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# THE AGE OF PERMANENT REVOLUTION: A TROTSKY ANTHOLOGY



Revealing Selections from the Speeches and Writings  
of This Century's Most Controversial Political Figure  
Edited, with an introduction, by Isaac Deutscher

"The publication of a popular anthology of Leon Trotsky's writings could not be more timely. Not one of the great political figures of our century has aroused as much passion and controversy as he did—none has been so much persecuted, maligned, and misunderstood. Yet probably none, with the exception of Lenin, has left a deeper and more lasting mark on the age. The purpose of this anthology is to convey a general image of Trotsky's personality and to give an introduction to his ideas."

—*From the Introduction by Isaac Deutscher*

ISAAC DEUTSCHER is one of the foremost authorities on the Soviet Union and has written numerous articles on the subject for English and American journals. He is the author of *Russia in Transition*, *Stalin: A Political Biography*, and the recently completed definitive study of Trotsky in three volumes: *The Prophet Armed*, *The Prophet Unarmed*, and *The Prophet Outcast*.

*A Laurel Original*



**THE AGE OF  
Permanent Revolution:**

**A Trotsky Anthology**

Edited, with an introduction, by  
**ISAAC DEUTSCHER**  
(with the assistance of **GEORGE NOVACK**)

Published by DELL PUBLISHING CO., INC.  
750 Third Avenue, New York, N.Y. 10017

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First printing—August, 1964

Printed in U.S.A.

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## BIOGRAPHICAL NOTE

Leon Trotsky (Lev Davidovich Bronstein) was born in a Jewish farmer's family at Yanovka, in the Province of Kherson in the Ukraine, on 7 November 1879. Brought up on the family farm until the age of nine, he attended, from 1888 till 1897, high schools at Odessa and Nikolayev. Before graduating from the Nikolayev school he joined a clandestine revolutionary circle of Narodniks (Populists), but soon became a Marxist, a Social Democrat, and one of the founders and the chief inspirer of the South Russian Workers Union. Early in 1898 he and other members of the Union were arrested, after having led a number of workers' demonstrations and strikes at Nikolayev and published clandestine literature. For nearly two years he was held in prison and then, without trial, deported for four years to Siberia. In prison he married Alexandra Sokolovskaya; and two daughters, Nina and Zina, were born to them in Siberia. In exile he joined the Social Democratic Siberian Union and, under the pen name Antid-Oto, became known as political commentator, social analyst, and literary critic. He fled from deportation in the summer of 1902 and, on Lenin's initiative, came to London, where he joined the team of Marxist propagandists grouped around the periodical *Iskra*. (Other members of the team were Plekhanov, Axelrod, Zasulich, Martov, Potresov). Participated in the Second Congress of the Russian Social Democratic Workers Party in Brussels and London, (1903), at which the historic split between Bolsheviks and Mensheviks occurred. Was for a time one of the chief spokesmen of the Mensheviks but soon fell out with them and took up an independent position between the factions. In 1904 he met, in Paris, Natalya Sedova, who was to be his second wife. In February, 1905, after the outbreak of

the first Russian Revolution, he was back in Russia and became one of the chief leaders and orators of socialism and the moving spirit of the St. Petersburg Council of Workers' Delegates, the first soviet in history.

After the defeat of the revolution, in 1907, he was tried and sentenced to life deportation to Siberia and loss of all civil rights, but fled to Western Europe. While in prison he formulated fully his theory of Permanent Revolution in an essay "The Balance and the Prospects of the Russian Revolution." From 1907 till 1914 with Natalya Sedova, his second wife, and their two sons Leon and Sergei, he lived in Vienna, editing *Pravda* and devoting himself to journalistic and political activity. At the outbreak of the First World War emigrated to Switzerland and then to France, where he was correspondent of a great Liberal Russian daily *Kievskaya Mysl* and edited *Nashe Slovo*. He was one of the chief inspirers of the revolutionary socialist opposition to war and of the Zimmerwald Conference (1915). Common opposition to war and common advocacy of the Third International brought him closer to Lenin, after years of factional struggle. Deported from France, he found asylum in the United States early in 1917; but after the outbreak of the February Revolution, he returned to Russia.

Joining the Bolsheviks in the summer of 1917, he distinguished himself as the most eloquent and, with Lenin, the most influential opponent of the February régime. He was imprisoned by Kerensky's government on August 5, 1917. Elected President of the Petrograd (St. Petersburg) Soviet, he prepared, organized, and led the October insurrection, which brought the Bolsheviks to power. First Soviet Commissar of Foreign Affairs, he conducted the peace negotiations of Brest Litovsk, but refused to accept Germany's *Diktat*, proclaimed a "neither-war-nor-peace" policy, and resigned from the Commissariat of Foreign Affairs. From 1918 till 1925 he was Commissar of War. Trotsky founded the Red Army and led it successfully in the years of civil war. With Lenin was cofounder of the Third International, and held a number of important posts in the government throughout the Lenin era. Wrote *From the February Revolution to Brest Litovsk, Terrorism and Communism*, and other books and pamphlets; was author of all the Manifestos of the first five Congresses of the Communist International and of some of its most important policy state-

ments and resolutions. (His military writings, speeches, and Orders of the Day were published in Russian in three volumes, under the title *How the Revolution Armed Itself*.)

In 1923 he headed the first opposition to Stalin, voicing protest against the suppression of Soviet democracy and the "bureaucratization" of the party and demanding rapid industrialization of the USSR. Defeated by the coalition of Stalin, Zinoviev, Kamenev, Bukharin, and others, he resigned from the Commissariat of War in 1925. During an interval in the inner party struggle he wrote *Literature and Revolution*, *On Lenin*, *Where is Britain Going?*, *Europe and America*, *Problems of Everyday Life*, and many other works. In 1926 he made common cause with Zinoviev and Kamenev against Stalin and formed the Joint Opposition. After an intense struggle over every major issue of Communist policy, he was, towards the end of 1927, expelled from the Party, and then exiled from Moscow and deported to Alma Ata on the Russo-Chinese frontier. From Alma Ata he continued to direct the Opposition, to criticize Stalin's "Socialism in one country" and the conduct of communist affairs, especially Stalin's policy during the Chinese Revolution of 1925-27. In Alma Ata he wrote his *Criticism of the Comintern Program*, *Permanent Revolution*, and other works.

Deported to Turkey in 1929, he lived on the Prinkipo Islands until the summer of 1933, organizing his following in many countries, publishing the *Bulletin of the Opposition* and writing *The History of the Russian Revolution*, *My Life*, and other books. From 1929 he conducted a special campaign designed to arouse the communist movement to the dangers of rising Nazism, but his warnings went unheeded. He was deprived of Soviet nationality in 1932. His followers and his relatives were the victims of savage Stalinist persecution. One of his daughters, Nina, died in 1928; the other, Zina, ill, also deprived of Soviet nationality and cut off from her family in Russia, committed suicide in Berlin in 1933. Shortly thereafter Trotsky, having for years been denied asylum by practically every European country, was admitted to France, where he called for the formation of a Fourth International. Expelled from France in 1935, he found for a short time refuge in Norway and wrote *The Revolution Betrayed*. After the trial and execution of Zinoviev, Kamenev, and other eminent Bolsheviks of the Old Guard (August, 1936) the Norwegian

Government, yielding to Stalin's pressure, interned him to prevent him from exposing the fraud of the Great Purges. By this time Stalin's furious campaign against Trotskyism had reached its climax; and in the Moscow trials Trotsky was the chief defendant *in absentia*, accused of staging innumerable conspiracies with the purpose of assassinating Stalin, Voroshilov, Kaganovich,\* and other Soviet leaders, and of acting in secret collusion with Hitler and the Emperor of Japan in order to bring about the downfall of the Soviet régime and the dismemberment of the Soviet Union. In 1937 Trotsky was admitted to Mexico and appeared there in a "Countertrial," over which John Dewey, the American philosopher, presided. As chief witness, Trotsky refuted all these accusations. In the next year he proclaimed the formation of the Fourth International and wrote its *Transitional Program*. In a stream of essays and articles he predicted the outbreak of the Second World War and analyzed its probable consequences. His youngest son, Sergei, was a victim of the great wave of terror in the USSR, the *Yezhovshchina*, in the course of which all of Trotsky's many followers, and even their families, were exterminated. Trotsky's elder son, Leon, died in Paris in February, 1938. The circumstances of his death suggested that he was assassinated by the G.P.U. Many of Trotsky's followers and sympathizers were abducted and assassinated by the G.P.U. in Spain, France, and Switzerland. In May, 1940, Trotsky himself was attacked by an armed Stalinist gang, led by the famous Mexican painter David Alfaro Siqueiros. Soon thereafter, on 20 August 1940, a G.P.U. agent, Ramon Mercader "Jacson," posing as Trotsky's disillusioned follower, assassinated him in his home at Coyoacán, Mexico, while Trotsky was writing his last book, an accusatory biography of Stalin.

\*Klement Voroshilov, Commissar of War from 1925 to 1940. Lazar Kaganovich, Commissar of Railways and Chairman of the Party Control Commission, which conducted the great purges.



## INTRODUCTION

The publication of a popular anthology of Leon Trotsky's writings could not be more timely. Not one of the great political figures of our century has aroused as much passion and controversy as he did—none has been as much persecuted, maligned, and misunderstood. Yet probably none, with the exception of Lenin, has left a deeper and more lasting mark on the age. The purpose of this anthology is to convey a general image of Trotsky's personality and to give an introduction to his ideas. This has been no easy task. His political and literary activity spans the first four decades of the century. During this period Trotsky reacted with word or deed to every major event of international significance. (A collected edition of his speeches and writings would make up fifty, sixty, or more very large volumes.) Obviously, so great an abundance of thought and action cannot be compressed into a pocket-size book. Important elements of the man's work must be represented in it only fragmentarily or can merely be hinted at. Some aspects of his personality can barely be sketched, others must be omitted.

Yet this selection of Trotsky's writings, made by Mr. George Novack, has the merits of many-sidedness and balance.\* It provides a cross section of Trotsky's activity; it should enable readers to follow the evolution of his thought chronologically and to grasp both its complexity and its underlying simplicity. Trotsky is shown here from various angles: as man of action, thinker, and writer; as theorist of Permanent Revolution and master of insurrection; as inspirer of international communism and literary critic; as sober analyst of world affairs and great visionary; as the implacable enemy of Stalinism and as the tragic Cassandra of contemporary Marxism. The material is arranged according to subjects so that this selection may serve as a guide to Trotsky's views on, say, socialism in a single country, Mussolini's rise to power, the social nature of Nazism, the Spanish Civil War, Roosevelt's New Deal, Stalin's Great Purges, India's struggle for independence, revolution in

\*Mr. Novack is also the author of the "Notes" prefacing Trotsky's texts in this volume.

