, in that case, we would do with the Constituent Assembly, we replied: "We shall see; perhaps we shall combine it with the soviets." We understood by that the case where the Constituent Assembly, convoked under the soviet regime, would give a soviet majority. As this was not the case, the soviets dispersed the Constituent Assembly. In other words: the question was posed of whether it was possible to transform the Constituent Assembly and the soviets into organs of one and the same class, and not at all of "combining" a bourgeois Constituent Assembly

*Theoretical review of the Trotskyist movement in France.

with the proletarian soviets. In one case (with Lenin), it was a question of the formation of a proletarian state, of its structure, of its technique. In the other (with Zinoviev, Kamenev, Hilferding) it was a question of a constitutional combination of two states of enemy classes with a view to averting a proletarian insurrection that would have taken power.

Social Character of the Anti-Fascist Revolution

2. The question we have just examined (the Republican Assembly) is intimately connected with another which you analyze in your letter, namely, what social character will the anti-fascist revolution acquire? You deny the possibility of a bourgeois revolution in Italy. You are perfectly right. History cannot turn backward a big number of pages, each of which is equivalent to half a decade. The Central Committee of the Italian Communist Party already tried once to duck the question by proclaiming that the revolution would be neither bourgeois, nor proletarian, but "popular." It is a simple repetition of what the Russian Populists said at the beginning of this century when they were asked what character the revolution against Czarism would acquire. And it is still this same answer that the Communist International gives today about China and India. It is quite simply a so-called revolutionary variant of the social-democratic theory of Otto Bauer and others, according to which the state can raise itself above the classes, that is, be neither bourgeois nor proletarian. This theory is as pernicious for the proletariat as for the revolution. In China it transformed the proletariat into cannon-fodder of the bourgeois counter-revolution.

Every great revolution proves to be *popular* in the sense that it draws into its tracks the entire people. Both the Great French Revolution and the October Revolution were absolutely popular. Nevertheless, the first was bourgeois because it instituted individual property, whereas the second was proletarian because it abolished this same individual property. Only a few petty bourgeois revolutionists, hopelessly backward, can still dream of a revolution that would be neither bourgeois nor proletarian, but "popular" (that is, petty bourgeois).

Now, in the imperialist period, the petty bourgeoisie is not only incapable of leading a revolution, but even of taking a determined part in it. In this way the formula of a "democratic dictatorship of the proletariat and the peasantry" henceforth constitutes a simple screen for a petty bourgeois conception of a *transitional* revolution and a *transitional* state, that is, of a revolution and a state that can not only take place in Italy but not even in backward India. A revolutionist who has not taken a point-blank and clear position on the question of the proletarian and peasant democratic dictatorship, is doomed to fall into error after error. As to the problem of the anti-fascist revolution, the Italian question, more than any other, is intimately linked to the fundamental problems of world communism, that is, of the so-called theory of the permanent revolution.

The Transitional Period in Italy

3. Following the above comes the question of the "transitional" period in Italy. At the very outset it is necessary to establish very clearly: transition from what to what? Period of transition from the bourgeois (or "popular") revolution to the proletarian revolution—is one thing. Period of transition from the fascist dictatorship to the proletarian dictatorship—is another. If the first conception is envisaged, the question of the bourgeois revolution is posed in the first place, and it is then a question of establishing the role of the proletariat

in it, only after which will the question of the transitional period toward a proletarian revolution be posed. If the second conception is envisaged, the question is then posed of a series of battles, disturbances, upsets in the situation, abrupt turns, constituting in their ensemble the different stages of the proletarian revolution. These stages may be many in number. But in no case can they contain within them a bourgeois revolution or its mysterious abortion: the "popular" revolution.

Does this mean that Italy cannot, for a certain time, again become a parliamentary state or become a "democratic republic"? I consider—in perfect agreement with you, I think—that this eventuality is not excluded. But then it will not be the fruit of a bourgeois revolution, but the preterminal foetus of an insufficiently matured and premature proletarian revolution. In case of a profound revolutionary crisis and of mass battles in the course of which the proletarian vanguard will not have been in a position to take power, it may be that the bourgeoisie will reconstruct its power on "democratic" bases. Can it be said, for example, that the present German Republic constitutes a conquest of the bourgeois revolution? Such an assertion would be absurd. There was, in Germany, in 1918-19, a proletarian revolution which, deprived of leadership, was deceived, betrayed and crushed. But the bourgeois counter-revolution nevertheless found itself obliged to adapt itself to the circumstances resulting from this crushing of the proletarian revolution, which resulted in the constitution of a republic in the "democratic" parliamentary form. Is the same—or about the same—eventuality excluded for Italy? No, it is not excluded. The enthronement of fascism was the result of the incompletion of the proletarian revolution in 1920. Only a new proletarian revolution can overturn fascism. If it should not be destined to triumph this time either (weakness of the Communist Party, manoeuvres and betrayals of the social democrats, the Freemasons, the Catholics), the "transitional" state that the bourgeois counter-revolution would then be forced to set up on the ruins of its power in a fascist form, could be nothing else than a parliamentary and democratic state.

For, what in the long run is the aim of the anti-fascist Concentration? Foreseeing the fall of the fascist state by an uprising of the proletariat and, in general, of all the oppressed masses, the Concentration is preparing to arrest this movement, to paralyze it, and to thwart it of its conquest *in order to pass off the victory of the renovated counter-revolution for a so-called victory of a democratic bourgeois revolution*. If this dialectic of the living social forces is lost sight of for a single moment, the risk is run of getting inextricably entangled and of swerving off the right road. I believe there cannot be the slightest misunderstanding between us on this score.

Democratic and Transitional Slogans

4. But does this mean that we communists reject *a priori* all democratic watchwords, all transitional or preparatory slogans, keeping ourselves rigidly to the *proletarian dictatorship* alone? That would be displaying a sterile, doctrinaire sectarianism. We do not believe for a single moment that a simple revolutionary leap suffices to cross what separates the fascist regime from the proletarian dictatorship. In no wise do we deny the transitional phase with its transitional demands, including the demands of democracy. But it is precisely with the aid of these transitional slogans, which are always the starting point on the road to proletarian dictatorship, that the communist vanguard will have to win the

whole working class and that the latter will have to unite around itself all the oppressed masses of the nation. And here I do not exclude even the eventuality of a constituent assembly which, in certain circumstances, could be imposed by the course of events, or more precisely, by the process of the revolutionary awakening of the oppressed masses. To be sure, on the historical scale and over the period of a number of years, the destiny of Italy will incontestably be reduced to the following alternative: *fascism* or *communism*. But to claim that the concept of this alternative has already now penetrated the consciousness of the oppressed classes of the people would be pure fantasy and would amount to considering as already settled the most gigantic problem the solving of which wholly confronts an as yet feeble Communist Party. If the revolutionary crisis were to break out, for example, in the course of the next months to come (under the impulsion of the economic crisis, on the one side, and under the revolutionary influence coming from Spain, on the other), the broad toiling masses, workers as well as peasants, would certainly follow up their economic demands with democratic slogans (such as freedom of assembly, of press, of trade union organization, democratic representation in Parliament and in the municipalities). Does this mean that the Communist Party should reject these demands? On the contrary. It will have to stamp them with the most audacious and most categorical aspect possible. For the proletarian dictatorship cannot be *imposed* upon the popular masses. It can be realized only by carrying on the battle—the battle in full—for all the transitional demands, requirements and needs of the masses, and at the very head of the masses.

It should be recalled here that Bolshevism did not at all arrive in power with the aid of the abstract watchword of the proletarian dictatorship. We fought for the constituent assembly much more boldly than all the other parties. We said to the peasants: "You demand the equalitarian enjoyment of the land. And for that, you must support the workers." As to the war, we said further to the peasants: "Our communist aim is to war against all the oppressors. But you have not gotten to the point of seeing so far. You are in a hurry to escape from the imperialistic war. Nobody but us, Bolsheviks, will help you do this." I do not deal here with the question of what exactly should be the central slogans of the transitional epoch in Italy in this year 1930. To determine them, and to establish the timely succession, it would be necessary to know the internal life of Italy much better than I know it, and it would be necessary to be in much closer contact with its toiling masses. And here, in addition to a good method, it is necessary to know the art of having the ear of the masses. Therefore, I want to point out here only the commonplaces of the transitional demands in the struggle of communism against fascism and against bourgeois society in general.

Democratic Charlatanism

5. However, while holding to this or that democratic slogan, we must take good care to fight relentlessly against all forms of democratic charlatanism. The "Democratic Republic of the Workers," watchword of the Italian Social-Democracy, is a sample of this low-grade charlatanism. A republic of the workers can only be a proletarian class state. The democratic republic is only a masked form of the bourgeois state. The mixture of the two is only a petty bourgeois illusion of the social-democratic masses below (workers, peasants) and an impudent falsehood of the social-democrats at the top (of all the Turatis, Modiglianis and I don't know

who else). And on this occasion, I repeat, if I opposed and still oppose the formula of "National Assembly on the basis of Workers' and Peasants' Committees," it is precisely because this formula comes too close to the slogan of the "Democratic Republic of the Workers" put forth by the social-democrats, and could be very pernicious for us in our struggle against the social democracy.

Fascism and Social Democracy

6. The assertion made by the official leadership [of the Communist Party] that the social democracy allegedly no longer exists in Italy, is nothing but a consoling theory of bureaucratic optimists who wish to see acquired advantages at the point where the question still is one of heavy tasks to accomplish. Fascism has not liquidated the social democracy *but has, on the contrary, preserved it*. In the eyes of the masses it does not bear the responsibility for the regime, of which it has itself fallen victim in part. It is in this way that it acquires new sympathies and holds on to the old. And a moment will come when the social democracy will coin money out of the blood of Matteotti just as ancient Rome did with the blood of Christ. And it is therefore not excluded that in the first period of the revolutionary crisis, the leadership should find itself mainly concentrated in the hands of the social democracy. If substantial masses are immediately drawn into the movement, and if the Communist Party keeps on the right road, it may well be that the social democracy, in a brief space of time, is soon reduced to zero. But that would be a task to accomplish and not a conquest to realize. It is impossible to leap over this problem; you must know how to solve it. Here I recall that Zinoviev, and after him Manuilsky and other Kuusinens, had already declared on two or three occasions that the German social democracy also no longer existed in fact.

In 1925, the Communist International, in its declaration to the French party written by the light hand of Lozovsky, had likewise decreed that the French Social-Democratic Party had definitely left the scene. The left opposition always spoke up energetically against this light-minded judgment. Only downright fools or traitors can want to have the proletarian vanguard of Italy believe that the Italian social democracy could no longer play the role that the German social democracy had in the revolution of 1918.

But it can be affirmed that the social democracy will not succeed once more in betraying and surrendering the Italian proletariat as it did one time already in 1920. These illusions and these traps are ended! Too many times in the course of its history has the proletariat been deceived first by liberalism and then by the social democracy.

What is more, we cannot lose sight of the fact that since 1920, ten full years have elapsed, and eight years since the advent of fascism. The children who were ten and twelve years old in 1920-22, and who have seen in these years what the work of the fascists was, now constitute the new generation of workers and peasants who will fight heroically against fascism but who, on the other hand, will lack political experience. The communists will come into contact with the real masses only during the revolution itself and, in the best of cases, they will need months to reach the point of demolishing and overturning the social democracy, which, I repeat, fascism has not liquidated but has, on the contrary, preserved.

To conclude, a few words on an important question of fact, on which there cannot be two different opinions in our circle. Should or can the Left Communists deliberately resign from

the party itself? There cannot even be any question about it. Save for rare exceptions—and they were mistakes—none of us ever did that. But I do not have a clear idea of the degree or the means by which the Italian comrades can hold on to this or that post inside the party in the present circumstances. I can say nothing concrete on this point, except that not one of

us can allow a comrade to accommodate himself to a false or equivocal political position in the eyes of the party or the masses with a view to avoiding expulsion.

I shake your hand.

Yours,

LEON TROTSKY.

May 14, 1930.

Europe and the Revolutionary Party

A Discussion of Fundamentals

The proletariat and its revolutionary vanguard have lived through a long period of catastrophic developments and defeats since the Russian working class seized state power in 1917. Coming in the midst of the chaos of the First World War, the October Revolution served as the spark to ignite the world revolutionary movement. The revolt of the German masses brought about a paralysis of the war regime and directly hastened the end of the imperialist blood-bath. Europe was shaken by the convulsions of enormous class battles; power was achieved or almost won in Italy, Hungary, Germany, Austria. Enormous struggles broke out in almost every country on the Continent. Its reverberations were felt in England, in the United States and the whole of Asia.

The Russian workers had shown the way; the soviet system earned the admiration of the most oppressed peoples of the world. The prospect of a new life of freedom, security and peace appeared real—not in the distant future, but within the grasp of every worker, peasant and exploited colonial subject in the world. The First World War was a gigantic propellor of social struggle. It revealed the deep contradictions of capitalism, the inability of the ruling classes to solve their problems except by the most violent and destructive means based upon the subjugation of the peoples of the world and competing powers.

The war, which resulted in a provisional victory for the Allies, ended as the great Marxists had forecast: in class upheavals. Looking back at that period one cannot but express amazement at the depth of the capitalist crisis, the disintegration and bewilderment of the bourgeoisie, and the nearness of a new stage in world development, workers' rule replacing bourgeois democracy and imperialism.

The Russian Experience

All the objective factors for social and political change were unquestionably present. They were present in the economic collapse of capitalism, in the disintegration of the political rule of the bourgeoisie and in the will to struggle of the proletariat. Yet the working class succeeded in only one country, one of the most backward in the world. In can thus be seen that, in addition to the objective factors of collapse, an additional factor is necessary to guarantee the victory of the forces of socialism. That factor is the vanguard party of the working class, the revolutionary organization armed with theory, program, experience, tradition, and finally, with the support, not only of the proletariat, but of all the exploited classes.

A revolution could have occurred in Russia in the absence of such a cohesive, experienced and organized party, but the new state power of the workers could not have survived the vicissitudes of the civil war, the famine and foreign interven-

tion without Lenin's Bolshevik Party. The proof of this is easy to find. Revolutionary attempts at power were made in many countries in the period between 1917 and 1920-21. In every other case but Russia, these attempts ended in bloody defeats. The basic reason for the defeats lay in the absence of a vanguard party, or in the profound errors in policy and judgment of the small vanguard parties which did exist.

If it is said that in some of these cases defeat was due, not to the absence of the revolutionary party, but to treachery committed by the Second International and the trade union movements which it controlled, that is merely displaying the other side of the coin. Such treachery within the ranks of the working class could have been neutralized, overcome and decisively defeated only by a strong, alert and conscious revolutionary party of the workers competing with social reformism and opportunism.

No matter what inferences may be drawn from the enormously rich history of the immediate post-war period, it is impossible to gainsay Lenin's acute observation that there is no hopeless situation for capitalism. Capitalism can and has repeatedly emerged from crises which seemingly marked its demise only because the "gravedigger" was either absent, weak, confused or pursued totally wrong perspectives.

What Gave Capitalism New Power?

Once capitalism survived the immediate post-war revolutionary situation it obtained a new lease on life. This was particularly true after its stupefying victory in Germany in 1923. This survival brought with it a whole train of consequences for the working class and its revolutionary organizations which are yet before us. A study then, of the development of the early Communist International is of immediate importance to the movement of today for reasons which we shall try to make clear in this article.

First, let us briefly sketch the broad lines of development since the Russian Revolution. Anyone who wishes to understand the present decade cannot do so without thoroughly absorbing the lessons of the past twenty-five years. The outstanding feature of the last two and a half decades is not the crisis of capitalism. That concept was thoroughly established by Lenin and Trotsky and the theoreticians of the Comintern **under their leadership. All that is required** in addition is merely the elucidation of the present factors of decline which are *fundamentally* identical to those outlined in the Second Congress of the Communist International held in 1920.

The outstanding feature of the present period is a crisis of leadership inside the working class movement, and a crisis of organization of the working class in general.

If we examine the period between the two wars, the above is incontestable. This period was characterized by tremendous

class conflicts. These were not merely every-day struggles of the masses for an improvement of their lot under capitalism; these were also great class battles for power! Enumerate them and the proof is obvious.

Since the German defeat in 1923 there have been the Vienna uprising, the British general strike, the Chinese Revolution, the rise of fascism to power in Germany, the civil war in Spain and the great struggle in France. A victory in any one of these situations would have altered the world situation and opened up a new epoch in which the workers' struggle for power on an international scale would be assured early victory. But in each instance, at every turning point, the proletariat suffered severe defeats. In each instance and at every turning point, the responsibility for the defeats rested almost entirely upon the two international organizations of the workers: the Communist International and the Labor and Socialist International, the former by its commission of theoretical, political and organizational errors, the latter by the same, and both by the direct assistance they have rendered to the bourgeoisie to maintain it in power.

Revolutionary Perspectives Remain

These defeats cannot be understood at all without understanding at the same time that the principal cause for the second series of post-war defeats was to be found in the degeneration of the Russian Revolution and the Communist International. The demise of the Second International had already appeared in the First World War and in so far as the revolutionary vanguard was concerned, it cannot be said that it had any faith or belief that the organization of MacDonald, Hillquit, Vandervelde, Bauer, Wels & Co. would become a force for progress in the period between 1918 and the Second World War. On the other hand, in the case of the Comintern, we had an organization which grew out of the struggle with reformism, the October Revolution and the counter-revolution. It was an organization born in struggle against opportunism, revisionism and ultra-leftism. Its degeneration following the death of Lenin and the defeat of the Russian and International Left Opposition was catastrophic, with consequences no one was able to foretell.

The Stalinist counter-revolution in Russia eliminated one of the greatest factors in the advance of the international working class. Henceforth, the influence of Russia and the Comintern was conservative, anti-Marxist, counter-revolutionary. The great clarification of the working class and the growth of its internationalism and revolutionary spirit was the signal accomplishment of Lenin. In achieving that for a time, Lenin carried on a merciless struggle for many years against social reformism and opportunism. Now, in the name of Marx and Lenin, Stalin has contributed more evil than the whole Second International in all its lifetime.

A quick observation of the state of the workers' movement will reveal its plight. The year 1944, in the midst of the Second World War, finds the international working class disorganized or unorganized, leaderless and misled, without a vanguard organization, without a proletarian theory, program, goal. Look at the four corners of the earth and the picture becomes clearer; but so do the tasks of the small Marxist propaganda groups which have survived the ravages of bourgeois, reformist and Stalinist counter-revolution.

This brief picture of the state of the working class movement can be stated in another way. *There is not a single Marxist mass party in any country in the world today. There is no all-embracing, unifying, authoritative, revolutionary interna-*

tional. Thus, from the point of view of the organization of the revolutionary vanguard, which is indispensable to the "winning of the majority," the workers' movement exists in one of the worst periods it has ever experienced since the dissolution of the First International.

But there is this enormous difference and it is this difference which gives no warrant to pessimism, cynicism or an outright departure from the ranks of the working class to make peace with capitalism: international capitalism is in an agonizing contradiction, in an objectively hopeless position. It reveals uncloseable fissures; the sickness of death. The war has further revealed that there is no firm or lasting solution for capitalism—not in fascism, bourgeois democracy, quasi-democracy, reformism, etc. No matter how many times capitalism survives shocks, disturbances and crises, they return with greater force and intensity to sap its worn-out foundations.

What are these disturbances, shocks and crises? They are manifestations of class struggle! This, capitalism can never eliminate whether it has a fascist political regime, bourgeois democracy, or even when it receives incalculable aid from Stalinism.

Reviving a Dangerous Theory

With this cursory analysis, let us consider then what are the real problems of the Marxists in the immediate future period. There may be some objection to the emphasis given to the defeats which the workers have suffered and to the deplorable state of the workers' movement. But it is far better to tell the truth than to deceive oneself, for nothing is worse in the revolutionary movement than self-deception. From the truth it is possible to learn; it is possible to understand, to correct errors, to adopt correct policies and in general to become clearly oriented in a correct direction. Any other attitude can only result in a continuation of the present state of affairs. Any other analysis would be what Trotsky so accurately and vividly described as "tub-thumping." The revolutionary vanguard movement does not need self-agitation; it needs Marxist analysis.

There is another still more dangerous aspect to the concepts of those who shun the truth with cries of "pessimism." Behind their "optimism" is false theory, false politics, false practice and mystical consolation.

The most dangerous of these concepts is the "theory" that the experiences of the past twenty-five years of defeat show that they are due to the existence of parties and an international. Parties degenerate. It is the degeneration of parties which caused the counter-revolution in Russia and the international defeats of the working class. The workers in Germany, Austria, Hungary, Italy, France, China, and everywhere else would have been much better off and more secure in their struggles if they had no parties. The spontaneous struggle of the masses offers a much more hopeful guarantee for the victory of socialism than a working class organized and led through its vanguard Marxist party. With a few "original" twists, the theory of spontaneity of the masses is reintroduced into the workers' movement as the force which can guarantee socialism.

There is a variation of this view which is fundamentally just as dangerous. It is the view that the struggle for power is spontaneous (thus establishing a partial truth), that the workers can take power without a party; it cannot keep that power without an organized party with a program, a tradition, a capital of experiences. But that party can be constructed and be-

come the leader of the masses in the revolution (also a partial truth).

Neither of these concepts grants the necessity for the prior existence of a party, for the development of its theoretical level, for the working out of its experiences, for the hammering out of its tradition and for the winning of the majority of the workers, and the masses as a whole. *They are thus Blanquist and putschist in essence.* Since, in the view of the writer, the organization of a vanguard party and a vanguard international is crucial to the future of the working class and indispensable in any prospect of a victory for the masses, I should like to concern myself with this question for a moment.

Once Again—Role of the Party

The role of a party was in dispute from the beginning of the first organized movements of the proletariat. The dispute over the role of the party was most acute and had its greatest international significance in the early years of the Russian movement, before the 1905 revolution. Revisionist views now expressed on the same question are hardly original. But that is not their worst fault. The present-day views are not even fully thought out; their generalities do not even allow for a good argument, let alone an illuminating and forthright discussion. Let us then put the question positively.

Bourgeois society "organizes" the classes. The productive system certainly gathers the proletariat together in "socialized" production. It exploits great masses simultaneously and the masses learn what their economic position is from the mass production system itself. But just how much does it learn? Does it learn socialism from its economic position? Does it learn the need for working class political parties because it works collectively? Does it understand the need for theory, for a program, for strategy and tactics in the class struggle against capitalist imperialism? Posing these questions readily indicates the obvious answers.

In examining these questions forty years ago, Lenin effectively demonstrated that the working class can, by its position in production, acquire economic, i.e., trade union consciousness. Lenin wrote:

...But there is a difference between spontaneity and spontaneity ... the "spontaneous element," in essence, represents nothing more nor less than consciousness in an **embryonic form**. ... Taken by themselves, these strikes were simply trade union struggles, but not yet social-democratic struggles. They testified to the awakening antagonisms between workers and employers, but the workers were not and could not be conscious of the irreconcilable antagonism of their interests to the whole of the modern political and social system, i.e., it was not yet social-democratic consciousness.

We said that **there could not yet be** social-democratic consciousness among the workers. This consciousness could only be brought to them from without. The history of all countries shows that the working class, exclusively by its own effort, is able to develop only trade union consciousness, i.e., it may itself realize the necessity for combining in unions, for fighting against employers and for striving to compel the government to pass necessary labor legislation, etc. The theory of socialism, however, grew out of the philosophic, historical and economic theories that were elaborated by the educated representatives of the propertied classes, the intellectuals. According to their social status, the founders of modern scientific socialism, Marx and Engels, themselves belonged to the bourgeois intelligentsia. (Lenin, *What Is to Be Done*, pp. 52f., *Selected Works*. Emphasis in original.—A. G.)

Objection may be raised: Why, that is old stuff. Lenin was writing many, many years ago. Look at what has happened since then; there have been parties, two internationals, decades of propaganda for socialism, agitation for struggle, many attempts at a seizure of state power, etc. The workers have

since been educated many times; they have not forgotten their lessons; they know what socialism is, etc.

Such objections are only partially correct. Lenin is cited, however, to show the origin of his own position and the type of the struggle which he waged against the advocates of spontaneity. But since the objections are only true in part, they are consequently wrong. For example, is it true in the United States? Has the American working class been educated politically—at any time in its organized existence? Has it a socialist experience, an acquaintance with its *general* ideas, let alone its theory? The answer is clearly, No! Is it true of the hundreds of millions of semi-colonial and colonial peoples? Obviously not. While socialist organization and ideas have exerted tremendous influence in Europe, the revolutionary Leninist movement did not at any time win a working class majority. Does this mean that the working class has to be socialist before it can abolish capitalism and lay the foundations for socialism? No, it does not mean this, but it does mean that it must move beyond trade unionism, beyond economic struggle to political struggle, and for this the vanguard Marxist party is indispensable.

The Main Task Is Clear

The proletariat is at the mercy of an organized, educated, experienced and conscious ruling class. It seems silly to even consider this point. Study Germany, the rise and fall of the workers' movement there, and you will note with what perspicacity and cunning the German ruling class more than once saved its black soul and conquered over the best organized, most educated and experienced working class in the capitalist world. It is necessary to understand Lenin's thought on this question to see the profound concepts which lie behind an apparently simple theory.

Naturally since Lenin's time much has happened. Struggle is piled upon struggle, experience upon experience, mistake upon mistake, a few small victories, a great many defeats. The modern class struggle expressed itself for some years as a conflict between two organized classes; more recently between an organized bourgeoisie and a disorganized working class. How do we look upon the question of organization, of a party in the present conjuncture of events? Just read what Trotsky wrote only a few years ago:

The rôle of the subjective factor [the party—A. G.] in a period of slow, organic development can remain quite a subordinate one. Then diverse proverbs of gradualism arise, as: "slow but sure," and "one must not kick against the pricks," and so forth, which epitomize all the tactical wisdom of an organic epoch that abhorred "leaping over stages." **But as soon as the objective prerequisites have matured, the key to the whole historical process passes into the hands of the subjective factor, that is, the party.** Opportunism which consciously or unconsciously thrives upon the inspiration of the past epoch, always tends to underestimate the rôle of the subjective factor, that is, the importance of the party and of revolutionary leadership. ... **In all these cases, as well as in others of lesser importance, the opportunistic tendency evinced itself in the adoption of a course that relied solely upon the "masses," and therefore completely scorned the question of the "tops" of the revolutionary leadership. Such an attitude, which is false in general, operates with positively fatal effect in the imperialist epoch.** (Trotsky, *The Third International After Lenin*, page 84. Emphasis mine—A. G.)