Latin America, and so on. This material comes from works available in the English language, so readers will have no difficulty in going to the sources in order to examine more closely any line of Trotsky's reasoning and argument.\*

In what does Trotsky's greatness consist? And how relevant are his ideas and struggles to the problems of our time? Trotsky's chief characteristic is that he is a "fore-thinker" in the sense that the Greek myth tells us Prometheus was a forethinker, in contrast to his brother Epimetheus, the "afterthinker." His mind, his will, his energy are directed towards the future. He stakes everything on the change and upheaval that Time, the great subversive, must bring about. He never doubts that the change and upheaval are worth working and waiting for. The established order, the powers that be, the *status quo* are merely evanescent "moments" in the flux of history. His whole being is permeated by an almost inexhaustible and indestructible revolutionary optimism. His life is one fierce controversy with Epimetheus—a fratricidal struggle between himself and the afterthinker.

"*Dum spiro spero*" [As long as I breathe I hope], he cries out as a boy of twenty. At the very threshold of the twentieth century he takes this vow: "As long as I breathe I shall fight for the future, that radiant future, in which man, strong and beautiful, will become master of the drifting stream of his history and will direct it towards the boundless horizons of beauty, joy and happiness!" And at the spectacle of blood and oppression with which the century had ominously opened he exclaims: "You—you are only the *present*."

Here, with boyish fervour and naivete, Trotsky had in fact struck the keynote of his life. Through all its phases he was to remain true to himself; at every change of fortune, in triumph and disaster alike, his *leitmotif* is the same. At the pinnacle of power nothing is further from him than acceptance of the *status quo*; he still works for change, upheaval, permanent revolution. At the bottom of defeat, when persecution drives him around the globe, while his children

\*A few of the available English translations are unfortunately not very satisfactory; and they had to be rephrased. The idea of this anthology originated with the late Professor C. Wright Mills. Illness prevented him from writing the introduction he had planned; and after his untimely and much lamented death, the Publishers invited me to take charge of the project.

are perishing, his friends and followers are being exterminated, he still utters, in a voice almost stifled with pain, his *dum spiro spero*.

The experience of my life [he said at the end of the "Counter-Trial" before the Dewey Commission, in Mexico, in 1937], in which there has been no lack either of success or failure, has not only not destroyed my faith in the clear, bright future of mankind, but, on the contrary, has given it an indestructible temper. This faith in reason, in truth, in human solidarity, which at the age of eighteen I took with me into the workers' quarters of the provincial Russian town of Nikolayev—this faith I have preserved fully and completely. It has become more mature, but not less ardent.

The arm of the assassin was already raised over his head when he repeated this pledge; and the only hope he expresses in his testament is that it may be given to him to bequeath his hope to posterity:

But whatever may be the circumstances of my death, I shall die with unshaken faith in the Communist future. This faith in man and in his future gives me even now such power of resistance as cannot be given by any religion. . . . I can see the bright green strip of grass beneath the wall and the clear blue sky above the wall, and sunlight everywhere. Life is beautiful. Let the future generations cleanse it of all evil, oppression, and violence, and enjoy it to the full.

During a spell of disillusionment and cynicism nothing is easier than to dismiss such an attitude as old-fashioned "Victorian" optimism or rationalism, if not as "metaphysics of progress." Trotsky, however, does not invoke the innate goodness or rationality of man, nor does he believe in any automatic perfectability of the human society. He sees the graph of history as a line terribly broken and twisted, not as one rising uninterruptedly. He is all too well aware of the somber impasses into which men had driven themselves so many times, of the vicious circles within which rising and declining civilizations had moved, of the countless generations, faceless and nameless to us, that have lived in unredeemable slavery and of the huge, immeasurable mass of cruelty and suffering man has inflicted on man.

History is not to him the manifestation of any mastermind or masterwill; nor is it a story with an underlying purposeful design. Yet, amid all of history's savage chaos and sanguinary waste, he sees the unique record of man's achievement: his biological rise above "the dark animal realm," his social organization, and his stupendous productive and creative capacity, which has grown with particular intensity in these last few generations. This capacity enables modern man to perpetuate the basis for the further growth and enrichment of his civilization. It enables him to make his culture as immune from decay as no earlier culture could be. All the vanished civilizations of the past had been dependent for their existence on too small and feeble productive forces, which, in slave societies, degenerated all too easily, until a single blow—natural calamity, social disaster, or foreign invasion—wiped them out. Thus, the lack of continuity in man's cultural growth was due, in the main, to the underdevelopment of his productive power. Modern technology has at last created the preconditions of continuity; it has given man all the means for recording, fixing, and consolidating his achievements. Time and time again it has enabled him to rebuild his social existence from ruins, and to reproduce his material and spiritual wealth on an expanding scale. This was to Trotsky the major source of his historical optimism.

But Trotsky, the pessimist will say, did not foresee the advent of the atomic age—he did not reckon with the ultimate weapon invented by our scientists and technologists. We are now capable not merely of destroying civilization but even of shattering the biological foundations of our existence. The growth of our productive power has given us the power of self-annihilation. Trotsky's optimism about man's productive capacity as the mainspring of history is, at best, a pathetic relic of the pre-atomic age.

The pessimist is mistaken. For one thing, Trotsky did foresee the advent of the atomic age; he forecast it nearly two decades before the first nuclear weapon was exploded, when the idea did not even occur to any statesman or political leader and while eminent scientists still viewed it sceptically. (See page 352) Even in this field he was the fore-thinker; he stated explicitly that the great social and political revolution of our age will coincide with a gigantic revolution in science and technology. As a Marxist, he was well aware that throughout history every advance in man's pro-

ductive and creative power has increased his capacity for oppression and destruction and that in any social system torn by its internal contradictions every act of progress is internally contradictory. In class society our power to control the forces of nature is monopolized by the dominant social class, or by ruling groups, who use that power also to control, subjugate, or destroy the social forces hostile to them (as well as foreign enemies). Marx and Engels had realized this; and this realization set apart their social optimism from the Liberal belief in the automatic progress of bourgeois society. They formulated a dual historical prognosis: mankind, they said, will either advance to socialism or relapse into barbarism.\* Trotsky constantly elaborates this dual prognosis. Fifty or thirty years ago the bourgeois Liberal considered it to be unduly dogmatic and unduly pessimistic; now he is inclined to dismiss it as "starry-eyed optimism."

Granted that the danger of society's relapse into barbarism now looks more menacing than ever, and that even Trotsky could not foresee just how desperately acute the alternative—Socialism or the collapse of civilization—would become in the atomic age. But then the Marxist school of thought and Trotsky in particular can be reproached only for not being fully aware of how profoundly they were right. Yet Trotsky's optimism was no profession of passive faith; nor were his forecasts the horoscopes of a

\*In her famous "*Junius Brochure*," written in a German prison during the first World War, Rosa Luxemburg said:

"Friederich Engels stated once that bourgeois society is confronted with this dilemma: either transition to socialism or relapse into barbarism. What does 'relapse into barbarism' signify at the present level of European civilization? We have certainly all read these words more than once, and repeated them thoughtlessly, without even a premonition of their terrible gravity. . . . The present world war is a relapse into barbarism. The triumph of imperialism leads to the decay of culture—temporary decay during any modern war, or complete decay, if the era of world wars that has begun were to last and go on to its final conclusion. Now therefore. . . we stand again before this choice: either the triumph of imperialism and the devastation of all culture, as in ancient Rome—devastation, depopulation, degeneration, a huge cemetery; or the victory of socialism. . . ." (Rosa Luxemburg was a Polish-born revolutionist, propagandist and theoretician of Marxism. She opposed the first world war, founded the Spartacus Bund with Karl Liebknecht, was imprisoned by the Kaiser's government and released by the German Revolution in 1918. In January, 1919, she was assassinated in Berlin by Right Wing thugs.

soothsayer. His confidence in man's future is predicated on man's capacity and willingness to act and fight for his future. His *dum spiro spero* was a battle cry; each of his prognostications was a summons to action. So understood, his optimism in the atomic age is more valid than ever. The closer man may be to self-annihilation, the more firmly must he believe that he can avoid it, the more intense and fanatical must be his determination to avoid it. His optimism is essential to his survival, while supercilious disillusionment and resigned pessimism are sterile and can only prepare us for suicide.

Trotsky is a classical Marxist in more than one sense. He represents the Marxist school of thought in its purity, as it existed before its debasement by the Social-Democratic and Stalinist orthodoxies. His writings convey the original inspiration, the intellectual splendor, and the moral elan of the idea and the movement. The generations of Socialists and Communists who, in Tsarist and Stalinist Russia, went underground to struggle against exploitation and oppression, who filled the prisons and places of deportation, who braved penal servitude, gallows, and execution squads, and who hoped for no reward except moral satisfaction, were animated by the mood and the vision of society to which Trotsky gives consummate expression. His writings are therefore a grand document of the time. American readers will find in them deep insights into the ethos of a society very different from their own, a society in the throes of revolution, a society electrified by peculiarly powerful currents of political thought, passion, and action.

Like every major school of thought and every great movement, Marxism has gone through various metamorphoses and transmutations; different aspects of it have come to the fore in different phases of its development. Trotsky is deeply committed to one element in classical Marxism, its quintessential element: permanent revolution. Marx had formulated the idea by the middle of the nineteenth century, in the era of the 1848 revolutions; Trotsky reformulated it at the beginning of this century, during the first Russian Revolution of 1905-6. The idea has since been the subject of ferocious controversy; for over forty years it has been banished from the Communist world and banned as the heresy of all heresies.

What has been its meaning and what bearing has it on the events of our time? The Stalinists (including the Khru-

shchevites and even the Maoists) have done all they could to discredit Permanent Revolution as the phantasmagoria of the obsessive ultra-radical. Before Stalin came to denounce Trotsky as "the leader of the vanguard of world counter-revolution" (and as the ally of Hitler and the Mikado), he described him as a "firebrand" and "wild man" bent on staging Communist coups all over the world, as the dogmatist of a "purely proletarian" revolution, and as the enemy of the peasantry and of the "small men" of other "intermediate" classes. What finally repudiates all these charges is the fact that in the long list of errors and crimes that Stalin attributed to Trotsky there is hardly one that he himself did not commit; and so his distorting portrait of Trotsky can now be seen as his own self-projection.

Trotsky's theory is in truth a profound and comprehensive conception in which all the overturns that the world has been undergoing (in this late capitalist era) are represented as interconnected and interdependent parts of a single revolutionary process. To put it in the broadest terms, the social upheaval of our century is seen by Trotsky as global in scope and character, even though it proceeds on various levels of civilization and in the most diverse social structures, and even though its various phases are separated from one another in time and space.