The Second Congress of the Comintern, in arguing against the syndicalists, et al., stated the problem briefly but most graphically when it wrote in its resolution on the role of the party:

They do not see that the working class without an independent proletarian party is like a body without a head.

If I were to state briefly what the main task of the vanguard groups the world over are in the present period I would say: *building the revolutionary Marxist party.*

In my next article I shall deal more fully with the present period of capitalist decline to illustrate how profoundly revolutionary it is and what enormous perspectives lie on the horizon for the international working class. The above references to the party and its role are deemed necessary even though we seem to have traveled far beyond a stage where elementary, fundamental questions require discussion. But the confusion of the working class is immense. This confusion finds a tremendous echo inside the small Marxist movement. Clarity,

therefore, becomes essential before any important forward steps are made.

The tasks ahead are made easier by objective factors of capitalist decline. It is not as though we are at the first beginnings of class economic and political organization. We build upon a theoretical foundation laid down for us by Marx and Engels, a theoretical tradition continued by Lenin and Trotsky. Among the great but now scattered foundation stones is a long history of proletarian organization, struggle, propaganda, agitation summarized in a vast experience. It is with this that we shall concern ourselves in the next article.

ALBERT GATES.

Ten Years of U. S. Labor History

The Road Ahead for the AFL and CIO

To crowd the past ten years of the history of the labor movement in the United States into four pages of *The New Internationalist* is an impossible task. Space limitations will make it necessary therefore to attempt a selection of the most outstanding events and to integrate them into some sort of pattern of the whole. Into this pattern would go such significant events as the coming of the New Deal and its rules and regulations for organized labor, the formation of the CIO, the impact of the war on the labor movement, the tremendous expansion of trade union membership, particularly the increase in Negro membership.

The Coming of the New Deal

The attempt of the ruling class in the United States to halt the decline of capitalism, to restore the economy to "normal" functioning, to pacify the masses of the people, were concretized in the election of Franklin D. Roosevelt to the presidency and bourgeois support of what came to be known as the "New Deal." The United States and the whole capitalist world were in the throes of the most deep-going economic depression. Four years of the Hoover Administration had demonstrated even to the bourgeoisie that the politics and the economic thinking of the Great Engineer would have to give way, at least temporarily, to more "enlightened" plans, policies and schemes. This was admitted and agreed to by the ruling class except the most reactionary, inept and mediaeval-minded of their number. These were the people who supported Hoover for re-election. Their group comprised the leaders of heavy industry, the capital goods manufacturers, the big bondholders and the big bankers. They were against any concessions whatsoever to "the mob," "the rabble" and to the masses of the people.

On the other hand, the chief support for the New Deal came from the lower middle class, including the small farmers, labor, small business, a large section of manufacturers of consumer goods and the liberals. It is important to emphasize that in so far as the New Deal was taken seriously and accepted as a permanent way out of the crisis, it was a middle class phenomenon, a mass movement of the middle class based on the desire of the petty bourgeois to salvage his presumed place in society and save his small rural and urban property holdings. In so far as the proletarian thought at all of the meaning of the New Deal, his thinking was very simple and quite naive. The proletariat, as represented by organized labor, was mainly

concerned with the maintenance of its unions, the right to organize, and employment. The unorganized part of the working class was first of all concerned with employment. Later, with the coming of Section 7-A of the NIRA and under the influence of the dubious and historically fallacious slogan: "Now the government has given us the right to organize," the unorganized workers fell in behind the New Deal as "labor's new Magna Carta."

The result of all of this was rapprochement between the white collar middle class, the proletariat, the small farmer and the small business man. While it was true that each group had its own group reasons for rallying enthusiastically to the support of the New Deal, they were all unified for the time being behind the idea that the times demanded the intervention of the government, as it was put, for the protection of the masses of the people, for the rejuvenation of the economy, for the fulfillment of the American Promise and the American Dream. Those who talk glibly today about the "Century of the Common Man" in connection with the "war aims" of the United Nations forget that barely ten years ago they proclaimed the New Deal as the "Century of the Common Man." Those liberals and their followers who exuberantly, piously or hopefully—dependent on temperament or stupidity—announce today that a "revolution" is taking place, forget that not over a decade ago they heralded the New Deal as "socialistic," the broad avenue to plenty in our time, the forerunner of the rights of man.

Failure of the AFL

The organized labor movement and the unorganized workers, particularly in the mass production and heavy goods industries, were enthralled by the New Deal mainly for the reason that this panacea appeared on the scene when labor was besieged and embattled by all the hosts of a frightened but stubborn ruling class. The labor movement had declined during the depression years and before. The decline in trade union membership was taking place even before the crash of 1929; it began seriously about 1922. The AFL membership at the time of the Great Crash was only about fifty per cent of its 1920 total. There was some attempt at organization by the AFL, notably among the textile workers of the South and in the automobile industry in Detroit. Both of these attempts were dismal failures. The Executive Council of the AFL, holding fast to a degenerate form of the philosophy of Gompers,

ignored completely the trend of the times both in respect to technological development and the company union plans of the employers. AFL President Green made a trip south during the depression, ostensibly to promote organization among textile workers. His efforts were confined to pious addresses to groups of business men, but he made no speeches to textile workers. He departed with the blessings of the business groups but the mill owners went their way totally unaffected by anything which had been offered by President Green in the way of AFL co-operation.

The same policy of attempting to organize the workers through co-operation with employers was employed in the automobile industry. The AFL sought an agreement with General Motors through which this corporation's workers would become members of the AFL without their knowledge or any effort on their part. The scheme was not acceptable to General Motors and was later rejected by the Ford Motor Co. The essence of the AFL plan was to form the workers into federal unions, directly affiliated to the AFL. Later, however, these workers would be separated into the various crafts and put in the appropriate craft international union. Thus did the AFL hold to its fatal craft union philosophy in the face of the rapid decline of its membership and in the face of the difficult plight of workers in the mass production industries who had no union organization.

The attitude of the AFL was summed up by Wharton of the International Association of Machinists, who said at a later date that the AFL had not been remiss in attempting to organize workers in the steel industry. The fact was, according to Wharton, the steel workers did not want to be organized. The fact is that right through the period of the depression the AFL was so thoroughly craft-union-conscious that the workers in the mass production industries were considered a lower order than the skilled workers in the craft unions. This attitude persisted until the wide expansion in employment after the beginning of the war. There was no change in the basic craft-union philosophy, but the treasury-minded presidents of the AFL internationals suddenly realized that there were millions of dollars in joining fees and per capita taxes waiting to be collected in camps and factories under construction and among the workers in the aircraft plants and shipyards. Even the Negro workers were wooed to some degree when it was seen that they would be employed by the hundreds of thousands and that they too would have money for joining fees and per capita taxes. To be sure, the practice of placing these Negroes in Jim Crow locals or of some other form of segregation was followed, but there was a slight change from the former practice of either excluding the Negroes or ignoring them.

Capital's Union-Busting Aims

The conservative practices of the AFL, pursued with extreme ineptitude and doddering callousness, persisted not only in the face of the ravages of the depression but also when confronted by the company-union designs of the bourgeoisie. This was the period when the employers and their associations were experimenting with various types of company unions under the mild-sounding name of "employee representation plans." Rubber, steel, textiles, coal, railroads and the electrical companies were all busy with these schemes. Their aim was to get their company unions entrenched while the legitimate organizations of labor were in a weakened and disorganized state from the years of unemployment. The bourgeoisie was determined to finish the unions off before the business

cycle began its upward climb and before re-employment began.

Not only was the AFL blind to the manifestations which have been enumerated, but the craft union leadership had not even an elementary idea either of the magnitude or the nature of the sickness of capitalism. This leadership was completely incompetent to deal with the real situation. Industry was sick, capitalist society was sick nigh unto death, and the labor movement was in a condition that can properly be described as a state of decay. Along with the rest of bourgeois society, the trade union movement had been drugged on the superficial and artificially stimulated "prosperity" of the golden years of Harding and Coolidge. True, the car was now somewhat dilapidated and there was no garage to put it in. True, there were millions of pots containing no chicken, the grass was growing in the streets and the full dinner pail was only a plaintive memory. But despite the fact that this situation existed all over the capitalist world, many leaders of labor and industry were convinced that the Hoover era was a mere mishap, a miscalculation which would and could be corrected with the aid of Providence, the American Spirit, and the revival of our pioneer fortitude and courage.

"Section 7-A"

The answer to the prayers of the faithful, the hopes of the believing and the class resourcefulness of the "enlightened" among the bourgeoisie was the election of Roosevelt and the proclamation of the New Deal. We are primarily concerned with the unions under the National Industrial Recovery Act and the transformation wrought in the relationship between organized labor and the government. We have remarked before that after the passage of the act labor leaders toured the country announcing that now "we have the right to organize."

In the light of what has happened to collective bargaining since the beginning of World War II it is important to quote the relevant section of the act. Section 7-A reads: "That employees have the right to organize and bargain collectively through representatives of their own choosing, and shall be free from the interference, restraint, or coercion of employers of labor... that no employee and no one seeking employment shall be required as a condition of employment to join any company union..." What the act did in fact was to legalize collective bargaining and to illegalize the company union. This was what was significant about Section 7-A. Formally, and so far as the law was concerned, employers were forced to bargain with their employees. And since labor had learned long before that its best bargaining agency was the union, it joined the unions by the hundreds of thousands and an upward swing in trade union membership began. It was a long and, to labor, a successful trek from the conspiracy trials of the early nineteenth century to government enforcement of collective bargaining in the second quarter of the twentieth century.

Despite the fact that the most reactionary of the employers resisted the operation of Section 7-A, not only by their efforts to maintain their company unions but by the persistence of their spy systems, their constant efforts to frustrate collective bargaining and often by open resort to anti-union violence, the movement grew rapidly. The AFL leadership at least knew enough to seek whatever organizational advantage there was in the new governmental paternalism. Also there were many employers who concluded that the easier road was recognition of the unions and the consent to bargain collectively. They knew that the whole New Deal was a necessary concession granted to the masses in a period of great stress and strain

from which the bourgeoisie had been unable to deliver itself. Furthermore, big business was still in control of industry through provisions contained in the codes of "fair competition." Furthermore, under the NRA set-up, labor leaders were drawn closer to the government and thereby made more amenable to conservative suggestions coming from the new "friends of labor" in the government.

From later developments, the contention of Norman Ware that "there are signs that the Administration originally regarded the collective bargaining clause as more a hindrance than a help to recovery" may have great weight. Ware continues: "It seems to have been the opinion of both President Roosevelt and General Johnson that minimum wages, maximum hours, employer paternalism and the suggestions of the Labor Advisory Board were all the wage earners needed for their protection." Ware then quotes from Roosevelt's message when he sent the NRA to Congress: "Workers know that the first move expected of the nation is a great co-operation of **all the employers . . . to improve the case of the workers.** Industries can do this only if they have the support of the whole public and especially of their own workers. This is not a law to foment discord and will not be administered as such. . . ." Ware remarks that there is not a word here about collective bargaining or any other principle on which trade unionism is founded. The whole concept advanced is one of employer and governmental paternalism. Of course this and many other aspects of the New Deal, the codes and Section 7-A, were explained by the Marxists at the time and the Blue Eagle was often described as the "Blue Buzzard."

The Unions Grow Stronger

The quantitative advance of the labor movement in the early days of the New Deal was, however, unquestionable. The AFL unions revived and increased their membership. Not only this, but scientific progress and technological achievement had created a situation in the mass production industries which made this decisive sector of the economy the most fruitful field of trade union expansion. The finance-capitalists understood this. It was here that they were determined to hold the line with their company unions, espionage systems and blackjacks. It was the conjuncture of the severest economic crisis in the history of capitalism, the attempt to resolve the crisis by strictly controlled concessions and bourgeois planning and the already demonstrated high level of the productive forces which brought to fruition the long but sporadic efforts to establish an industrial union movement in the United States. Here had been erected plant capacity far in excess of what was necessary for supplying the needs of the domestic population. It was estimated, for instance, that the large automobile companies could produce enough cars to supply the whole world, and not just a restricted capitalist world market. This was true to one degree or another of the actual and potential production of other goods and services.

Despite this, the productive forces—labor, plant and natural resources—were idle. The New Deal had begun its regime of price-fixing, wage-fixing, artificial competition-stimulation, artificial expansion of the market and provisions for taking care of the halt, the lame and the aged.

Rise of the CIO

It was out of this objective situation that the industrial union movement and the CIO emerged. It was by working in this milieu, seizing the advantages offered by the New Deal and comprehending, in an elementary way, the potential role of the mass production workers, that John L. Lewis and his

associates became makers of labor history. The AFL leadership, on the other hand, seeing nothing and learning nothing; encrusted with a decadent craft union philosophy; contemptuous of the needs of the mass production workers; ignorant of the fact that 1935 was not 1885; plunged ahead and confined its efforts to the expansion of its craft union membership. The craft union theorists could not understand that the protagonists of industrial unionism were not latter-day Knights of Labor nor ideological heirs of the founders of the Socialist and Labor Alliance. The tremendous struggle which ensued therefore was a conflict between craft unionism, which had once played a progressive role in the labor movement, and new conceptions suitable to an age of monopoly capitalism, a higher level of technology and mass production. With the emergence of the CIO it can be said that the labor movement attained a higher level, and in relation to the AFL the CIO became the progressive section of the labor movement.

It has been remarked often that the New Deal was instituted as a recovery measure; which, being interpreted, means that the New Deal was a mechanism for the rehabilitation of capitalist production. Business was permitted to write its own codes of "fair competition." Temporarily the government replaced the private monopolist as the price-fixer. It is interesting that the New Deal government took over from monopoly capitalism one of its favorite modes of price-maintenance and price-appreciation by artificially holding down production. Furthermore, industry was stabilized and the profit function protected by government subsidies and enormous loans. Despite this, all that the labor bureaucracy could discern was Section 7-A, "which gives us the right to organize."

This was particularly true of the CIO. Its theoreticians, those in the organization, and its friends inside and outside the New Deal government, hailed the new role of the government as the protector of labor. This despite the fact that the New Deal was again and again announced as a recovery measure; that is, as a measure to restore the status quo before the depression. This new theory of the role of the government was not at all understood by the CIO leadership. While it was true that the government was playing a new role, it was not what the labor movement believed it to be. Some of them were to understand this later, with the coming of World War II.

One of the reasons for the CIO succumbing so completely to the blandishments of the New Deal was somewhat fortuitous. The NLRB, under Madden, Witt and Edwin Smith, was partial to the CIO as against the AFL, and the CIO profited greatly from decisions of the board which were not always objectively arrived at. This was partially due to the influence of the Communist Party in the board, the CP at this time being violently pro-CIO. This was enough for empirically-minded labor leaders who were more concerned with the building of their organization than with the making of political analyses, which they were not competent to make even if they had been so inclined.

The War and the Unions

Concomitant with the progress of the labor movement in membership and prestige the bourgeoisie continued its struggle against the New Deal and the unions. This was accentuated as the "depression" was magically transformed into the "recession" and some measure of "prosperity" was restored. The organized workers fought back persistently and continued the extension of their organizing drives. But the course of world events disturbed "the American Dream" and the uto-

pian hopes of the labor leadership. War clouds appeared on the horizon and "recovery" through the forty-hour week, collective bargaining, "premium pay," minimum wages, burning the wheat and killing the pigs, was turned into "recovery" through the forty-eight and sixty-hour week, the abolition of collective bargaining, job stabilization, maximum wages, taking away the right to strike and the elimination of "fair competition." The subsidies were still there, only bigger. The profits were there, but huge beyond compare, even after the taxes went higher than ever before. The big bourgeoisie which had allegedly been driven from the temple in 1933-35, appeared again in full view, and in total control of the government.

The drive began to unify the nation behind the "war effort." The labor leaders responded to this call, which they described as the call of "our government." The CIO devised the slogan of "Victory Through Equality of Sacrifice." They and their friends among the dwindling New Dealers fought for the retention of all the fundamental New Deal measures and legislation. What they did not know was that the real spirit and essence of the New Deal was being retained. The essence of the New Deal was "planning" for the salvation of capitalism in a period of decline extremely alarming to the bourgeoisie. We have already quoted Roosevelt on the NRA: "This is not a law to foment discord and will not be administered as such." At a time when the bourgeoisie is facing a life-and-death struggle with a foreign imperialism, to administer the New Deal as was the custom during peacetime would "foment discord," in the eyes of the bourgeoisie and its government.

Furthermore, it must be emphasized again that the ruling class, in a period of capitalist decline especially, will not worry overmuch about how "recovery" is effected. They do not put all of their eggs into one basket, neither are they committed to the use of the same basket from period to period. They have many avenues of approach to the maintenance of their monopoly, prestige and profits. At one period it is a New Deal, at another it is imperialist war. The fact that they do not have control over the course of history, or that they cannot have control over the course of history, or that they cannot predict without error does not deter them from seizing on events and using them for their own class interests, whether in war or peace. The profits accruing from the manufacture of munitions are no less profits than those flowing in from peacetime monopoly or New Deal plowing under of cotton.

Militancy of the Workers

An outstanding feature of the past ten years of the labor movement with all its ups and downs has been the persistent militancy of the proletariat. True, its militancy has been dampened since the outbreak of the war and under the betrayals of the trade union bureaucracy, but no one can say that the working class in the United States has capitulated. No matter what one's ideas and opinions may be about "this being a period of reaction," this fuzzy saying cannot be interpreted to mean that the proletariat is or should be quiescent. The numerous strikes, especially those after the declaration of war, give the lie to any such declaration.

Perhaps the most heartening aspect of the resurgence of the organized labor movement during the past decade has been the entrance of Negroes, until today there are nearly a million Negroes occupying a place in the trade union movement. The outstanding feature of the entrance of the Negroes

into the ranks of organized labor is their making a place for themselves, primarily as workers and not as Negroes. This is attested by the virtual passing of scabbing on the part of Negroes, their development of union loyalty and their support of the militant actions of the unions of which they are members. This development of course is part and parcel of the industrial union movement. There is no evidence that the AFL has changed its ideas or its practices in connection with the Negro worker. If anything, the position of this organization has become more reprehensible under attack. One can hear from AFL bureaucrats such statements that "the AFL treats Negroes better than the CIO."

The past decade witnessed not only the formation of a new trade union center but sporadic efforts at unification and a split in the CIO with the withdrawal of the UMWA. The agitation for unification was confined largely to the top of the AFL and CIO. The whole proceedings were conducted bureaucratically with no apparent effort to arouse the rank and file of the two organizations in favor of a merger. In fact, the rank and file demonstrated little interest in unification. This was in part due to the conflicts engendered in the course of competitive efforts at organizing, especially in the war industries. Furthermore, on the part of the CIO membership there were the recent and unpleasant memories of their experiences with the AFL before the coming of the CIO. On the part of the AFL, craft-union exclusiveness acted as a deterrent to the development of unification. In practice it was difficult to discover a point at which the interests of the two groups of workers coalesced. This was true despite all the theoretical and practical reasons that might be adduced for the merger of the two organizations.

The Roosevelt government for a while intervened in this matter in favor of unification, but two situations lessened the interest of the government in such a consummation. First was the unity proposal of John L. Lewis and the second was the solid support received from the AFL and the CIO in the prosecution of the war. Roosevelt was opposed to any step which would enhance the power of Lewis in the labor movement and unanimity of the AFL and CIO on full support of the war and other measures of the Administration made it unnecessary to intervene further in the direction of unification. Since the Administration had complete support for the war program there was no need to risk the dangers of a unified trade union movement.

The Road Ahead

In closing this brief survey it is necessary to say something on the road ahead for the labor movement in this country. What are the prospects for the post-war period? This problem worries the leadership, especially the leadership of the CIO. The AFL craft-union bureaucrats are more sanguine. They have several advantages, at least of a temporary sort. This, of course, is enough for them. They could not be expected to concern themselves with the really important omens in connection with capitalist production and world trade. They base themselves on what they believe to be the abiding features of industry at the point of the need for skilled craftsmen. This applies to the building and construction industry, the metal trades and transportation. This is the backbone of the AFL. They believe that after the war, even though there is a "recession," there will be enough work for enough of their membership to maintain the organization and the treasuries of the Federation and the international unions. Furthermore, many of these internationals have millions of dollars in their treas-

uries. They can go through several lean years, they believe, and maintain themselves.

The CIO is in a somewhat different condition. Its unions are younger, not as stable in an organizational and financial sense, and, more important, the CIO can live effectively only if it continues to expand.

The drive that is already under way to smash the union movement will gain momentum after the war and will be centered on the CIO. It is easier to come to an understanding with the AFL craft-union aristocracy than with the lower-paid semi-skilled and unskilled masses of the CIO. Furthermore, there will be layoffs in the mass production industries that will tend to decimate the CIO membership. In order to meet this, the CIO will probably resort to a series of mergers between internationals. This is presaged by the United Steel Workers taking in the Aluminum Workers.

Neither the AFL nor the CIO will be able to withstand the attacks of the bourgeoisie now and after the war if they persist in their present policies. This is especially true of the CIO. It is this organization that we are especially concerned with because of its greater promise and significance, which flow not only from its vertical structure but its composition. At no point in its existence, however, has the leadership of the CIO understood what is really fundamental, important and potent in the industrial form of organization. That is, the industrial form of organization lends itself more readily to class struggle and a class struggle program.

It can be maintained that beneath the demand of the proletariat for industrial union type of organization is an unuttered demand for a class struggle program. This demand is inchoate and vague but it is there. This is the point at which the industrial union movement can and should distinguish itself from craft unionism. The CIO bureaucracy, however, rejects class struggle notions and programs in favor of class collaboration and intermittent capitulation at every decisive phase of the struggle.

The CIO will not be able to maintain its leadership after the war with a continuation of such crass class collaboration as it has practiced in the past and practices today. The organization will never be in a position to repulse the assaults of the bourgeoisie without the most determined and conscious class-struggle action.

The leadership of the CIO has some vague understanding of this point. This is the meaning of their resistance to independent political organization of the proletariat. It is true that sustained economic struggle augmented by the intrusion of the ideas of the revolutionaries will promote class consciousness among the proletariat and impel them to independent political organization and class political action. The CIO leadership resists this class demand of the proletariat because, as meek class collaborationists, such a demand is not of their world. But this is the direction the labor movement must take if it is to make any further genuine progress at all.

DAVID COOLIDGE.

The American People in 'One World'

An Essay in Dialectical Materialism

America has entered upon a new phase of relationship with the rest of the world. Its armies tramp and roll over the most remote corners of the globe; its navies scour the five oceans; every day its airmen blaze new "Santa Fe" trails over African jungles and the China Sea. American military and political leaders lay down the law in Casablanca, London, Chungking and Rome, and partition continents at Cairo and Teheran. Arabs, Hindus and Koreans, seeking the bread of independence, jostle one another along the stone corridors of Constitution Avenue. All the world has been converted and Washington is the modern Mecca. Within the White House, Roosevelt arrogates the right to O. K. rulers of empires as a merchant O. K.'s prospective salesman. Augustan Rome, the Pope sitting crowned upon the grave thereof, even imperial Britain, seem to have been merely successive anticipations of this monstrous, this incredible concentration of power. The American people are grappling with the change. The sales of Willkie's *One World*, the greatest publishing success in history, is a political and not a literary phenomenon. Yet the true nature of the new relation remains obscure for the great masses of the people. How could it be otherwise? Day after day, year after year, it has heard American history past and present discussed in the following terms:

"It is not a coincidence . . . that the United States and Russia, under the czars and under the Soviets, have always in vital matters been on the same side; that for more than 100 years Britain and America have in the end always found that against the mortal enemy of either, they would support one another,

and that France, which did so much to liberate America, has twice in her mortal peril found us at last beside her." (Walter Lippmann, *Herald Tribune*, July 8, 1944.)

We propose to expose the falsity of this interpretation of American history in its international relations. It is not the truth about American history and can be factually exposed. Left unexposed, it affords too fertile a soil for the organized deception of the people as to the true character of America's foreign relations of today and still more, of tomorrow. We propose, however, to make a preliminary statement of our own principles, first because of the vastness of the subject and the danger of becoming lost in it; secondly, owing to the necessity of constantly counterposing Marxism to the bourgeois* ignorance and superficiality of Lippmann's method, which in bourgeois society seems as natural as the air we breathe; finally, owing to the reinforcement to this nationalistic empiricism, now being provided by the Stalinists in the name of Marx. This inexhaustible source of corruption celebrated the latest July 4 as follows:

The fact that our country was able to rally from the unclear national policy and the dark days of division of Munichism to play the tremendous part it has in the great anti-Hitler war of liberation is in large measure due to the democratic content which for 168 years, despite many vicissitudes, has continued to characterize our national existence. ("How America Got That Way," by F. J. Meyers, *New Masses*, July 4, 1944.)

What are these but the historical method and the ideas of

*We say bourgeois advisedly. Lippman is intelligent, well informed and conscientious—but bourgeois.

Lippmann dressed in a pink sweater? This deliberate and criminal falsification has a clear purpose. The political struggle of the proletariat in international relations now becomes a struggle as to whether "our country," i.e., Roosevelt, will continue to play the role it has played "for 168 years," i.e., in 1944, support Stalinist Russia. Under this potent but poisonous fertilizer, the advocacy of incentive pay and of the no-strike pledge become the continuation of the great traditions of the Declaration of Independence, not only at home but abroad.

Yet, in reality, the history of the United States, properly understood, is a clarion call to the masses of the people everywhere to raise the concept of the nation to a higher plane by inseminating it with the concept of class. Dialectically handled, this history is a weapon to be used by and for the people and not against them.