It should be remembered that when Trotsky first expounded his view, nearly sixty years ago, the stability of the old order seemed unshakeable: nearly all continents were still dominated by Europe, whose great empires and dynasties seemed indestructible. Only in Russia had the first breach just been torn in Tsardom—a breach soon to be plastered over; and through it Trotsky glimpsed the horizon of the century that lay ahead. He was, in this respect, unique among contemporary Marxist leaders and theorists, for none, not even Lenin, had the audacity to maintain that Russia would be the first country in the world to establish a proletarian dictatorship and attempt socialist revolution. What Marxists generally believed then was that Western Europe was "ripe" for socialism, although with most European socialists the belief was rather Platonic. As for Russia, no one saw her as standing at the threshold of socialist revolution. It was commonly held that she was heading towards a bourgeois revolution that would enable her to free herself from the heavy legacy of her feudalism and transform herself into a modern capitalist nation; in a



word, that she was about to produce her own version of the Great French Revolution.

One section of the socialists, the Mensheviks, deduced that the leadership in the coming revolution should belong to the Liberal bourgeoisie. Lenin and his followers realized that the Liberal bourgeoisie was unable and unwilling to cope with such a task, and that Russia's young working class, supported by a rebellious peasantry, was the only force capable of waging the revolutionary struggle to a conclusion. But Lenin remained convinced, and emphatically asserted, that Russia, acting alone, could not go beyond a bourgeois revolution; and that only *after* capitalism had been overthrown in Western Europe would she too be able to embark on Socialist revolution. For a decade and a half, from 1903 till 1917, Lenin wrestled with this problem: how could a revolution led, against bourgeois opposition, by a Socialist working class result in the establishment of a capitalist order? Trotsky cut through this dogmatic tangle with the conclusion that the dynamic of the revolution could not be contained within any particular stage, and that once released it would overflow all barriers and sweep away not only Tsardom but also Russia's weak capitalism, so that what had begun as a bourgeois revolution would end as a socialist one.

Here a fateful question posed itself. Socialism, as understood by Marxists, presupposed a highly developed modern economy and civilization, an abundance of material and cultural wealth, that alone could enable society to satisfy the needs of all its members and abolish class divisions. This was obviously beyond the reach of an underdeveloped and backward Russia. Trotsky therefore argued that Russia could only *begin* the socialist revolution, but would find it extremely difficult to *continue* it, and impossible to *complete* it. The revolution would run into a dead end, unless it burst Russia's national boundaries and brought into motion the forces of revolution in the West. Trotsky assumed that just as the Russian Revolution could not be contained within the bourgeois stage, so it would not be brought to rest within its national boundaries: it would be the prelude, or the first act, of a global upheaval. Internationally as well as nationally, this would be Permanent Revolution.

Curiously, the international aspect of the theory was, when Trotsky first formulated it, less controversial than it became later. It was less disputed by Marxists than was

Trotsky's insistence on the thesis that Russia would initiate the socialist upheaval.

Classical Marxism had been acutely aware of the international scope and character of modern capitalism and emphasized in particular international division of labor as one of its most progressive features. Marx and Engels had argued, in the *Communist Manifesto*, that Socialism would begin where capitalism had ended: it would evolve, broaden, intensify, and rationalize the international division of labor inherited from capitalism. This idea was part and parcel of the intellectual tradition of Marxism. But at the turn of the century it was already falling into neglect or oblivion, and it had little impact on the practical policies of the labor movement.

Trotsky revived the idea and threw it into fresh relief. He saw socialism and the nation-state as being incompatible. Thus implicitly he repudiated Stalin's "socialism in a single country" about twenty years before Stalin began to preach it.

This is not to say, as the Stalinists maintained, that when the Russian Revolution became isolated, in the nineteen twenties, Trotsky saw no hope for it—no possibility of survival and development. He had always held that the revolution must *start* on a national basis and had made allowance for the possibility of its temporary isolation in a single country. So when the Bolshevik regime had in fact become isolated, he fought for its survival vigorously and successfully—first as Commissar of Defense, and then as chief advocate of the rapid industrialization of the USSR. But it is true that he went on viewing the confinement of the revolution to a single state as an interlude and an interim. He refused to see the Russian Revolution as a self-sufficient development capable of finding its consummation within its national boundaries. He persisted in treating it as the first act of a global drama, even after the "pause" before the next act had turned out to be unexpectedly long. Of course, even Stalin never renounced quite explicitly the "link" between the USSR and world communism—the Bolshevik commitment to Marxist internationalism had been far too strong to be flouted openly. But the idea, to which Stalin merely paid lip service, permeated all of Trotsky's thought and activity.

Here an analogy drawn from American history may be pertinent. The dichotomy of isolationism and international-

ism, which runs through so much of United States history, runs also through Soviet history, where it appears in a far more confused but also far more violent and tragic form. Stalinism was the Bolshevik isolationism—positive isolationism between two world wars, and disintegrating isolationism afterwards; Trotskyism was Bolshevik internationalism, unadulterated and undiluted. (The confused and ambiguous character of Soviet isolationism stems from the fact that, unlike its American counterpart, it had inherited an internationalist ideology with which it was in continuous conflict. Soviet isolationism was not anchored in geography: the USSR was not separated from hostile or potentially hostile powers by two oceans.)

In the course of twenty or twenty-five years, from the early nineteen twenties to the late nineteen forties, all appearances of the world situation spoke against Trotsky's doctrine. Revolution made no progress outside the USSR and seemed contained within the Soviet boundaries for good. It may be moot to what extent this was due to "objective" circumstances and how much Stalinism contributed to prolonging the "pause" in revolutionary development. In any case, Stalinism not only made peace with the national containment of the revolution, but proclaimed its self-containment and national self-sufficiency. Many anti-communists (who preferred Stalin, the "realistic statesman," to Trotsky, the "dreamer" or "incendiary") applauded him for this. So did all communist parties. "Is not Stalin right," they argued, "to bank on Socialism in one country? Only the spirit of capitulation or counterrevolutionary malice can prompt Trotsky to maintain that socialism cannot be achieved within a single country."

Stalin's triumph, long-lasting though it was, turns out to have been as transitory as the situation that had produced it. "Socialism in a single country" can now be seen as the ideological reflex of temporary circumstances, as a piece of "false consciousness" rather than a realistic program. The next act of Permanent Revolution began long before the USSR came anywhere near Socialism. (It is a travesty of the truth to claim that the Soviet Union is—or was in Stalin's days—a Socialist society; even after all its recent progress, it still finds itself somewhere halfway between capitalism and socialism.) Stalin's famous "statesmanship" is now repudiated and ridiculed by his former acolytes, who describe his rule as a long Witches' Sabbath of senseless

violence inflicted upon the Russian people. These denunciations must be taken with a grain of salt, for they tend to obscure the deeper underlying realities of the Stalin epoch. The isolated Russian Revolution could not cope satisfactorily with the tasks it had set itself, because these could not be resolved within a single state. Much of Stalin's work consisted in squaring the circle by means of mass terror; and his single-country socialism was indeed, as Trotsky maintained, a pragmatist's Utopia. The Soviet Union abandoned it to all intents and purposes towards the end of the Second World War, when its troops, in pursuit of Hitler's armies, marched into a dozen foreign lands, and carried revolution on their bayonets and in the turrets of their tanks.

Then, in 1948-9, came the triumph of the Chinese revolution, which Stalin had not expected and which he had done his best to obstruct. The "pause" definitely had come to an end. The curtain had risen over another act of international revolution. And ever since, Asia, Africa, and even Latin America have been seething. In appearance each of their upheavals has been national in scope and character. Yet each falls into an international pattern. The revolutionary dynamic cannot be brought to a rest. Permanent Revolution has come back into its own, and whatever its further intervals and disarray, it forms the socio-political content of our century.

History hardly ever gives a hundred-percent confirmation to any great anticipatory idea. It does not accord such a confirmation even to Trotsky, for no thinker or political leader is infallible. Trotsky's great forecast is coming true, but not in the way he forecast it. The difference may not seem to posterity as great as it appears to us. A historian looking back on our time from the vantage point of another age will almost certainly see this century not as the American or Russian century, but as the century of Permanent Revolution. In retrospect he may see the continuity of the whole process and attach little importance to the breaks and intervals. But to contemporaries, to Trotsky's generation and our own, the breaks and intervals are just as full of tension and conflict as are the main acts; they fill large parts of our lives and absorb our energies and efforts. Trotsky spent the first half of his militant life on a rising tide of revolution and the second—on the shoals. Hence the frustrations and defeats that followed upon his triumphs,

and the relative fruitlessness of so much of his struggle against Stalin. In the USSR his large and important following was physically exterminated so that the Soviet Trotskyists, like the Decembrists over a hundred years earlier, now appear as a generation of revolutionaries "without sons," i.e., without *direct* political descendants. Outside the USSR, Trotskyism has not been a vital political movement: the Fourth International has never been able to make a real start. Even Trotsky's political genius could not turn ebb into flow.

Moreover, Permanent Revolution has taken a course very different from that which Trotsky had predicted. In accordance with the tradition of classical Marxism, he expected its next acts to be played out in the "advanced and civilized" countries of the West. Readers of this anthology will see for themselves how large Germany, France, Britain (and the United States) loomed in his revolutionary expectations and how urgent was the immediacy of the hopes he placed on them.\* Instead, the underdeveloped and backward East has become the main theatre of revolution. It is not that Trotsky overlooked the East's potentialities—far from it—but he saw these as being secondary to the potentialities of the West, which in his eyes were to the end—decisive.

This fault of perspective (if this is the right term here) is closely connected with the Marxist assessment of the role of the industrial working class in modern society, an assessment summed up in the famous epigram that "the revolution will either be the work of the workers or it will not be at all." Yet not one of the social upheavals of the last two decades has been strictly "the work of the workers." All have been carried out by closely knit military organizations and/or small bureaucratic parties; and the peasantry has been far more active in them than the industrial proletariat. This has been so especially in the greatest of these up-

\*Compare this with the message which F. Engels addressed to the National Council of the *Parti Ouvrier Français* (French Workers Party), in 1890, on the occasion of his 70th birthday:

"It was your great countryman Saint-Simon who first saw that the alliance of the three great western nations—France, England, Germany—is the primary international condition of the political and social emancipation of the whole of Europe. I hope to see this alliance, the nucleus of the European alliance which will once and for all put an end to the wars of cabinets and races, realized by the proletarians of these three nations. Long live international social revolution!"

heavals, the Chinese. Mao's Partisans carried the revolution from country to town; whereas with Trotsky it was an absolute axiom that the revolution must come from town to country and cannot succeed without urban initiative and leadership.