The Method of Investigation

1. Marx has stated that "as in the eighteenth century the American War of Independence sounded the tocsin for the European middle class, so in the nineteenth century the American Civil War sounded it for the European working class." All Marx's method is contained in that sentence. Not America in general, but the *class struggle* in America, the American Revolution and the American Civil War. Not Britain or France or Germany in general, but the progression from the European middle classes in the eighteenth century to the European proletariat in the nineteenth. The method of dialectical materialism at one stroke clears its skirts from the hereditary stupidities of the bourgeois publicist and the criminal huckstering of his Stalinist hack. We today must bear in mind that logical class movement from the eighteenth to the nineteenth century and by projecting it, disentangle from complicated historical phenomena the class relations and international perspectives of the twentieth. It is precisely this logical connection that we wish to establish and precisely this that the Stalinists wish to destroy, because it is this more than anything else that the American people need.

2. This is no mere academic exercise. We can orient for the future only by comprehension of the present in the light of the past. This apparent truism, with the bourgeoisie mere "common sense" or sententiousness, for the Marxist has an entirely different significance, both logical and historical. Marx taught us that the very categories by which we distinguish the various phases of the social movement are fully developed and therefore fully comprehensible only in the maturity of bourgeois society. Today we can go further. It is in the decay of bourgeois society as it falls to pieces that concepts centuries old shed all social and traditional disguise and stand naked. When Jesse Jones, after Pearl Harbor, heard that stock-piles of rubber had been destroyed by fire in Boston and asked if they had been insured, half the country laughed at him. The fetishism of commodities stood exposed as an idol of the market place. In every sphere of social knowledge contemporary developments reveal the past in truer perspective and show us our own great contradictions as merely the logical climax of embryonic movements maturing through the centuries.

The history of Bolshevism etches in sharper and clearer perspective the apparent hair-splitting of the early Christians and the Puritans and thus gives historical discrimination to the conflicts of today in the light of tomorrow. Only the October Revolution could extend our knowledge of the British and French revolutions and the three in sequence together constitute a statue of liberty that illuminates the whole con-

temporary darkness. This extension of American power to the remotest reaches is a dramatic climax to the role this country has played in international relations, lighting up the past of the whole of Western civilization and projecting its present contradictions into their future resolution.

Today, in American imperialism, the commodity has reached its most grandiose historical manifestation. All peoples are entangled in the net of the world market. We have only to examine carefully the historical development to see concretely posed the revolutionary socialist solution which Marx distilled by logical abstraction. It is necessary to do this so as not to be misled by the apparent ignorance and bewilderment of the great masses of the people. The masses do not learn history, they make it. More accurately, they learn it only when they make it. Even Washington had little conception of what tocsin he was sounding, and Lincoln had less. So, today the American proletariat, as it went into the factories to protect the birth of the CIO and now girds itself for the post-war struggle against unemployment, is, unawaredly, preparing international and economic transformations and social realignments on a scale comparable only to the elevation of American capitalism to its position as dominant world power. This for us is the objective movement of history which we attempt, by precept and example, subjectively to clarify and advance. Not forgetting, however, that the subjective movement, whatever its accidental chances, is in its totality the complement of objective necessity and cannot be separated from it.

The First Tocsin

In the last quarter of the eighteenth century bourgeois Europe needed to emancipate itself from that combination of feudalism and commercial capitalism which we know as mercantilism. Yet the protagonists of the new industrial capitalism, in Britain as well as in France, had been nourished on the famous "triangular trade" of mercantilism—Africa, America and the West Indies. After the end of the Seven Years War in 1763, the up and coming industrial bourgeoisie began to find itself in conflict with the mercantilist commercial and political domination. Each class sought to solve its difficulties at the expense of the periphery—the thirteen colonies. But in the thirteen colonies the resulting economic and political crisis soon brought on to the political stage the artisans and mechanics of the towns. Says Beard: "They broke out in rioting in Boston, New York, Philadelphia and Charleston. . . . In fact, the agitation, *contrary to the intent of the merchants and lawyers*, got quite beyond the bounds of law and order." (Emphasis mine—J. R. J.) Well might Gouverneur Morris remark: "The heads of the mobility grow dangerous to the gentry, and how to keep them down is the question."

In the border areas the farmers, checked in the first agitation against the British, broke out into furious revolt against the American ruling class. A conservative historian (Miller, *Origins of the American Revolution*, 1943, page 319) sums up his research thus: "But this Eastern ruling class was at no time disposed to sacrifice any of its privileges in order to bring the Western farmers wholeheartedly into the revolutionary movement. Instead the aristocracy urged Americans to center their attention wholly upon British tyranny and not to seek to apply revolutionary principles to conditions at home." The "no-strike pledge" and "incentive pay" have a long ancestry.

When the victory was won, the bottom had been torn out of the "triangular trade" and the British industrial bourgeoisie came immediately into its own. The Treaty of Versailles which ratified the independence of America was signed in

1783. One year later, 1784, is the traditional date set as the "beginning" of the industrial revolution in Britain. In a surprisingly few years the trade with America on the new basis rivalled the old mercantilist prosperity to the confutation of the prophets of evil. Not only in the internal affairs of Europe did the loss of America create a revolution. Colonial relations underwent a radical transformation. One year after the loss of America came the first of the great India Bills which marked the beginning of the change from the old-fashioned robbery and plunder of India to the more systematic economic exploitation based on the developing textile industry. Three years after Versailles, Pitt personally asked Wilberforce to undertake the agitation for the abolition of the slave trade. This was accomplished in 1806 and marked the beginning of a new relationship between Great Britain and Africa. Mercantilist Britain, for a century the undying foe of colonial independence, by 1820 had become the champion of the freedom of the Latin-American colonies. Where George III had said of the struggle with the thirteen colonies, "Blows will decide," Canning, with his eye on British trade in Latin America, declared: "We have called a new world into existence to redress the balance of the old."

George Washington might preach isolationism and non-intervention. The revolution had set in motion great class struggles in Europe and given a new direction to international trade and colonial relations. Today we can estimate the relative values of the Declaration of Independence and the essential *political* document of the time, *Wealth of Nations*. Adam Smith had worked on it for ten years when it appeared in 1776. He wrote that the present system of management, i.e., mercantilism, procured advantage "only to a single order of men," i.e., one class. Great Britain (and Europe as well) "derives nothing but loss from the dominion which she has assumed over her colonies." The problem was how to achieve the death of this system. In the opinion of this bourgeois, to propose that Britain "give up all the authority over her colonies . . . would be to propose such a measure as never was and never will be adopted by any nation in the world." The American revolutionary leaders for years had been in close contact with the radical opposition in Britain. But all these politicians were, like Smith, unable to visualize the radical and complete break. It was the artisans, the mechanics and farmers who started the ball a-rolling and converted Smith's theories into reality. Thus Washington's "isolationism" was merely the appearance of things. Their essence was far different. We shall see this difference between the appearance and the essence constantly repeated on an ever more extensive scale until it reaches truly gigantic proportions in the contradiction between the apparent power of Washington today and the underlying economic and social movement.

The Second Tocsin

Technological discoveries are the spermatozoa of social change. The cotton-gin not only created the historical patterns of American capitalism. It laid an indelible impress on European development as well. In 1847 Marx, engaged in the congenial task of exposing the misuse of the Hegelian dialectic by Proudhon, took as one of his illustrations, slavery.

Without slavery you have no cotton, without cotton you have no modern industry. It is slavery which has given their value to the colonies, it is the colonies which have created the commerce of the world, it is the commerce of the world which is the essential condition of the great industry. . . . Without slavery North America, the most progressive country, would have been transformed into a patriarchal country. Efface North America from the map of the world

and you would have the anarchy, the complete decadence of modern commerce and civilization. Cause slavery to disappear and you will have effaced America from the map of nations. (*Poverty of Philosophy*.)

By 1847, however, this was the summation of an age which was dying. Its death was to change the social structure of America and signalize the coming of age of a new force in Europe.

Just one year before Marx's book, the British bourgeoisie won its final victory over the landlords by the abolition of the "corn laws," which brought the cheap wheat of the New World into Britain and lowered the value of the laborer. The South had calculated all along that the loss of its cotton would inevitably bring intervention by the European powers, particularly Britain. It miscalculated the interest of the industrialists in cheap wheat from the wheat belt, which was one of the most powerful supporters of the North. But the role of cheap wheat was a testimony to the fact that the special claims of the textile industry, always the first to mature in a nascent capitalist development, had already been superseded by the interests of the bourgeoisie as a whole. The varied and expanded accumulation of capital had brought with it a varied and expanded proletariat. In 1848 this proletariat appeared on the scene in France in the first proletarian revolution. Europe trembled, but in Washington, the White House, the government and the people in the streets rejoiced at the downfall of the monarchy. The ruling classes of Europe therefore hated the political system of America with its scorn of aristocracy and monarchy, its emphasis on equality, manhood suffrage and popular government.

But in the United States, by 1848, forces were at work converting the bourgeoisie from the ally to the foe of popular aspirations abroad. In 1850, a desperate attempt was made to compromise the differences between North and South. But the economic conflict was irrepressible. The fugitive slaves and the Abolitionists would not let the question be forgotten for a moment. In 1858 economic crisis shook not only the United States but the whole of the now vastly extended world market. From then on the sequence of international events came thick and fast.

First, between 1857 and 1859, a series of great strikes and class conflicts broke out all over Europe, Britain included. In 1860 came Lincoln's election. The South expected that the commercial capitalists of the North would as usual capitulate. But independent farmers of the Northwest could not for a moment tolerate the idea of a hostile power holding the mouth of the Mississippi and they were among the chief supporters of Lincoln. But even more important, *the victory of the Republican Party was due more than anything else to the support of labor.** And labor, though no lover of Negroes, was by 1860 conscious enough of the stake which free labor had in the struggle with slave labor. *Thus labor and the independent farmers were the most powerful forces in the North while the general unrest and minor but repeated insurrections among the slaves completed the forces which pushed the unwilling rulers of the North and South to the final settlement by arms. The mechanics, the artisans, the frontiersmen of 1776 and the Negroes** who had fought with Washington had now developed into the powerful force on whom Lincoln had ultimately to depend for political support and military victory.*

*The neglect of this fact is one of the strangest features of radical propaganda and agitation in the United States.

**They had also joined the British in large numbers, listening to their promises of freedom.

But political activity, the concrete expression of social consciousness, though sometimes accelerated, sometimes retarded, must keep pace with social development. Even before 1848 the Abolitionists not only led an incomparable agitation in the United States. Garrison and Negroes who had escaped from slavery placed the case of the slaves before vast numbers of European workers. They enrolled supporters by the hundreds of thousands. One Negro alone enrolled 70,000 in Germany.

When war actually began, the European ruling classes were on the alert for an opportunity to intervene. Everything hinged on Britain. The British government was hesitant and hoped for an encouraging signal from the Lancashire cotton operatives, who were in great distress over the cessation of cotton exports from the South. The British textile operatives, however, denounced the intervention plans of the government and what took place in Britain was repeated on a lesser scale all over Europe. The British bourgeoisie was sneering at Lincoln's repeated declarations that the war was not a war for the abolition of slavery. The European workers shouted across the ocean that it was, and called on Lincoln to say so. Lincoln, with the North in great danger, finally penned the Emancipation Proclamation, to take effect on January 1, 1863. The European proletariat celebrated a great victory. It came just in time. Marx tells us (Schlueter, *Lincoln, Labor and Slavery*, page 187; see also Marx and Engels' *Correspondence*) that in April, 1863, "a monster meeting... prevented Palmerston from declaring war against the United States when he was on the point of doing it."

In 1861, the Czar, fearful of rebellion from below, had emancipated the serfs. In 1862 had come the rebellion of the Poles. A great international mass meeting took place in London in July, 1863, on behalf of Polish independence. These two events, the American Civil War and the Polish Rebellion, brought to a conclusion the tentative negotiations long in progress and on September 28, 1864, the First International was founded. On November 1 the executive committee adopted the inaugural address by Marx. Nothing so contributed to the final consummation as the Civil War.

At the beginning of that same November, Lincoln was re-elected President. Marx, on the Council of the International, initiated a series of mass meetings in Britain protesting against the hostile attitude of the English ruling class and government to the Union. On the 29th, Marx presented to the Council the address to Lincoln. The International became the terror of the European governments. If in the eighteenth century the American Revolution had initiated the struggle for bourgeois democracy, the Civil War had set on foot the movement which ended its first phase in the Paris Commune—the dictatorship of the proletariat.

Oriental Interlude

It is in revolutionary periods that the culmination of previous trends and the beginning of new ones appear. That is why they are so important.

Before we draw together the developing historical tendencies which meet in the colossal power of the United States today, we have to note briefly the temporary but symptomatic Far Eastern colonial adventure which spurted during the revolutionary crisis of 1850-1860.

In that critical decade the Northern industrial capitalists, unwilling to challenge seriously the combination of plantation owners and financial and commercial interests, seriously sought an outlet in the Far East. The low tariffs imposed by

the mainly agrarian Democratic Party brought European goods into the United States, and already by 1844, American merchants in Canton had extorted a commercial treaty from the Chinese, granting them, among other things, "extra-territoriality." Ten years later, Daniel Webster, Whig mouthpiece, sent Commodore Perry to open Japan, chiefly as a port of call on the long journey to China. The hapless Japanese had seen what Britain had done and was doing to China and knew, moreover, that British and Russian battleships were waiting to do likewise to Japan. They accepted the "gentle coercion." American agents seized the Bonin Islands and Formosa. The U. S. was already ankle-deep in the bloody mud of the imperialist scramble. *But the class struggle at home checked the adventure.* The Southern agrarians had their own idea of imperialism—conquest of land for plantations in Cuba and Mexico. The Pacific islands were far and could not be defended except by heavy expenditure on a navy. The neo-imperialists began a dog-in-the-manger policy which they canonized as the defense of the "territorial integrity" of China.

Imperialist enterprise draws political consequences. By 1850 European industry and European plunder had thrown the subsistence economies of India and China into disorder. In that tumultuous decade the first of the great series of Oriental revolutions burst upon the world. The Taiping rebellion against the Manchu dynasty began in 1850, and it has been described as a mass movement of the propertyless against the corruption, inefficiency and capitulation to Britain of the old Chinese ruling class. By 1856 this revolution was at its height. In 1857 followed what the British call the Indian mutiny but which the Indians call the First War of Independence. *The American representatives in China played their part side by side with the British and other imperialists in suppressing the Taiping Rebellion.* From that beginning to this day American imperialism has never wavered in its unrelenting hostility to the democratic aspirations of the Oriental peoples. When, in the seventies, radical elements in Japan established a republic in one part of the islands, and again in 1894, when the Japanese Parliament was leading popular hostility against the throne and the bureaucracy, the administration in Washington gave every assistance, military, political and diplomatic, to save the monarchy and the militarists.

The Contemporary Grandeur

As the industrial bourgeoisie felt the struggle of the proletariat at home, so they became its enemy abroad. At the end of World War I, American food and diplomatic power had to be used to stifle the socialist revolutions in Europe and Asia. Never was there such destruction, such misery, such barbarism; never such disillusionment by the masses of the people in every continent with the old order. American imperialism therefore becomes the chief bulwark of the capitalist system as a whole. At the same time, ten years of the New Deal have shown the impossibility of solving the great economic depression. Therefore the United States hopes to restore its own shattered prosperity by substituting its own imperialism for the imperialism of Britain and France, its "allies." It even prepares to "liberate" India in the interests of the "open door" and the "territorial integrity" of India.

The Gandhis and Nehrus, however, seek the protection of this new patron to pacify the masses, satisfy their hatred of Japan and Britain and divert them from social revolution. The United States is the friend and ally of every reactionary government and class in Latin America except in so far as these for the moment assist the Axis.

This, in 1944, is "our country." The colossal power of American imperialism is the apex of a process—the rise, maturity and decline of the capitalist world market. In the eighteenth century, "our country," in achieving its own independence, released the great forces of the European bourgeoisie. In the nineteenth, "our country," in the triumph of its industrial bourgeoisie, released the great political potentialities of the European proletariat, the mortal enemy of the European bourgeoisie. Today "our country" can release nothing. Driven by the contradictions of its own capitalistic development and of capitalism as a whole, it is now the enemy of hundreds of millions of the people everywhere. The appearance of liberator of peoples is a necessary disguise for the essential reality of American imperialism, epitome of decadent capitalism, mobilized for the defense of privilege and property against a world crying to be free.

The laws of dialectics are to be traced not in metaphysical abstractions such as 168 years of "our country," but in economic development and the rise, maturity and decline of different social classes within the expansion and constriction of the capitalist world market. The greatest progressive force in the eighteenth century, the nationalism of "our country," is, in the twentieth century, the greatest of obstacles to social progress. In accordance with a fundamental dialectical law, the progressive "nationalism" of eighteenth century America is transformed into its opposite, the reactionary "internationalism" of American imperialism. The liberating "isolationism" of Washington is transformed into the rapacious "interventionism" of Roosevelt. The essence underlying each social order is exactly the opposite of its appearance on the surface. The power of Washington as capital of the world rests on no sound foundation. Except to those for whom a logical development of historical forces has ceased, or has never existed, the imperialist American grandeur is the mark of imperialist American doom. Imperial Washington, like imperial Rome, is destined to be cursed and execrated by the embittered millions. The liberating international tradition can and will have a new birth in this nation but, today, in accordance with historical logic, only in the service of the American proletariat, consciously using the great American tradition of the past and its present economic power as the pivot and arsenal of international socialism.

"Modern International Society"

The stage is set. "There are unmistakable indications that there is rapidly rising a truly popular demand for a cleaning of the Augean stable of modern international society and that it will not admit defeat." The author of that is no Marxist but a man who for years directed the international policy of American imperialism, Sumner Welles. But history has proved again and again since 1917 that the agrarian revolution on which hangs the salvation of India, of China and of Latin America cannot be achieved without the conscious aid of the working class in each country. In our compact world, successful revolt in any area will sound the tocsin for the center more violently than the American revolutions of the eighteenth and nineteenth century shook metropolitan Europe.

And the social crisis in America must bring unto the scene the American proletariat.

Yet it would be a grave error to mistake the twentieth for the nineteenth century and to believe that the American proletariat is dependent upon the tocsin from abroad to engage in relentless class struggles with American capital. Whatever may be the incidental occasion, that struggle is rooted in the inability of American capital to solve the problem of the industrial reserve army of labor. Significant action of any kind by the American proletariat will reverberate in every corner of our "One World." Every Chinese knows that it is impossible to have great class struggles in China without provoking the intervention of American imperialism. The whole tendency of the modern economy shows that foreign trade will be increasingly a transaction under the aegis of governments. American imperialism cannot escape its entanglement in foreign class struggles even if it would. Revolutionary movement anywhere can release only the international proletariat and the hundreds of millions dependent upon it. And that too is a law of the dialectic, proving the ripeness of the organism for transformational change.

The American proletariat itself may view the tangled skein of world politics with faint interest or even with indifference. To judge the future of contemporary history by these subjective appraisals is to make an irreparable error, to forget that being determines consciousness and not vice versa. In our "One World" the first serious and prolonged struggle on which the American proletariat embarks with its own bourgeoisie will rapidly educate it in the realities of international politics.

This must be the theoretical basis of action. The masses who comprised the Sons of Liberty had little understanding of fact that they were sounding tocsins for the European middle classes. Lincoln, the leader, did not even know that he would have to emancipate the slaves, far less sound the tocsin for the organization of the first Workers' International. The farmers, mechanics and artisans, the workers and Negro slaves, pursued strictly immediate and concrete aims and made world history.

The premises of international proletarian organization are here. The individual productive unit of early competitive capitalism found its political complement in bourgeois democracy where individual units of the bourgeoisie fought out its collective problems. The maturity of capitalist production drove the proletariat to international organization in the nineteenth century. By the twentieth century the size of the productive units had linked the national units of production so closely that imperialist war marked the final decline of capitalism. From the large-scale productive unit came the new political form of the future—the soviet. For the soviets are *not* merely organs of struggle but the political framework of the new society. To the soviets, instinctive rejection by the masses of the organs of bourgeois democracy, the bourgeoisie responded with the totalitarian state. The most glaring sign of the degeneration of the role of the workers in Stalinist Russia is the destruction of the soviets by the constitution of 1936. Stalinist totalitarianism, the historical result of the first proletarian revolution, its growing collaboration with American imperialism, the mischievous power of its satellites abroad, have disoriented those whose Marxism, based on emotion and superficial reading, reject the dialectic in history. They work from Stalinist Russia and American imperialism back toward the possibilities of socialism. They see the absence of international organization, the acquiescence and indifference of the workers, the organizational power of the Stalinist corruption inside the

working class, and draw the gloomiest prospects for international revolutionary action. Such was never the theory or the practice of Marx. Let us end this theoretical study with one of his most mature and pregnant sayings:

"The international activity of the working class does not by any means depend on the existence of the International Workingmen's Association. This was only the first attempt to create a central organ for that activity; an attempt which from the impulse it gave is an abiding success that was no longer practicable in its first historical form after the fall of the Paris Commune."

It was in that reasoned faith that Lenin and his band of Bolsheviks worked and created the Third International. We who have seen the determination of the contemporary masses to cleanse the Augean stables of modern international society are not in any way dismayed by the power of Washington or of Moscow. In the contradictions and barbarism of world economy we see the soil from which at whatever remove, and through whatever corruption from without or within, must ultimately arise the Fourth International.

J. R. JOHNSON.

Ten Years of 'The New International'

Three Anniversary Articles

We reprint here with gratification, and without further comment, the editorial announcement on the aims of *The New International* as set forth in the first issue to be published, ten years ago, in July, 1934.—Ed.

A GREETING

Editorial Board

The NEW INTERNATIONAL

Dear Comrades:

The fact that you have established a theoretical organ, I consider as a festival occasion. Its name, The NEW INTERNATIONAL, is a program of an entire epoch. I am convinced that your magazine will serve as an invaluable weapon in the establishment of the new International on the foundations laid by the great masons of the future: Marx, Engels, Lenin.

With Communist greetings,

L. TROTSKY.



Our periodical appears at a most critical juncture in the life of the international labor movement. The mighty mechanism of capitalist society is crumbling in the sight of all. Once it tore whole nations out of the backwardness of feudalism and erected that colossal productive machine which is capable of keeping all mankind at a high level of comfort and culture. Having surmounted Alpine peaks of progress, it is now rolling at breakneck speed down a precipitous incline. In its ascension, it encountered obstacles, but it overcame them and mounted higher. As it hurtles into the abyss to which it is historically doomed, the tiniest impediment subjects it to the most convulsive shocks. It leaks at every joint and gives off suffocating fumes of decomposition like the gases of a gangrened body which empoison the atmosphere. All the retrogressive and parasitic abomination inherent in the very existence of capitalism are pressed upward to the surface in a last effort to evade paying the final note on its overdue doom.

The Decay of the Bourgeoisie

The lusty young bourgeoisie, which once dealt such crushing revolutionary blows at feudal and clerical reaction, has aged to a decrepit senility when life depends upon reviving

and forming an alliance with all that is archaic and reactionary in the world's economy and politics. The once progressive capitalist class can no longer live without preserving feudalism and serfdom in more than half the world, and resorting to Fascist barbarism in the rest of the globe. Where it once relied for its victory upon the support of the working class and peasantry, which liberated it and society from their common foe, capitalism can now maintain itself only by reducing its former allies to a standard of life and culture no higher than the feudal.

Capitalism has outlived its usefulness! It cannot expand the productive forces of mankind—it contracts them. It cannot feed the masses—it starves them. It cannot bring peace to the people—it drives them to war. It can no longer justify its supremacy—it maintains it with the Fascist bayonet.

If we can write, as von Hutten said in his day, that this is a time for the joy of living, then only because we live in the period of revolution, the triumphant culmination of which will open up a new era to humanity. The forces of production of the things men live by are in rebellion against the anachronistic fetters which impede their fullest development. The proletariat is in rebellion, now blindly, now consciously, against its exploiters. The colonial slaves are in rebellion against their metropolitan oppressors. The class struggle, which no human or natural agency can suppress without suppressing society—at least not until classes themselves have been abolished—has reached an unprecedented degree of acuteness. Yet, outside the Soviet Union, capitalism still prevails. Instead of receiving its mortal blow, it has inflicted upon the proletariat some of the cruelest defeats in history.

On the one side, an outlived social order, revealing within itself the objective necessity and inevitability of a new society; on the other side, a proletariat socially developed to the point where it can inaugurate this new society which nevertheless has not yet summoned sufficient forces to overthrow the old. The unknown factor is only too well known, and can be established with the exactness of a mathematical equation.

The two parties of the proletariat, into whose hands history successively gave the imposing task of overthrowing the bourgeoisie and opening the road to socialism, have failed abysmally. Social democracy and Stalinism both collapsed at the first blow, like eggshells sucked dry, in Germany, then in Austria, then in Latvia, then in Bulgaria. (The social democracy, be it noted, died politically twenty years ago; it proved no less despicable in its second incarnation.)

The Importance of the Party

The whole history of the modern proletarian movement has only served to underscore the full-importance and indispensability of that most highly perfected of all its instruments: the political party. Especially in our time has it become the master key to all problems. The class war is fought by class armies. The working class as a whole—to say nothing of its necessary allies in other sections of the population—is not characterized by firm homogeneity. It is stratified at different levels of consciousness, it is divided by conflicting ideologies, by separatist interests of caste, religion, nationality, sex, age. Emerging from its ranks—but transcending these differences and consequently able to overcome them—is its vanguard, the revolutionary political party. The party embodies the accumulated experiences of the proletariat distilled into its revolutionary theory. It is the repository of the consciousness of the class. It embraces the most advanced, the most militant, the most devoted, unites them firmly on the basis of tested principle and welds them together in rigorous discipline.

The proletariat as a class, as a whole, cannot directly plan and guide its battles, any more than each platoon in an army can elaborate the strategy and tactics of war. For that a staff, a vanguard is imperative—not imposed from above as in a capitalist army, without the possibility of control and verification from the ranks, but rising from the ranks by tested ability and common approval. It is all the more imperative in this epoch because of the extreme concentration of power in the enemy camp, its increased mobility, and because of the abruptness with which changes take place in the objective situation. These necessitate a trained, vigilant vanguard equipped with foresight and consequently capable of pre-arrangement. Foresight is made possible by the searchlight of Marxism, whose powerful batteries are merely the condensed experiences of history, illuminating the path ahead.