Yet it is rash to jump to the conclusion, drawn by some writers, notably the late C. Wright Mills, that all this disproves the Marxist conception that considers the industrial working class as the chief "historic agency" of socialism. We must not forget that for over a century the working classes of Europe were indeed the chief agents of socialism and that generation after generation they struggled for it with an intelligence, passion, and heroism that amazed the world. Nothing can delete from history the deeds of the English Chartists and of the French Communards, the fight of the German workers against Bismarck and the Hohenzollerns, the epic underground struggle, lasting over half a century, of Polish socialist and communist workers, and the Russian proletarian insurrections of 1905 and 1917. This is a record unparalleled in the annals of mankind, for none of the exploited and oppressed classes of earlier societies—slaves, serfs, "free" peasants, or urban plebeians—had ever shown any even remotely comparable capacity for political thought, self-discipline, organization, and action. It was the "factory hands" of St. Petersburg, not any Bolshevik or Menshevik intellectuals, who "invented" the institution of the Council of Workers' Delegates, the Soviet. Even the debased Soviets of today, like the bureaucratized trade unions of the West, remain monuments—malignantly disfigured monuments—to the political creativeness of the working class. All the defeats suffered by the workers, all their failures to secure the fruits of their victories, and even their failure to act any decisive part in the upheavals of the last two decades—are not enough to deprive them of the title of the "chief agents of socialism," a title gained in the course of a century. A sense of proportion and perspective is needed to avoid generalizing about a long term historic process from one particular phase of it.

Having said this, we must admit that the complexities of the historic development put to a severe test the Marxist conception of proletarian socialism and the beliefs and hopes of everyone involved in the labor movement. The world is in the throes of permanent revolution, but is this the revolution of proletarian socialism? In order that

Trotsky's idea should retain its full validity, its main premise must yet be fulfilled: the workers of the industrially advanced nations—and these include now the USSR as well as the West—must recover from the apathy, confusion, and resignation into which Western reformism and Stalinism have driven them; they must reassert themselves as the chief agents of socialism. The question as to who will ultimately be in control of the revolution of our century is still open: will it be irresponsible and tyrannical bureaucracies or the working class as the representative of the general interest of society? On the answer hangs much more, infinitely more, than the validity of any doctrine—all the material and spiritual values that man has created and accumulated are at stake.

The idea that the working class is, or should be, the chief actor in social revolution determines the whole of Trotsky's political thinking, his conception of the Soviet regime and of the Bolshevik party, and his entire struggle against the Social-Democratic and Stalinist orthodoxies. "Proletarian democracy" is the key notion of all his reasonings and arguments.

Like all revolutionary Marxists, Trotsky considers proletarian dictatorship to be the necessary political condition of the world's transition from capitalism to socialism. No one among his comrades and rivals, not even Lenin, was "harder" and "tougher" in upholding this principle in theory and practice. To portray Trotsky as a soft humanitarian, an intellectual dreamer, a preacher of nonviolence, a Gandhi-like figure in Bolshevism would be to falsify history. This great martyr did not live on goat's milk, nor did he trade in the milk of human kindness. He knew how many of the momentous turns in history have been stained by human blood—he often evoked the American Civil War as a major example. He did not shrink from ruthlessness when he was convinced that this was necessary for the progress of society. And it would be cant and hypocrisy to condemn him, because of this, in the name of Western civilization and its values, a civilization that has on its conscience the mass slaughters of two world wars and has exposed mankind to the perils of nuclear war. Where Trotsky differs from all the glorified butchers of history is that he never, not even for a single moment, relished his own ruthlessness and the taste of blood. He staged the greatest of all armed insurrections, the rising of November 7, 1917,



in such a way that, according to most hostile eyewitnesses, the number of all its casualties did not exceed ten; and as captain in the civil war he treated bloodshed in the surgeon's manner, as an indispensable, but strictly limited part of a necessary and salutary operation.

He stood for the proletarian dictatorship because he took it for granted that landlords, capitalists, and slave-owners do not, as a rule, yield up their possessions and power without a savage fight. (They did not so yield it up in Russia, and they were armed and supported by all the great Western democracies.) Only a dictatorship could make Russia safe for the revolution. But what was to be its nature?

It is necessary here to restore to his ideas the meaning they had to him (and indeed to Lenin and the early Bolsheviks), because in the meantime, with the experience of totalitarian regimes, these ideas have become overgrown with heavy and repulsive accretions alien to them. In Trotsky's mind the proletarian dictatorship was, or should have been, a proletarian democracy. This was no paradox. It should not be forgotten that, like other Marxists, Trotsky was accustomed to describe all bourgeois democracies (the British constitutional monarchy, the German Weimar Republic, the French Third Republic, and the political system of the USA) as "bourgeois dictatorships." He knew, of course, that, in strictly political and constitutional terms, these were not dictatorial or even semi-dictatorial regimes, and he was very well aware of the freedoms people enjoy under parliamentary democracies. (What importance he attached to these can be seen from his controversy with the Stalinist Comintern over Fascism and Democracy in Germany—see page 165.)

But Trotsky insisted on describing the Western parliamentary system as a bourgeois dictatorship in a broader sense, as a regime that, being based on capitalist property, assures the propertied classes of their economic and social supremacy, and consequently of cultural and political predominance. The term "bourgeois dictatorship" describes precisely that supremacy and dominance, and not necessarily any particular constitutional system or method of government. Similarly, when he (or Lenin or Marx) speaks of proletarian dictatorship, he uses the term in its broadest sense to denote a regime that should assure the working class of social supremacy; he does not prejudge constitutional form

or method of government. Like the bourgeois "dictatorship," the proletarian may be politically either dictatorial or democratic; it may take on various constitutional forms. In the period immediately after revolution, and during civil war, it must tend to be strictly dictatorial; in more normal circumstances it should tend to be democratic. But even in its strictly dictatorial phase it should still be, as the Soviet regime was at the outset, a proletarian democracy, assuring genuine freedom of expression and association, at least to the workers, and enabling them to exercise effective control over the government. This conception of the dictatorship had nothing to do with—indeed it was the very negation of—any self-perpetuating rule of a "socialist" oligarchy or of an autocrat, or with any "monolithic," totalitarian system of government. No wonder that under Stalinism this conception came to be denounced as a Menshevik heresy and was eradicated from communist thinking. From minds formed in its school Stalinism has indeed eradicated the belief that the working class is, or ought to be, *the* agency of socialism.

Like so much else, Trotsky's conception of the Party also stemmed from that belief. It is impossible within the compass of this anthology to illustrate adequately the complex evolution of Trotsky's views on this subject—readers interested in it must be referred to the three volumes of my biography of Trotsky.\* Here it will be enough to recall that on this point Trotsky was in disagreement with Lenin for nearly fifteen years and in bitter opposition to Stalin for about twenty—he marched in step with the Bolsheviks only for six years, the "world shaking" years from 1917 to 1923. The whys and wherefores of his polemics against Lenin differ widely from the grounds for his antagonism to Stalin. Nevertheless one *motif* runs through both controversies: Trotsky's abhorrence of any form of party tutelage over the workers. It was of the ambition to exercise such a tutelage that he had suspected Lenin before 1917, and he saw that ambition incarnate and fulfilled in Stalin. He himself recognized that he had been grievously mistaken about Lenin, who had trained the Bolshevik Party to *lead* the workers, not to *tame* or subjugate them. In drawing a distinction between legitimate leadership on the one hand and tutelage

\*Isaac Deutscher: *The Prophet Armed* (1954); *The Prophet Unarmed*, (1959); and *The Prophet Outcast* (1963), Oxford University Press.

and usurpation on the other, the mature Trotsky corrected a certain one-sidedness in himself: he had relied too strongly on the spontaneous class-consciousness of the workers, on their inherent revolutionary intelligence and will, which by themselves would secure the victory of socialism. He had tended to see the working class as a homogeneous social body, all animated by the same socialist awareness and all possessed by high capacity for political action. Such a working class needed no special guide—the party had merely to identify itself with it and express its aspirations.

Lenin, for whom also belief in the “historic mission” of workers as chief agents of socialism was basic, saw the working class more realistically and critically. He saw it as a complex and heterogeneous body consisting of different layers, each with its own origin and background, each related differently to the peasantry, the petty bourgeoisie, and the rest of the working class, each with its level of education and social awareness, and each with its own degree of capacity (or incapacity) for revolutionary action. This highly differentiated mass was united only by its proletarian status in society and by its antagonism to capitalist exploitation; it was disunited by centrifugal forces in its midst and the varying degrees of receptiveness to socialism. The *real* class consisted of progressive and backward elements, of the clear-sighted and the dull, the courageous and the meek; it needed the Party’s guidance in order to rise to its revolutionary “mission.” Consequently, the Party could not merely identify itself with the workers and content itself with absorbing and expressing their moods. It had to shape their moods. It had to identify itself primarily with the advanced workers in order to be able with them and through them to educate politically the backward ones. The Party must therefore be a “proletarian vanguard,” a Marxist elite, lucid, self-disciplined, indomitable, and capable of providing the “general staff” of revolution.

The mature Trotsky accepted this Leninist idea and never abandoned it. It would be idle to deny the dangers inherent in any elite party, the dangers to which the young Trotsky had been so sensitive that his early philippics against Lenin’s scheme of the Party read now like uncannily prophetic previews of the Stalinist regime.\* The elite could (and would) turn into an oligarchy all too easily; and the oligarchy would bring forth the irremovable and infallible dicta-

\*See *The Prophet Armed*, pp. 88–97.

tor. Trotsky nevertheless accepted Lenin's scheme because of Lenin's overwhelmingly realistic analysis of the relationship between party and class, but mainly because of the manner in which Lenin's Party (as distinct from Stalin's or Khrushchev's) exercised its leadership. Highly disciplined though the Party was, it was a free association of revolutionaries, taking for granted, and making full use of, their democratic rights within the organization, criticizing their leaders without fear or favor, and debating, most often in public, every major issue of policy. The large prerogatives of the Leninist Central Committee, the strong concentration of power in its hands, and the obligation of Party members to act in unison on its orders were effectively counterbalanced by uninhibited criticism and control from below.

Lenin's "democratic centralism" must be distinguished from the bureaucratic ultra-centralization characteristic of Stalinism. The elite Party was not, in Lenin's intention, to have been a self-sufficient body replacing the working class as agent of socialism. It was to remain part of the working class, just as in any army the vanguard remains part of the fighting force even while it acts as a special detachment to perform a special function. In the Leninist Party the rank and file were free to change the composition of the Central Committee, just as in the Soviet republic the working class was in precept entitled to depose and replace the party in office. Proletarian democracy included innerparty democracy as its particular aspect.

We know that however irreproachable this scheme may have been ideally, the realities of the revolution have ridden roughshod over it. This was no "historic accident" or the result merely of Stalin's ill will. The backwardness of the old Russia found its most cruel expression in the advent of Stalinism. The Soviet working class had been exhausted by revolution and civil war, catastrophically reduced in size, disorganized, and demoralized through the collapse of the entire economy. It proved unable to safeguard proletarian democracy and control the Party in power. Within the Party, too, the rank and file failed to preserve their rights and to control the leaders. The Bolshevik regime took on the bureaucratic and monolithic character it was to maintain for decades.

Stalin's struggle against Trotsky constituted a crucial phase in this transformation. The extraordinary cruelty and fury of that struggle came from the fact that "Trotskyism"

represented the conscience of the revolution, that it insistently recalled to the Bolshevik Party its commitment to proletarian democracy, and that it kindled in the working class the never quite extinct aspiration to become once again *the* agent of socialism. For a whole epoch Trotskyism was the sole revolutionary alternative to Stalinism.

Trotsky's ideas on the "construction of socialism" were also diametrically opposed to Stalinist theory and practice. A brief recapitulation may help to put the contrast into focus. Trotsky was the original prompter and promoter of the rapid industrialization of the USSR—he has therefore his share in the present economic ascendancy of the USSR. Also he regarded the collectivization of farms as a necessary accompaniment of industrialization and as the way to a mode of agricultural production superior to that based on the old rural smallholding worked with archaic tools. In a sense Stalin stole Trotsky's clothes after he had defeated him—he took over the program of industrialization and collectivization from the Left Opposition.\*

This has led some "Sovietologists" to argue that there was not much difference between Stalin and Trotsky, that there is indeed "not much to choose between them." The argument misses a point of importance, namely that Stalin, as he was putting on Trotsky's "clothes," soaked them in the blood of Soviet peasants and workers. There, in a nutshell, lay the difference between the two men's "methods of socialist construction."

In Trotsky's scheme of things, rapid industrialization was to be promoted with the workers' consent, not against their will and interests. This presupposed a balanced and simultaneous expansion of producer and consumer industries, a more or less continuous improvement of the population's standard of living, and an increasing, conscious, and willing participation of the workers in the processes of planning—"planning from below as well as from above." Stalin, however, promoted a one-sided development of the producer industries, neglecting consumer industries. Consequently the standard of living of the masses was depressed

\*The Left Opposition was formed in 1923 by a large group of prominent Bolsheviks under Trotsky's leadership around the questions of workers' democracy and state-planned industrialization. After a five-year struggle for its program within the party, it was outlawed by the Fifteenth Party Congress in 1927.

or remained stagnant, and the workers, resentful at being denied the benefits of industrialization, were deprived of any share in determining economic policy; they were robbed of any right to protest, strike, or otherwise express an opinion. In the course of two decades the workers paid for most trivial offenses against "labor discipline" with years of slavery and torture in the inferno of Stalin's concentration camps. Throughout the nineteen thirties Trotsky was their only vocal defender; his voice resounded in the world against the deafening din of a mendacious Stalinist propaganda. Similarly, collectivization of farming, as Trotsky advocated it, was to be carried out gradually, by persuasion, with the peasantry's consent, and not "wholesale" as Stalin enforced it in the years 1929-32.

It is sometimes said that if persuasion rather than coercion had regulated the tempo of industrialization and collectivization, the USSR would not have been able to build up its economic and military power as rapidly as it did—not rapidly enough to enable it to emerge victorious from the Second World War and to break the American monopoly of atomic energy soon thereafter. A reasoning of this kind cannot either be accepted or refuted on purely empirical grounds. Great weight, however, must be given to Trotsky's counterargument that under an economic leadership more rational and civilized than Stalin's, and more sensitive to the people's needs, the economic and military power of the USSR would have been placed on firmer foundations and would have been even more effective. Much of what Stalin gained on the swings through an excessive tempo of development, he lost on the roundabouts through bureaucratic mismanagement and waste, a terrible waste of men as well as materials. (Nor should one forget the "waste" that Stalin's conduct of foreign affairs caused the USSR, when, *inter alia*, it enabled Hitler's armies to occupy and devastate the wealthiest Soviet lands during the Second World War.) In any case, the criticisms Trotsky once made of Stalin's Five Year Plans are now voiced by Stalin's successors, who themselves were closely associated with their master's practice. If the Stalinist "method" was historically inevitable, then it was so in one sense only—because the Soviet ruling group or, more broadly, the Soviet bureaucracy itself was too backward, too crude, and too brutal to attempt a more civilized and more socialist way of building

up Soviet power. In the last instance, the vices of the bureaucracy stemmed from that old Russian barbarism that survived the October Revolution and overpowered it. It was Trotsky's and Russia's tragedy that even in struggling to rid herself of that barbarism Russia was unable to rise above it.

Many Western readers may find it difficult to visualize the awe-inspiring immensity of the conflict that raged through two decades of Soviet history. But I hope that the following pages may convey to them something of the intellectual and moral elan, and of the dramatic pathos and warm humanity that Trotsky brought to the struggle. The freedom of his spirit and the astonishing range of his interests and activities are reflected in his writings. He himself once said of Lenin that Lenin thought in "terms of continents and epochs." This is true also of himself. Even though his thought, like his epoch, was still European-centered, it constantly transcended this limitation. And it reached out to the other, then still "silent" continents and peoples, and to our epoch in which they were all to acquire their own voices and at last to impart a truly global character to current politics. In the years of Trotsky's last exile, from wherever persecution—Western "democratic" as well as Stalinist persecution—had driven him (from a remote Turkish island, from a hiding place in the French Alps, from a Norwegian village, and, finally, from a suburb of Mexico City), his mind and heart never ceased embracing the world. His internationalism was not merely an intellectual conviction; it was instinct-like in its spontaneity; it showed itself in an ever alive and active solidarity with every segment of oppressed and struggling humanity. He was as intensely preoccupied with the prospects of the Chinese Revolution in the period of its eclipse as he was with the fate that awaited the German workers in the event of Hitler's rise to power, or with the baneful illusions of the French and Spanish Popular Fronts. He followed the struggle for independence of India, Indonesia, and Indochina (as Vietnam was then called) and delved into their class relations. His ear caught every social tremor that passed through Latin America. And even in his last days his thoughts were with the North American Negroes who, he knew, would one day rise *en masse* against their oppressors. He felt at home with every nation and every people on earth, for every one of them had to contribute its share to the Permanent Revolution.



In another sense also the range of his ideas and work is exceptional. Political leader, sociologist, economist, war captain, military theorist, outstanding "specialist" on armed insurrection, historian, biographer, literary critic, master of Russian prose, and one of the greatest orators of all times, Trotsky brings his searching and original mind and his extraordinary power of expression to every field of his activity. He treats every subject he tackles in his own way, as no one has treated it before or after. Even when sometimes he repeats the commonplaces of Marxism, he rediscovers, as it were, the truth they contain and invests them with fresh life, so that with him they are never clichés; he restates them in order to deduce from them novel and creative conclusions. He is, in many ways, the most orthodox of Marxists, but his personality dispels the odor of orthodoxy. He speaks with authority, not as one of the scribes; and in spirit, temperament, and style he is closer to Marx himself than any of Marx's disciples and followers.

"The style is the man," but it is also the epoch. Trotsky's style mirrors superbly the heroic period in the history of revolution and Marxism, its ethos and color. That period has since been overlaid, at least to the eye of the present generation, by the blood and mud of Stalinism, and by the drab ambiguities of the post-Stalinist regimes in the USSR and other Eastern countries. It is all the more important for the student of contemporary history to try to penetrate through the crust of these accretions to the original, half-forgotten inspiration of the October Revolution. The mental effort required for this may be compared to the effort of cleansing and restoration that is nowadays being spent on old works of art in our museums and galleries. These works were for so long covered by dirt and patina that often their original color and even shape were forgotten; and art historians came to regard the dim incrustations as part of the old master's own palette and of his vision of the world. Learned dissertations have been written about the "color schemes" of a Goya or an El Greco on this erroneous assumption, until one day inquisitive and courageous students began to scratch cautiously and cleanse the surface of a famous masterpiece. As they went on quite a different "color scheme" of the master revealed itself to their astonished eyes—it was bright and brilliant, and had little in common with the "color scheme" construed by the learned experts.

The images of Marxism, of Leninism, and of the Russian Revolution purveyed by Western Sovietologists and Soviet ideologists alike have this in common with the theories of those unfortunate art experts: they too assume that all the muck and soot and blood on the surface somehow belong to the originals. In the meantime history has just set to work slowly and hesitantly, to scratch off the distorting accretions from Marxism and the revolution. Trotsky's writings are already, and will increasingly be, a most important and active element in this work of restoration.

What is involved here, however, is not merely the recovery of the authentic historical image of a great epoch. Trotsky's ideas belong not only to the past. In curiously tangled ways they are closely intertwined with the critical controversies of the present. True enough, Trotsky himself failed in his attempts to create an independent and politically effective communist movement. Yet, as he liked to stress, ideas deeply rooted in social reality are not destroyed even when their advocates are assassinated or exterminated *en masse*. The ideas crop up again and take possession of the minds of other people, who may not even know or suspect who had first formulated and expounded them. Sometimes a stream runs its course a long distance in the open; then suddenly it vanishes from sight, sinks underground, and remains submerged for a lengthy stretch of its road; until eventually, in an unfamiliar landscape, it re-emerges either as a single stream or as several divergent currents. Something like this is happening with "Trotskyism" now. A quarter of a century after its "final" suppression, it has been surging up in the communist world, not in its old recognizable form so far, not even under its own name, but as if it were split into its elements and broken up into diverse currents.

In the controversy between Khrushchev and Mao Tse-tung, which is tearing asunder the communist world, the disputants accuse each other of—Trotskyism. Of course, Mao and Khrushchev attach the label each to the other in order to discredit each other all the more easily, for in each, and in the followers of each, the Stalinist horror of the Trotskyist heresy is still trepidatingly alive. Yet there is more than mere polemical trick in the mutual accusation. Khrushchev does in fact appear to Mao as a disguised Trotskyist; and so does Mao appear to Khrushchev. Moreover, each has some grounds for thinking of the other as he does,

for both carry out, unwittingly and perhaps even unknowingly, Trotsky's political testament—but each carries out a different part of it. The Khrushchevite de-Stalinization is Trotsky's posthumous triumph: every progressive domestic reform carried out in the USSR since 1953 has been but a faint echo of the *desiderata* and demands Trotsky once put forward, whereas Soviet foreign policy is still largely dominated by the spirit of Stalinist self-sufficiency and opportunism. Conversely, Mao's domestic regime, reflecting China's poverty and backwardness, is still closer to the Stalinist model, whereas in his criticism of Khrushchev's foreign policies and in his approach to international communism, Mao expounds, crudely yet unmistakably, some of the basic tenets of Permanent Revolution.