For lack of just such a party, the working class has suffered one defeat after another, until the dreadful climax in 1933-1934 disclosed the bankruptcy of the existing organizations.

Neither of the two parties came to their miserable end because of some aberration, springing out of conditions peculiar to Germany, or Austria. Their demolition is rather to be traced to the fundamental theories and practises common to their respective internationals. The generic name of these theories is nationalistic opportunism.

The modern social-democratic parties were nurtured on the skimmed milk of the imperialistic expansion of their respective national fatherlands. Grown mighty and fabulously wealthy on the vast profits of colonial exploitation, the imperialist powers found it necessary and possible to corrupt and thus enlist the support of a whole section of its own working class. The social democracy based itself upon the aristocracy of labor, upon the reforms which an indulgent imperialism vouchsafed it, and upon sections of the middle class. It was generally absorbed into the machinery of the capitalist state and interlaced its destiny with the fate of the bourgeois nation. Thence the unforgettable treason of the social democracy during the war, each party digging bloodsoaked fingers into the throat of the other for the greater glory of its own fatherland. Thence the rabid loyalty to the capitalist state when the spontaneous post-war revolutionary wave threatened to inundate the bourgeoisie. Thence the theory of gradually converting capitalism into socialism just as smoothly and miraculously as the transubstantiation of the wafer and the wine into the body and blood of Christ. Thence the repudiation of the dictatorship of the proletariat and its replacement by the

theory and practice of coalitions with the democratic bourgeoisie for the preservation of capitalism, as a necessary transition to socialism. Thence the theory of the lesser evil—capitalism is preferable to bolshevism—to socialism. Thence the theory which facilitated the victory of fascism.

Stalinism and Revolution

What distinguishes the Stalinist parties from the social-democratic is not so much the outcome of their policy—the effects have been equally calamitous in both cases—as it is the different origin of their nationalism. The Stalinist parties were not poisoned at the well of imperialist nationalism, but at the well once fed exclusively by the springs of a proletarian revolution. The theory of “socialism in one country” is an expression of the nationalist degeneration of the Soviet Union. There is not, nor can there be, an inherent conflict between the interests of the Soviet Union and the interests of the world revolution. The interests of a parasitic Soviet bureaucracy, however, can and do conflict with the interests of the world revolution. The generalized formulation of this conflict is implicit in the theory of “socialism in one country.”

The Soviet bureaucracy, myopically attributing longevity to phenomena of a temporary character, does not believe in the possibilities of a world revolution for several decades to come. With this conviction pervading all their thoughts, the bureaucrats want above all else the safeguarding of Russia's territorial integrity in order to construct a nationally walled-off utopia. This course had led inexorably to the transformation of the Third International from the general staff of the world revolution into a Soviet border patrol. Internationalism requires the subordination of each country to the interests of the world revolution. Nationalism means the subordination of the world movement to the interests of the Stalinist bureaucracy in the Soviet Union.

Their nationalist degeneration, however much it differs in origin and complexion, led both the social democracy and Stalinism to their Waterloo in Germany. *Fundamentally*, there is no other explanation for the collapse of the existing internationals. All the blunders and crimes, the big ones as well as the little and less dramatic ones, flowed from a central fountainhead.

History and the events that compose it, do not occur for nothing. They afford the possibility of theoretical generalization, of learning from them. The great strength of the Communist International in its early years lay in the fact that it learned from the collapse of the Second International.

The lesson of the collapse of the *two* Internationals is not the renunciation of internationalism but its revival. And not on paper, but in deeds. Revolutionary internationalism must be active and concrete. At the present time that can mean only one thing: *unfurl the banner of the Fourth International and work unremittingly to rally the vanguard elements throughout the world around it!*

Colloquy with the Doubter

—We too are internationalists, but will it not be a better and a stronger International if we first build up solid revolutionary parties in each country and then unite them throughout the world?

—Dear friend, so many stupendous events have been experienced in the last twenty years that it would appear as if everybody must have learned something. But it seems that one cannot judge by appearances.

How will you build up “solid revolutionary parties” nationally without unceasing activity for the reconstruction of

the International at the same time? The day of *national* revolutionary parties ended long ago, as did the day of national party programs. In the period when world politics and world economy exist as distinct entities, there can be only one revolutionary party—the International, with sections in every country. The International cannot be a mere arithmetical sum of various national parties, that is, it must not be. What you will have, if ever you reach the stage of forming your International, will be a somewhat less repulsive edition of the Second, composed of disparate parties, which developed by themselves in divergent directions, which are jealous of their “national independence,” which resent “interference by outsiders”. You propose to turn back to twenty-five years ago. We prefer to go forward.

—But must the International be formed this very moment, when there is so much confusion in the ranks of the working class?

—Just because of that. Hide and seek is no game to be played with the masses. The revolutionary vanguard needs a new Communist International. The masses are confused, it is true. They are being confused by the social democrats of all shades and disguises, who tell them that the Second International is good enough, that it can be reformed, if not today, then tomorrow, if not tomorrow then . . . after fascism triumphs in a few more countries. They are being confused by the Stalinists who tell them that the Third International was right yesterday, today, tomorrow and forever. They are being confused by the vacillators and opportunists who deceive them with stories about uniting the Second and the Third, or about forming some other International—not a “sectarian” one, God forbid, but one in which all “good revolutionary parties outside the Second and the Third” will find shelter for the night. The Fourth International will not bring confusion into the ranks of the working class. It will bring a flaming sword whose edge cuts through the web of lies and deceit and hypocrisy, and whose light bring clarity.

—But who wants a Fourth International now? You are too weak, it is a period of defeats, and even Lenin formed the International only a year and a half after the triumphant revolution.

—Your arguments do not improve with age, dear friend. Lenin proclaimed the need for the new, the Third International, not after the Russian victory, but in the darkest days of reaction, in August 1914. At Zimmerwald in 1915 he fought bitterly against those who, like you, argued that “now is not the time” because “we are too few”. A year later at Kienthal his persistence had brought to his side new and greater forces. The basis for the Comintern was not laid in Moscow in March 1919, but four years before. The struggle for the building of the new International can no more be postponed than the struggle for the rebuilding of the new parties in each country. It is just as unpostponable as the class struggle itself. For us the International is not, as Kautsky said, merely an instrument in peace times which does not function in war. That is all his International was. The International is the general staff of the world proletariat, and consequently it is indispensable *at all times*. The general staff, like the army, is demobilized or has its functions drastically curtailed only at the end of a war. But our class war is far from ended.

—But already some of those who were for the new International have begun to vacillate, haven't they?

Fate of Vacillators

—Indeed, indeed. So much the worse for them; so much the worse for those who take the same course. Not all those

who began with the Zimmerwald left wing of Lenin, stayed with it. Some developed reservations, some quit, others even deserted to the enemy. But do not judge by superficial phenomena. Today the vacillators murmur softly or not at all about the Fourth International to which they firmly pledged themselves before. They want to “win the masses” of Tranmael's Norwegian Labor Party and Brockway's Independent Labour Party. How? By keeping still. Tomorrow, when Tranmael and Co. have gone the way of the Austro-Marxists, it will not be thanks to the vacillators that Tranmael's present followers will have learned necessary lessons. But when they do, and they will, they will join hands all the more firmly with those who fought persistently for the Fourth International.

—Words have meaning, or they should have. The Fourth International—that means new *Communist* parties and a new *Communist* International. The Second means all the varieties of social reformist. The Third means Stalinism, bureaucratic centrism. But in addition there are those who want to bridge the gap between reformism and communism, those who want the unity of the two, those who want a Two-and-a-Half International, a home for the politically homeless, a night's lodging until the storm in the ranks blows over and they can resume their peaceful journey back to the Second International, as they did in 1923 at Hamburg.

The Fourth International? This is no meaningless phrase. *It is a fighting program!* It means a fight to the death against fascism, imperialism, war. It means an intransigent struggle against treacherous social reformism, bureaucratic Stalinism, cowardly compromising centrism of all species. It means the unconditional struggle to defend the Soviet Union which social democrats and Stalinists left in the lurch in Germany when they permitted the arch-anti-Sovietist Hitler to come to power without a battle. It means the militant struggle for revolutionary Marxism, for the final victory of the working class.

That is the unsullied banner our periodical will defend. In periods such as the one we are passing through, now, it becomes fashionable in certain quarters to seek the reasons for defeat and reaction in all corners except where they are to be found, to trace the causes everywhere except to their roots. Not the traducers of internationalism are at fault; perhaps it is internationalism itself. Not the traducers of Marxism; perhaps it is Marxism itself which requires revision or “reinterpretation”. As yesterday, so today, we shall continue to work with all our strength for all the fundamental theories of Marx, Engels, Lenin and Trotsky, which have been tested through and through and confirmed a thousand times over and from every angle. With its modest resources, THE NEW INTERNATIONAL will defend the revolutionary teachings of Marxism in every domain, taking up every challenge and refuting all over again those “new” anti-Marxists who have merely refurbished the well-riddled views of old revisionists. Our banner is hoisted and unfurled. The class conscious militants will rally to it and plant it on the citadels of capitalism.

For the Fourth International! For revolutionary Marxism!

**Best Wishes to the N. I. from
a Friend and Ardent Reader**

P. McD.

The N. I. in Latin America

The immigrant workers from Europe brought to the Latin countries of the Western Hemisphere the social ideals and class-consciousness they had acquired in their native lands. They also took to the New World their own backwardness and their own prejudices.

By the end of the century, with the great stream of European immigrants to Latin America, Spaniards, Italians and Portuguese began to pour into South America. These Latin workers constituted the overwhelming majority of the immigrants. Those who were not sent to the large plantations and farms of Argentina, Brazil, Uruguay and Chile as tenants or hired hands, formed the first industrial workers' army.

Part of these immigrants were skilled workers of all sorts (engineers, machinists, electricians), or were engaged in the transport industry (railways, street cars, public utilities). Most of them were organized in professional and insurance associations and cooperative societies. The more conscious of them were reformists. However, some of these made the first attempt to build a "socialist" group, following the pre-first-war pattern. The other sector was composed chiefly of handicraft workers in small industries, and their social basis was the small workshops. They were shoemakers, bakers, tailors, glassworkers, typographers, etc. As to the great mass in the textile industry, they were too exploited to be organized, and, a great number of them being women, this made their unionization still more difficult. Their union came much later. These artisan workers were, however, the first to be organized in militant unions. They were all permeated with anarcho-syndicalism. To them belongs the honor of being the first in the Latin-American countries to organize the working class against the owning class.

Until the Russian Revolution, the best elements and fighters of the young proletariat of these countries were rallied under the flag of Bakunin, Proudhon, Kropotkin, Ferri, Grave and Malatesta rather than Marx. They read Italian and Spanish pamphlets on the nuances of anarchism. Marxism was confined to some isolated group belonging to the workers' aristocracy or the petty bourgeois intelligentsia.

Influence of Bolshevism

The Russian Revolution spelled the end of the influence of anarchism among workers of Latin America. The most militant elements of the working class were won over to Leninism. In Brazil, for instance, the founding nucleus of the C.P. was formed by militants from the anarchist groups.

The ideological influence of the Russian Revolution came chiefly through the French language. French became the "international" language of communism in South America. This was due, basically, to two factors: The new strata of intellectuals, chiefly students, who were attracted to the labor movement by the Russian Revolution, and the lack of a strong Marxian tradition among the workers of Spain, Portugal and Italy. The students, who came from bourgeois and petty bourgeois classes, knew French as their second language. French was their "cultural" language, especially in the only Portuguese speaking country of Latin America, Brazil.

We should not forget that the new Italian Communist Party had had a very short life, and disappeared with the triumph of Mussolini. Italian communism therefore had no time to exercise a marked influence on the Latin-American

radical workers and intellectuals. In Spain the Marxian and communist movement was until recently too weak to be able to have much influence abroad. So Italy, like Spain, ceased to be the natural channel which brought revolutionary doctrines to the proletariat of the Latin countries of our hemisphere.

It was to the above-mentioned past that an old revolutionist, an Argentinian comrade, referred when at the end of 1940 he received in his country a copy of *The New International*. This is what he said:

"Before the First World War we all read Italian and Spanish radical publications. Then with the Russian Revolution I had to learn French in order to be able to follow the development of the international revolutionary movement. Now with the degeneration of the old Communist International and the victory of Nazism in Europe, we have to learn English, the 'new' revolutionary language. Where else in the world can we now find a magazine of revolutionary Marxism beside *The New International*?"

In effect, up to 1934, militant Marxism came to Latin America chiefly through the French language. For a certain time, when the Latin-American secretariat of the Comintern was functioning, first in Buenos Aires and then in Montevideo, through the *Boletín Sud Americano*, put out by the same secretariat, the Spanish idiom became the "official" language of the communist movement on our continent.

With the rise of the Left Opposition of Russia, however, French became the main language among the small circles of Left Oppositionists in Latin America. With the organization of the Left Oppositionists in Spain, which took place with the establishment of the Republic, *Comunismo*, the official organ of the Spanish Left Oppositionists, edited by Comrades Nin and Andrade, balanced off the French press among the small cadres of the Bolshevik-Leninists. This was not true, however, of the Brazilian Oppositionists. But soon Nin's group broke away from the Trotskyist movement and *Comunismo* ceased to be the theoretical organ for the organizations of the Fourth International militants in South America.