What an ironical illustration this is of the "law of uneven development"! Trotskyism is, in a sense, having its comeback, but its elements appear disparately in strange combinations with elements of Stalinism. The communist movement, which is still suffering from political amnesia, is not even conscious of the way in which the continuity of its own submerged traditions is asserting itself—as continuity in discontinuity. But the reemergence of Trotsky's ideas has only begun. It remains to be seen how it is going to proceed—whether, how, and when his ideas may coalesce again, not in order to reproduce the old Trotskyism, but in order to absorb it and transcend it in a new phase of Marxism, and in a new socialist consciousness enriched by the experiences of our epoch. This much, however, is certain: a knowledge of Trotsky's work is absolutely essential to an understanding of the ferments the communist world is undergoing and of the changes it will undergo in the coming years.

"But Trotsky has hardly anything to tell us," an American critic will say, "about our own society. Marxism has none of the relevance to our own problems that he claimed for it. Was he not patently mistaken in the belief he held in the late thirties that the USA (as well as Western Europe) was entering an era of proletarian revolution, that Marxism was about to conquer the American mind, and that we Americans were going to create the truly modern, up-to-date version of Marxism? Not only have none of these prophecies come true, but the whole development of our society has gone in the opposite direction!"

Trotsky's American prognostications were indeed far-

fetched. In the last quarter-century, American capitalism, far from collapsing, has displayed immense vitality, achieved quite unparalleled expansion, and drawn abundant assurance from its wealth and power. Consequently Trotsky's prediction of "a great epoch of American Marxism" remains unfulfilled. Not only has the United States "refused" to create any up-to-date version of proletarian socialism, but its working class seems to be further than ever from accepting any brand of socialism at all. And what was once the leftish, and even Marxist, American intelligentsia is now a legion of Panglosses believing that the American "way of life," slightly refurbished according to the Keynesian prescription, is the best of all possible ways of life.

Yes, Trotsky's confidence in "American Marxism" was sadly misplaced, but does this speak against him or against his critics? He, at any rate, remains true to character: great revolutionaries always hope for much more and aim at much more than they can achieve, for otherwise they would never attain what they do attain. They must, as a rule, overreach themselves in order to grasp the things that are within reach. The Panglosses (even the "radicals" among them) never commit such mistakes; and now they are able to point exultantly to prolonged postwar prosperity in order to dismiss the Marxist analysis as obsolete and inapplicable to American society. The question that is left still open, however, is whether Trotsky, the forethinker, was thinking too far ahead in his American prognostications, or whether his thought was moving in the wrong direction?

His American critics would have more solid grounds for their confidence *if* the great postwar prosperity of American (and West European) capitalism did not contain an ingredient as poisonous as an armament fever lasting a quarter-century, including the madness of the nuclear arms race of two decades; *if* the postwar booms were not ever more frequently and sharply interrupted by recurrent depressions; *if* American governments, so enlightened by Keynesian theory, proved able to cope with the unemployment of millions, which reappeared amid booms even before automation had its full impact on the industrial manpower; and *if* recurrent dollar crises and furious competition in world markets did not signal the end of America's exceptional postwar supremacy, and the approach of overproduction throughout the West. The critics have perhaps "buried" Marxism some-

what prematurely. After the two decades of prosperity the basic flaws of the system, as diagnosed by Marxists—its irrationality and anarchy—persist. The social character of the productive process is still in conflict with the antisocial property relations, and the international needs and demands of the modern economy are in conflict with the nation-state. It was on the persistence of these “flaws” and on the conviction that they cannot be remedied within capitalism, that Trotsky had based his American prognostications; and as long as his premise remains valid, the element of error in his forecasts concerns the tempo rather than in direction of the course of events. For all its outward signs of flourishing health, the American (bourgeois) “way of life” carries within itself its incurable disease. In years to come this may well show in the way the United States reacts to the challenge from the rising communist powers.

This is not to deny the importance of Trotsky’s misjudgment of the tempo of the development, for the mistake about the tempo inevitably turns into an error about the circumstances. When, in the late thirties, Trotsky spoke of the approaching crisis of American capitalism, he did not imagine that in such a crisis the United States would have to confront communist governments established over a third of the globe, and that it would find itself under the direct pressure of modern Soviet economic and military power. The victory of the Chinese Revolution was then still about ten years off, and the USSR was in an early phase of its industrial “takeoff.” The shifts in the world’s balance of power have come about not in the way Trotsky visualized them—they have come about through revolution (and revolutionary growth of industrial power) in the East, not in the West. In the next decade or so, this trend almost certainly will continue and change the balance even more radically. Eventually the American “way of life” is likely to be subjected to a far graver and far more severe test than the one Trotsky predicted; the test is likely to be so much graver and more severe precisely because it has been “delayed” by decades. If the Panglosses were not Panglosses, they would not rejoice over the fact that Trotsky’s American predictions have not come true; they would be deeply perturbed. Because of its social conservatism and political complacency the United States may have missed, or may be missing, its greatest historical chance.

Long ago, even before the First World War, Trotsky him-

self provided a clue to this situation. In a characteristic generalization he wrote about the remarkable fact that by the turn of the century Western Europe had "exported" its most advanced idea—Marxism—to Russia, which was, industrially and technologically, the most backward of European nations; and it had "exported" its most advanced technology to the United States, which was the most backward politically and ideologically. Such has been the fateful one-sidedness of the historical evolution! How much easier this age of transition might have been, how much bloodshed and suffering might have been avoided, if advanced technology had gone hand in hand with advanced ideology; and if the United States, instead of Russia (and/or China), had led the world from capitalism to socialism!

This was not to be. In the meantime, however, in the USSR "advanced ideology" has, despite all the cruel Stalinist distortions, helped to produce advanced technology as well, whereas the USA, for all its technological and industrial triumphs, has made no decisive advance in political ideas. Yet without such an advance, American technology may well be defeated even in its own field. Of the two great European "exports," the export of modern "ideology" may well turn out to have been far more fruitful than the export of technology, and historically, far more profitable to the "importing" nation.

One would like to believe that the Americans can as a nation still make good their lag in the field of ideas, but they have not much time to lose. In recent years the Russian Sputniks and Luniks have greatly shaken the social and political complacency of the USA. But the effect of the shock, as far as the outsider can judge it, appears limited. American energy has been intensely geared to competition with the Russians in the new fields of science and industry, in astro-physics, in construction of space vehicles, etc. This is all to the good insofar as it contributes not merely to military power but to the progress of knowledge and to man's control over nature. Even so, the creative American reaction to Soviet successes remains one-sidedly technological. In sociopolitical ideas American conservatism seems unshaken. Yet it is in the field of ideas, Marxist ideas, that Americans have most to learn, if they are not to land themselves in a grim historical impasse.

And in the field of ideas, Trotsky, I am sure, is still a superb teacher.

ISAAC DEUTSCHER

# 1

## YOUTH AND FIRST EXILE: 1879-1905

### *On Optimism and Pessimism; on the 20th Century and on Many Other Issues*

*At the beginning of the year 1901 the young Lev Davidovich Bronstein, who had not yet assumed the name of Trotsky, but was already in exile in Siberia, epitomized his revolutionary mood in an impassioned invocation to the twentieth century. Despite persecutions and inquisitions, he asserted, the revolutionary "confidently knocks at the gate of history." To the mocking of the philistine for whom "there is nothing new under the moon," the revolutionary who looks to the future replies:*

*Dum spiro spero!* [While there's life, there's hope!] . . . If I were one of the celestial bodies, I would look with complete detachment upon this miserable ball of dust and dirt. . . . I would shine upon the good and the evil alike. . . . But I am a *man*. 'World history which to you, dispassionate gobbler of science, to you, book-keeper of eternity, seems only a negligible moment in the balance of time, is to me everything! As long as I breathe, I shall fight for the future, that radiant future in which man, strong and beautiful, will become master of the drifting stream of his history and will direct it towards the boundless horizon of beauty, joy and happiness! . . .

The nineteenth century has in many ways satisfied and has in even more ways deceived the hopes of the optimist. . . . It has compelled him to transfer most of his hopes to the twentieth century. Whenever the optimist was con-

from *The Prophet Armed: Trotsky, 1879-1921* by Isaac Deutscher, p. 54

fronted by an atrocious fact, he exclaimed: What, and this can happen on the threshold of the twentieth century! When he drew wonderful pictures of the harmonious future, he placed them in the twentieth century.

And now that century has come! What has it brought with it at the outset?

In France—the poisonous foam of racial hatred;\* in Austria—nationalist strife . . . ; in South Africa—the agony of a tiny people, which is being murdered by a colossus;\*\* on the ‘free’ island itself—triumphant hymns to the victorious greed of jingoist jobbers; dramatic ‘complications’ in the east; rebellions of starving popular masses in Italy, Bulgaria, Rumania. . . . Hatred and murder, famine and blood. . . .

It seems as if the new century, this gigantic newcomer, were bent at the very moment of its appearance to drive the optimist into absolute pessimism and civic nirvana.

—Death to Utopia! Death to faith! Death to love! Death to hope! thunders the twentieth century in salvos of fire and in the rumbling of guns.

—Surrender, you pathetic dreamer. Here I am, your long awaited twentieth century, your “future.”

—No, replies the unhumbled optimist: You—you are only the *present*.

## *The Proletariat and the Revolution*

*And indeed the century was presently to change its tone and language! In Russia the Revolution of 1905 was approaching; the ground was shaking under the Tsar's throne. Though Trotsky had fled from Siberia and was living abroad, he sensed the “pent-up revolutionary energy” about to explode and, at the close of 1904, sketched with remarkable clarity and prescience the course of the coming revolution and the workers' crucial role in it.*

The proletariat must not only conduct

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from *Our Revolution* by Leon Trotsky, pp. 29–44.

\*The reference here is to the Dreyfus affair.

\*\*The Boer War



a revolutionary propaganda. The proletariat itself must move towards a revolution.

To move towards a revolution does not necessarily mean to fix a date for an insurrection and to prepare for that day. You never can fix a day and an hour for a revolution. The people have never made a revolution by command.

What *can* be done is, in view of the fatally impending catastrophe, to choose the most appropriate positions, to arm and inspire the masses with a revolutionary slogan, to lead simultaneously all the reserves into the field of battle, to make them practice in the art of fighting, to keep them ready under arms,—and to send an alarm all over the lines when the time has arrived.

Would that mean a series of exercises only, and not a decisive combat with the enemy forces? Would that be mere maneuvers, and not a street revolution?

Yes, that would be mere maneuvers. There is a difference, however, between revolutionary and military maneuvers. Our preparations can turn, at any time and independent of our will, into a real battle which would decide the long-drawn revolutionary war. Not only can it be so, it *must* be. This is vouched for by the acuteness of the present political situation which holds in its depths a tremendous amount of revolutionary explosives.

At what time mere maneuvers would turn into a real battle, depends upon the volume and the revolutionary compactness of the masses, upon the atmosphere of popular sympathy which surrounds them, and upon the attitude of the troops which the government moves against the people.

Those three elements of success must determine our work of preparation. Revolutionary proletarian masses *are* in existence. We ought to be able to call them into the streets, at a given time, all over the country; we ought to be able to unite them by a general slogan.

All classes and groups of the people are permeated with hatred towards absolutism, and that means with sympathy for the struggle for freedom. We ought to be able to concentrate this sympathy on the proletariat as a revolutionary power which alone can be the vanguard of the people in their fight to save the future of Russia. As to the mood of the army, it hardly kindles the heart of the government with great hopes. There has been many an alarming symptom for the last few years; the army is morose, the army grum-

bles, there are ferments of dissatisfaction in the army. We ought to do all at our command to make the army detach itself from absolutism at the time of a decisive onslaught of the masses.

Let us first survey the last two conditions, which determine the course and the outcome of the campaign.

We have just gone through the period of "political renovation" opened under the blare of trumpets and closed under the hiss of knouts,—the era of [Prince] Svyatopolk-Mirski\*—the result of which is hatred towards absolutism aroused among all the thinking elements of society to an unusual pitch. The coming days will pluck the fruit of stirred popular hopes and unfulfilled government pledges. Political interest has lately taken more definite shape; dissatisfaction has grown deeper and is founded on a more outspoken theoretical basis. Popular thinking, yesterday utterly primitive, now greedily takes to the work of political analysis. All manifestations of evil and arbitrary power are being speedily traced back to the principal cause. Revolutionary slogans no longer frighten the people; on the contrary, they arouse a thousandfold echo, they pass into proverbs. The popular consciousness absorbs each word of negation, condemnation, or curse addressed towards absolutism, as a sponge absorbs fluid substance. No step of the administration remains unpunished. Each of its blunders is carefully taken account of. Its advances are met with ridicule, its threats breed hatred. The vast apparatus of the liberal press circulates daily thousands of facts, stirring, exciting, inflaming popular emotion.

The pent-up feelings are seeking an outlet. Thought strives to turn into action. The vociferous liberal press, however, while feeding popular unrest, tends to divert the current into a small channel; it spreads superstitious reverence for "public opinion," helpless, unorganized "public opinion," which does not discharge itself into action; it condemns the revolutionary method of national emancipation; it upholds the illusion of legality; it centers all the attention and all the hopes of the embittered groups around the

\*Prince Svyatopolk-Mirski, Russian prime minister, succeeded the ultra-reactionary Von Plehve, who was assassinated in July, 1904, by a revolutionist. After promising "cordial relations" between the government and the people, the Prince issued an edict Dec. 12, 1904, cracking down "with the hiss of the knout" on all unauthorized gatherings.

*Zemstvo* campaign,\* thus systematically preparing a great debacle for the popular movement. Acute dissatisfaction, finding no outlet, discouraged by the inevitable failure of the legal *Zemstvo* campaign which has no traditions of revolutionary struggle in the past and no clear prospects in the future, must necessarily manifest itself in an outbreak of desperate terrorism, leaving radical intellectuals in the rôle of helpless, passive, though sympathetic onlookers, leaving liberals to choke in a fit of platonic enthusiasm while lending doubtful assistance.

This ought not to take place. We ought to take hold of the current of popular excitement; we ought to turn the attention of numerous dissatisfied social groups to one colossal undertaking headed by the proletariat,—to the *National Revolution*.

The vanguard of the Revolution ought to wake from indolence all other elements of the people; to appear here and there and everywhere; to put the questions of political struggle in the boldest possible fashion; to call, to castigate, to unmask hypocritical democracy; to make democrats and *Zemstvo* liberals clash against each other; to wake again and again, to call, to castigate, to demand a clear answer to the question, *What are you going to do?*; to allow no retreat; to compel the legal liberals to admit their own weakness; to alienate from them the democratic elements and help the latter along the way of the revolution. To do this work means to draw the threads of sympathy of all the democratic opposition towards the revolutionary campaign of the proletariat.

We ought to do all in our power to draw the attention and gain the sympathy of the poor non-proletarian city population. During the last mass actions of the proletariat, as in the general strikes of 1903 in the South, nothing was done in this respect, and this was the weakest point of the preparatory work. According to press correspondents, the queerest rumors often circulated among the population as to the intentions of the strikers. The city inhabitants expected attacks on their houses, the storekeepers were afraid of being looted, the Jews were in a dread of pogroms. This

\*The *Zemstvos* were provincial or county councils having only economic and cultural functions. *Zemstvo* petitions were resolutions adopted by these advisory bodies and forwarded to the central government by the liberals in their struggle for a Constitution.

ought to be avoided. *A political strike, as a single combat of the city proletariat with the police and the army, the remaining population being hostile or even indifferent, is doomed to failure.*

The indifference of the population would tell primarily on the morale of the proletariat itself, and then on the attitude of the soldiers. Under such conditions, the stand of the administration must necessarily be more determined. The generals would remind the officers, and the officers would pass to the soldiers the words of [General Mikhail] Dragomirov: "Rifles are given for sharp shooting, and nobody is permitted to squander cartridges for nothing."

*A political strike of the proletariat ought to turn into a political demonstration of the population, this is the first prerequisite of success.*

The second important prerequisite is the mood of the army. A dissatisfaction among the soldiers, a vague sympathy for the "revoluters," is an established fact. Only part of this sympathy may rightly be attributed to our direct propaganda among the soldiers. The major part is done by the practical clashes between army units and protesting masses. Only hopeless idiots or avowed scoundrels dare to shoot at a living target. An overwhelming majority of the soldiers are loathe to serve as executioners; this is unanimously admitted by all correspondents describing the battles of the army with unarmed people. The average soldier aims above the heads of the crowd. It would be unnatural if the reverse were the case. When the Bessarabian regiment received orders to quell the Kiev general strike, the commander declared he could not vouch for the attitude of his soldiers. The order, then, was sent to the Kherson regiment, but there was not one half-company in the entire regiment which would live up to the expectations of their superiors.

Kiev was no exception. The conditions of the army must now be more favorable for the revolution than they were in 1903. We have gone through a year of war [against Japan]. It is hardly possible to measure the influence of the past year on the minds of the army. The influence, however, must be enormous. War draws not only the attention of the people, it arouses also the professional interest of the army. Our ships are slow, our guns have a short range, our soldiers are uneducated, our sergeants have neither compass nor map, our soldiers are barefooted, hungry, and freezing, our Red Cross is stealing, our commissariat is stealing—ru-

mors and facts of this kind leak down to the army and are being eagerly absorbed. Each rumor, as strong acid, dissolves the rust of mental drill. Years of peaceful propaganda could hardly equal in their results one day of warfare. Although the mere mechanism of discipline remains, the faith, the conviction that it is right to carry out orders, the belief that the present conditions can be continued, are rapidly dwindling. The less faith the army has in absolutism, the more faith it has in its foes.

We ought to make use of this situation. We ought to explain to the soldiers the meaning of the workingmen's action which is being prepared by the Party. We ought to make profuse use of the slogan which is bound to unite the army with the revolutionary people, *Away with the War!* We ought to create a situation where the officers would not be able to trust their soldiers at the crucial moment. This would reflect on the attitude of the officers themselves.

The rest will be done by the street. It will dissolve the remnants of the barracks hypnosis in the revolutionary enthusiasm of the people.

The main factor, however, remains the revolutionary masses. True it is that during the war the most advanced elements of the masses, the thinking proletariat, have not stepped openly to the front with that degree of determination required by the critical historic moment. Yet it would manifest a lack of political backbone and a deplorable superficiality, should one draw from this fact any kind of pessimistic conclusions.

The war has fallen upon our public life with all its colossal weight. The dreadful monster, breathing blood and fire, loomed up on the political horizon, shutting out everything, sinking its steel clutches into the body of the people, inflicting wound upon wound, causing mortal pain, which for a moment makes it even impossible to ask for the causes of the pain. The war, as every great disaster, accompanied by crisis, unemployment, mobilization, hunger, and death, stunned the people, caused despair but not protest. This is, however, only a beginning. Raw masses of the people, silent social strata, which yesterday had no connection with the revolutionary elements, were knocked by sheer mechanical power of facts to face the central event of present-day Russia, the war. They were horrified, they could not catch their breaths. The revolutionary elements, who

prior to the war had ignored the passive masses, were affected by the atmosphere of despair and concentrated horror. This atmosphere enveloped them, it pressed with a leaden weight on their minds. The voice of determined protest could hardly be raised in the midst of elemental suffering. The revolutionary proletariat, which had not yet recovered from the wounds received in July, 1903, was powerless to oppose the "call of the primitive."

The year of war, however, passed not without results. Masses, yesterday primitive, today are confronted with the most tremendous events. They must seek to understand them. The very duration of the war has produced a desire for reasoning, for questioning as to the meaning of it all. Thus the war, while hampering for a time the revolutionary initiative of thousands, has awakened to life the political thought of millions.

The year of war passed not without results, not a single day passed without results. In the lower strata of the people, in the very depths of the masses, a work was going on, a movement of molecules, imperceptible, yet irresistible, incessant, a work of accumulating indignation, bitterness, revolutionary energy. The atmosphere our streets are breathing now is no longer an atmosphere of blank despair, it is an atmosphere of concentrated indignation which seeks for means and ways for revolutionary action. Each expedient action of the vanguard of our working masses would now carry away with it not only all our revolutionary reserves, but also thousands and hundreds of thousands of revolutionary recruits. This mobilization, unlike the mobilization of the government, would be carried out in the presence of general sympathy and active assistance of an overwhelming majority of the population.

In the presence of strong sympathies of the masses, in the presence of active assistance on the part of the democratic elements of the people; facing a government commonly hated, unsuccessful both in big and in small undertakings, a government defeated on the seas, defeated in the fields of battle, despised, discouraged, with no faith in the coming day, a government vainly struggling, currying favor, provoking and retreating, lying and suffering exposure, insolent and frightened; facing an army whose morale has been shattered by the entire course of the war, whose valor, energy, enthusiasm, and heroism have met an insurmount-

able wall in the form of administrative anarchy, an army which has lost faith in the unshakable security of a régime it is called to serve, a dissatisfied, grumbling army which more than once has torn itself free from the clutches of discipline during the last year and which is eagerly listening to the roar of revolutionary voices—such will be the conditions under which the revolutionary proletariat will walk out into the streets. It seems to us that no better conditions could have been created by history for a final attack. History has done everything it was allowed by elemental wisdom. The thinking revolutionary forces of the country have to do the rest.