In 1934, however, the growing social crisis in France was reflected in the convulsive course of the French Trotskyists. The lack of organizational stability which characterized the French Left Opposition was also reflected in its press, which thereafter appeared irregularly. At that time the growing preponderance of American imperialism on the economic and political life of Latin America began to be felt in other fields, social and cultural.

Rise of American Trotskyism

Paralleling this development was the progress of the Trotskyist movement in America. The United States became the center of the world Trotskyist movement. Its progress was the pride of the small and persecuted family of Trotskyists throughout the world. The Minneapolis and Toledo strikes were a tremendous source of inspiration for all our small groups scattered throughout the six continents. The fusion with the American Workers Party, well executed by the Communist League, was a great tactical step made in a consistently Bolshevik way. It served as a great source of experience for our entire international movement.

Even the entrance into the Socialist Party at a later date

was a well led tactical step, in contrast to the French organization, where all the initial successes gained by the small Trotskyist group in the mass French Socialist Party were later completely lost when the French Trotskyists split over the question of leaving the party. The practical know-how and organizational capacities of the American comrades were qualities highly praised in Latin American countries, for those were precisely the qualities lacking in our own ranks. For Latin American countries, this was a marriage between the proverbial American empiricism and theoretical Marxism represented to them by the European movement. Among some of us the hope arose for a new period of Marxism, American Marxism, just as the Russian Revolution brought with it a new period of Marxism with color and life as against the old and watered-down Marxism of the great pre-war social democratic doctors.

We recalled at that time that Kautsky in 1905 once spoke of the march of Marxism to the East, meaning Russia, and the most hopeful among us hoped to see this march continue through the East to the West. All of this compelled the Latin American comrades more and more to look to the American publications as their source of theory, especially to *The New Internationalist*.

The need for this became more acute with the outbreak of the Second World War and the subsequent isolation of Europe from America.

The great problem brought out by the war made it more imperative than ever to link the isolated Latin American organizations with the American movement. The problem of the defense of Russia after the pact with Hitler was a burning question not only in Europe and the United States, but also in Latin America. There was no other source for studying and obtaining information on all these great political disputes than in the theoretical organ of the American Trotskyists. The split in the American movement over the Russian question did not lessen the need of the theoretical organ of the American organization. In spite of the sterile sectarianism of the SWP, especially after the death of Trotsky, *The New Internationalist* continued to be awaited anxiously by the same leading elements of the "official" Trotskyists in Latin America.

Eternal Russian Question

The problem of the Russian Revolution and the eternal question of the character of the Russian state, bureaucratically settled by the "official" Trotskyists, continued to be a burning

question for them. And for them there was no other source of study of these great questions than the condemned *NEW INTERNATIONALIST*. For instance, the first theoretical article on the character of the Russian state by Max Shachtman after the split made a very deep impression on all sections of the Trotskyist movement in Latin America. In Brazil, it was basic material in the discussion on the Russian problem and was one of the reasons why the newly-won ex-Stalinists broke with the viewpoint of *The New Internationalist*, charging that its views were a revision of Marxism! But this did not free them from the Russian question and they continued to discuss the same eternal problem.

Subsequently, the discussion which took place in the columns of *The New Internationalist* on Russia and the character of its economy, as well as on the Nazi economy, was the greatest contribution made by the American comrades for the revolutionary parties of Latin America. It was on the basis of these discussions that the small Uruguayan group which, with the attack on Russia by Germany, went back to the "official" Trotskyists, split once more and some of its best elements returned to the position of the Workers Party, represented by *The New Internationalist*.

Distinct American Problems

It is necessary that the study of the problem of Latin America be made systematically in order that the beneficial influence of the American revolutionary Marxists on the independent revolutionary movements of Latin America balance off the dangerous and malevolent influence of American imperialism, under the guise of the Good Neighbor policy, on the life of the Latin American people. An important task is to help prepare the Latin American cadres for the coming rebirth of the international movement, so that they may, jointly with the European and world proletariat, aid in the reconstruction of the international socialist organization. This movement must be built on a higher historical plane now that fascism in Europe is at the end of its power and Stalinism has finally taken off its mask in order to assume the role of the "best defender" of the bourgeois social order of today. The social-democratic reformists, by the same token, lost their old traditional role of softening up the working class for the bourgeoisie.

For these big historical tasks, we hope *The New Internationalist* will fulfill a useful and indispensable role.

M. MORENO

'The New Internationalist' in England

In modern times the Anglo-Saxon countries have not been distinguished for theory. In the seventeenth century, Hobbes and Locke in Britain were among the greatest philosophers in Europe. In the eighteenth century, the torch passed to France, while the British perfected the empiricism which corresponded to their material prosperity. The German bourgeoisie, laboring in a Europe which had economically left them far behind, produced the magnificent idealist philosophy. Britain contented itself with the prosaic Bentham and the philosophy of common sense, the greatest good of the greatest number.

This distrust of theory, the veneration of "muddling through," is now deeply rooted in British thought. In the days when Marxism occupied the attention of all the greatest

scholars of Europe, the British produced nothing. Bolshevism was introduced by the Communist International after the Russian Revolution. It fell on stony ground. One candle, however, burnt in the empiricist gloom. That was *The Labour Monthly*. Under the editorship of R. Palme Dutt this theoretical journal did a wonderful work. True, it bore the Anglo-Saxon stamp. Historical materialism, Marxian economics and, for many years, dialectical materialism, were absent from its pages; but Dutt's "Notes of the Month," a Marxist analysis of contemporary topics, and his deep respect for Marxist theory, trained a whole generation of young Marxists.

By 1934, however, Dutt was on the way down, and within a year the policy of the Popular Front had completed the corruption of *The Labour Monthly*. It was just at this period,

however, that the British public turned to Marxism. This is one of the most extraordinary phenomena in the intellectual history of Britain and has never been adequately reported, far less evaluated. Two things contributed to it. One was the completion of the first Five Year Plan contrasted with the bankruptcy of British capitalism, and indeed of capitalism all over the world. This was celebrated by *Soviet Communism, a New Civilization?* by Sidney and Beatrice Webb. They placed their great reputations and powers of compilation at the service of the Stalinist bureaucracy. The second factor was the exposure of British imperialism by the Hoare-Laval plan. The British public reacted violently against this shameless imperialist immorality. The Stalinists, on the alert, formed an alliance with the great publishing firm of Israel Gollancz. Together they organized the Left Book Club. Before long the club had 40,000 members, reading a skillful combination of Marxist classics and Stalinist Popular Front propaganda. Harold Laski, John Strachey and J. B. S. Haldane, perhaps the three best known, if the not most gifted intellectuals in Britain, were at the head of the movement, and with the Webbs, Gollancz, and many others seemed to be carrying all before them.

Fighting the Stalinists

Nothing, absolutely nothing, stood in the way of this corruption of Marxism except The NEW INTERNATIONAL, the publications of Pioneer Publishers, and an infinitesimally small group of Trotskyists. It is almost unbelievable what this group, led by The NEW INTERNATIONAL, managed to do. It fought pitched theoretical battles against the Stalinists and was never overwhelmed. In Britain the practice of democracy among the people is very strong. The workers do not stand for beating up and throwing out opponents. At great mass meetings organized by the Stalinists, with the Hon. D. N. Pritt, MP, KC, John Strachey, Pat Sloan, Page Arnot, Andrew Rothstein and other Stalinist luminaries as the main speakers, the small band of Trotskyists would attend and take the floor. C. L. R. James, Harry Wicks, Gerry Bradley, Graves, Ted Grant, Bert Matlow, Henry Sara and various others used to put the Trotskyist case. And the Trotskyist case was learned from The NEW INTERNATIONAL. The biggest meeting the Stalinists ever held on the Moscow Trials with D. N. Pritt and Pat Sloan as chief speakers and Gollancz in the chair, broke up in disorder under the fire of James and other Trotskyists. Labour Party organizations often invited both Stalinist and Trotskyist speakers to debate. One entire number of the *Internal Bulletin* of the Left Book Club was devoted to this question of the Trotskyists. It is difficult to believe that all the Trotskyists in Britain at that time in all probability did not number one hundred.

The Independent Labour Party started a journal called *Controversy* in which all opinions were to be welcome. Issue after issue was filled with the Stalinist-Trotskyist debate, the Trotskyists putting forward the arguments learned in The NEW INTERNATIONAL and holding their own.

The theoretical leaders of the Independent Labour Party, as they felt the increasing pressure of the Stalinists, leaned more heavily on The NEW INTERNATIONAL. True, they twisted and distorted its doctrines to suit their own centrist purposes, but it was from this journal that they got their main arguments. There was nothing else to get arguments from.

Winning British Support

For a time a Stalinist fraction and the Trotskyists fought it out inside the ILP itself. The Stalinist fraction had all the

powerful organization of the Communist Party behind them. We had nothing but the Fourth International and its representative to us, The NEW INTERNATIONAL. It was enough. The pacifist ILP never succumbed to the Stalinists but all through its recent history Maxton and the parliamentarians have been plagued by a left wing which from the start drew its sustenance from The NEW INTERNATIONAL.

The high peak of the British Trotskyist propaganda in Britain came with the publication of *World Revolution* by C. L. R. James. The book was extensively reviewed in the bourgeois press, the *Times Literary Supplement*, the *Manchester Guardian*, the *New Statesman and Nation* giving long reviews. The Stalinists countered with a long article in one of their theoretical journals. Yet as the author of that book has acknowledged, without The NEW INTERNATIONAL the book could not have been written at all. It was not a question of influence. The small band of Trotskyists not only educated themselves on the paper. They used it in debate, as a basis for expository or polemical articles. Its opponents had to meet its arguments directly. Better still, they had to contend with its *method*. It was the grasp of Marxism and the organization of the material which drew and held the attention of audiences when a solitary Trotskyist rose to speak at a Stalinist meeting. In a country like Britain, the theoretical grasp, the emphasis on the fundamentals of socialism, the familiarity with the process of development in Russia, the ultimate connection between the degeneration of the revolution and the gyrations of the Comintern, these things made an enormous impression. "At any rate, you Trotskyists know your stuff. You get down to it," was a frequent remark. We had to. What we learned, we learned under fire. In Britain, in empirical Britain, swept by the Stalinist flood, this meant much. The Stalinists did *not* have it all their own way. We made ourselves heard. The little band of British Trotskyists were quite incapable of working out these things for themselves. All came from The NEW INTERNATIONAL, particularly the needs of the struggle from day to day.

Glasgow is the intellectual center of British labor. The magazine and the old *Militant* were more widely read in Glasgow than anywhere else. In Edinburgh the paper had its devotees. It was read in South Wales. Its work can best be judged by the following: At its very best, *The Labour Monthly*, backed by the powerful Stalinist organizations all over the English-speaking world, sold 7,000 copies. The NEW INTERNATIONAL at one time sold 4,000. A substantial number of these was sold in Britain.

To those familiar with the history of the Trotskyist movement in Britain, the work done by The NEW INTERNATIONAL gives a great lesson. It is doubtful if anywhere such small, inexperienced forces, lacking theoretical tradition and the guidance of personally developed and experienced comrades ever waged so powerful a fight as against the Stalinist machine and the allies it gained during the days of the Left Book Club. It used to be a matter of regret, but also of humor too, that we who were so small and so few, without influence, were able to contest so many positions.

Its Role in the Empire

A word must be said about The NEW INTERNATIONAL in the British Empire. Some of the comrades who now comprise the movement in India were trained in Britain on The NEW INTERNATIONAL and the powerful party in Ceylon which follows the general line of the Fourth International will testify some day, soon we hope, to what The NEW INTERNATIONAL meant to it. The South African comrades who got into per-

sonal touch with the British movement told the same story. And the African Bureau, an organization in London representing the Negro peoples all over the world, came under the paper's influence directly and indirectly.

We were sneered at in those days. The Fourth International was said to be a figment of Trotsky's imagination. We were called intellectuals who had no connection with the workers; it was said that we were only mouthpieces for Trotsky's views. So to a large extent we were. What is the result? In Britain today a group of Trotskyists, their leaders trained on The New International and Pioneer publications, are writing new and imperishable pages in the history of the working class movement in Britain. The colonials in India, Ceylon, in West Africa, and the Bureau in Britain oppose the imperialist war, not only in ideas but in action. True, there are differences on Russia. But it is only the ignoramuses and

the short-sighted ones who fail to see that much as Russia dominated the pages of the paper, it was all in the framework of *the unity of the international proletariat against both "democratic" and "fascist" imperialisms*. That work The New International did, in Britain and the Empire. Those who doubt it should ask Ernest Bevin, Minister of Labor, and Herbert Morrison, Home Secretary of Britain. Even we who were animated in those days only by faith, had little idea of the foundations we were laying.

As the British people experience shock after shock, they will be dragged out of their empiricism and compelled to substitute dialectic for "muddling through." Properly to evaluate what The New International did in Britain during the past years is to learn precious lessons in the movement of history and to understand how scientific was the faith in which the great Marxists did their work.

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