A tremendous amount of revolutionary energy has been accumulated. It should not vanish with no avail, it should not be dissipated in scattered engagements and clashes, with no coherence and no definite plan. All efforts ought to be made to concentrate the bitterness, the anger, the protest, the rage, the hatred of the masses, to give those emotions a common language, a common goal, to unite, to solidify all the particles of the masses, to make them feel and understand that they are not isolated, that simultaneously, with the same slogan on the banner, with the same goal in mind, innumerable particles are rising everywhere. If this understanding is achieved, half of the revolution is done.

We have got to summon all revolutionary forces to simultaneous action. How can we do it?

First of all we ought to remember that the main scene of revolutionary events is bound to be the city. Nobody is likely to deny this. It is evident, further, that street demonstrations can turn into a popular revolution only when they are a manifestation of *masses*, i.e., when they embrace, in the first place, the workers of factories and plants. To make the workers quit their machines and stands; to make them walk out of the factory premises into the street; to lead them to the neighboring plant; to proclaim there a cessation of work; to make new masses walk out into the street; to go thus from factory to factory, from plant to plant, incessantly growing in numbers, sweeping aside police barriers, absorbing new masses that they happened to come across, crowding the streets, taking possession of buildings suitable for popular meetings, fortifying those buildings, holding continuous revolutionary meetings with audiences coming and going, bringing order into the movements of the masses,

arousing their spirit, explaining to them the aim and the meaning of what is going on; to turn finally, the entire city into one revolutionary camp, this is, broadly speaking, the plan of action.

The starting point ought to be the factories and plants. That means that street manifestations of a serious character, fraught with decisive events, ought to begin with *political strikes of the masses*.

It is easier to fix a date for a strike than for a demonstration of the people, just as it is easier to move masses ready for action than to organize new masses.

A political strike, however, not a *local, but a general political strike all over Russia*—ought to have a general political slogan. This slogan is: *to stop the war and to call a National Constituent Assembly*.

This demand ought to become nationwide, and herein lies the task for our propaganda preceding the all-Russian general strike. We ought to use all possible occasions to make the idea of a National Constituent Assembly popular among the people. Without losing one moment, we ought to put into operation all the technical means and all the powers of propaganda at our disposal. Proclamations and speeches, educational circles and mass meetings ought to carry broadcast, to propound and to explain the demand of a Constituent Assembly. There ought to be not one man in a city who should not know that his demand is: a National Constituent Assembly.

The peasants ought to be called to assemble on the day of the political strike and to pass resolutions demanding the calling of a Constituent Assembly. The suburban peasants ought to be called into the cities to participate in the street movements of the masses gathering under the banner of a Constituent Assembly. All societies and organizations, professional and learned bodies, organs of self-government and organs of the opposition press ought to be notified in advance by the workingmen that they are preparing for an all-Russian political strike, fixed for a certain date, to bring about the calling of a Constituent Assembly. The workingmen ought to demand from all societies and corporations that, on the day appointed for the mass manifestation, they should join in the demand of a National Constituent Assembly. The workingmen ought to demand from the oppo-



sition press that it should popularize their slogan and that on the eve of the demonstration it should print an appeal to the population to join the proletarian manifestation under the banner of a National Constituent Assembly.

We ought to carry on the most intensive propaganda in the army in order that on the day of the strike each soldier, sent to curb the "rebels," should know that he is facing the people who are demanding a National Constituent Assembly.

## 2

### THE REVOLUTION OF 1905

#### *The Soviet of 1905 and the Revolution (Fifty Days)*

*The 1905 revolution was defeated, but the defeat was not a failure. In St. Petersburg (then capital of the Russian Empire) the Council of Workingmen's Deputies had provided the revolutionary leadership and inspiration. This was the first Soviet in Russian history. Trotsky was its Chairman in its most critical days. After the event, he analyzed the significance of this new organization of the working masses. He regarded it as the most important legacy of 1905, and predicted that "the first wave of the [next] revolution will lead to the creation of Soviets all over the country." This was to happen in February, 1917.*

The history of the Soviet is a history of fifty days. The Soviet was constituted on October 13th; its session was interrupted by a military detachment of the government on December 3rd. Between those two dates the Soviet lived and struggled.

What was the substance of this institution? What enabled it in this short period to take an honorable place in the history of the Russian proletariat, in the history of the Russian Revolution?

The Soviet organized the masses, conducted political strikes, led political demonstrations, tried to arm the workingmen. But other revolutionary organizations did the same things. The substance of the Soviet was its effort to become *an organ of public authority*. The proletariat on one hand, the reactionary press on the other, have called the Soviet "a labor government"; this only reflects the fact that

from *Our Revolution* by Leon Trotsky, pp. 151-161

the Soviet was in reality *an embryo of a revolutionary government*. Insofar as the Soviet was in actual possession of authoritative power, it made use of it; insofar as the power was in the hands of the military and bureaucratic monarchy, the Soviet fought to obtain it. Prior to the Soviet, there had been revolutionary organizations among the industrial workingmen, mostly of a Social-Democratic nature. But those were organizations *among* the proletariat; their immediate aim was to *influence the masses*. The Soviet is an organization *of* the proletariat; its aim is to fight for *revolutionary power*.

At the same time, the Soviet was *an organized expression of the will of the proletariat as a class*. In its fight for power the Soviet applied such methods as were naturally determined by the character of the proletariat as a class: its part in production; its numerical strength; its social homogeneity. In its fight for power the Soviet has combined the direction of all the social activities of the working class, including decisions as to conflicts between individual representatives of capital and labor. This combination was by no means an artificial tactical attempt: it was a natural consequence of the situation of a class which, consciously developing and broadening its fight for its immediate interests, had been compelled by the logic of events to assume a leading position in the revolutionary struggle for power.

The main weapon of the Soviet was a political strike of the masses. The power of the strike lies in disorganizing the power of the government. The greater the "anarchy" created by a strike, the nearer its victory. This is true only where "anarchy" is not being created by anarchic actions. The class that puts into motion, day in and day out, the industrial apparatus and the governmental apparatus; the class that is able, by a sudden stoppage of work, to paralyze both industry and government, must be organized enough not to fall the first victim of the very "anarchy" it has created. The more effective the disorganization of government caused by a strike, the more the strike organization is compelled to assume governmental functions.

The Council of Workmen's Delegates introduces a free press. It organizes street patrols to secure the safety of the citizens. It takes over, to a greater or less extent, the post office, the telegraph, and the railroads. It makes an effort to introduce the eight-hour workday. Paralyzing the autocratic government by a strike, it brings its own democratic order

into the life of the working city population.

After January 9th the revolution had shown its power over the minds of the working masses. On June 14th, through the revolt of the Potemkin Tavritchesky\*, it had shown that it was able to become a material force. In the October strike it had shown that it could disorganize the enemy, paralyze his will, and utterly humiliate him. By organizing Councils of Workmen's Deputies all over the country, *it showed that it was able to create authoritative power*. Revolutionary authority can be based only on active revolutionary force. Whatever our view on the further development of the Russian revolution, it is a fact that so far no social class besides the proletariat has manifested readiness to uphold a revolutionary authoritative power. The first act of the revolution was an encounter in the streets of the *proletariat* with the monarchy; the first serious victory of the revolution was achieved through the *class-weapon of the proletariat*, the political strike; the first nucleus of a revolutionary government was a *proletarian representation*. The Soviet is the first democratic power in modern Russian history. The Soviet is the organized power of the masses themselves over their component parts. This is a true, unadulterated democracy, without a two-chamber system, without a professional bureaucracy, with the right of the voters to recall their deputy any moment and to substitute another for him. Through its members, through deputies elected by the workingmen, the Soviet directs all the social activities of the proletariat as a whole and of its various parts; it outlines the steps to be taken by the proletariat, it gives them a slogan and a banner. This art of directing the activities of the masses on the basis of organized self-government, is here applied for the first time on Russian soil. Absolutism ruled the masses, but it did not direct them. It put mechanical barriers against the living creative forces of the masses, and within those barriers it kept the restless elements of the nation in an iron bond of oppression. The only mass absolutism ever directed was the army. But that was not directing, it was merely commanding. In recent years, even the directing of this atomized and hypnotized military mass has been slipping out of the hands of

\*The mutiny of the sailors of the cruiser Potemkin belonging to the Black Sea Fleet on June 14, 1905, touched off the revolts in the armed forces.

absolutism. Liberalism never had power enough to command the masses, or initiative enough to direct them. Its attitude towards mass movements, even if they helped liberalism directly, was the same as towards awe-inspiring natural phenomena—earthquakes or volcanic eruptions. The proletariat appeared on the battlefield of the revolution as a self-reliant aggregate, totally independent from bourgeois liberalism.

The Soviet was a *class organization*. This was the source of its fighting power. It was crushed in the first period of its existence not by lack of confidence on the part of the masses in the cities, but by the limitations of a purely urban revolution, by the relatively passive attitude of the village, by the backwardness of the peasant element of the army. The Soviet's position among the city population was as strong as could be.

The Soviet was not an official representative of the entire half million of the working population in the capital; its organization embraced about two hundred thousand, chiefly industrial workers; and though its direct and indirect political influence was of a much wider range, there were thousands and thousands of proletarians (in the building trade, among domestic servants, day laborers, drivers) who were hardly, if at all, influenced by the Soviet. There is no doubt, however, that the Soviet represented the interests of *all* these proletarian masses. There were but few adherents of the Black Hundred\* in the factories, and their number dwindled hour by hour. The proletarian masses of St. Petersburg were solidly behind the Soviet. Among the numerous intellectuals of St. Petersburg the Soviet had more friends than enemies. Thousands of students recognized the political leadership of the Soviet and ardently supported it in its decisions. Professional St. Petersburg was entirely on the side of the Soviet. The support by the Soviet of the postal and telegraph strike won it the sympathy of the lower governmental officials. All the oppressed, all the unfortunate, all honest elements of the city, all those who were striving towards a better life, were instinctively or consciously on the side of the Soviet. The Soviet was actually or potentially a representative of an overwhelming ma-

\*Colloquial name for the Union of the Russian People, a league of the most reactionary monarchists and nationalists who used violence and terror against the revolutionaries and were the chief instigators of pogroms against the Jews.

majority of the population. Its enemies in the capital would not have been dangerous had they not been protected by absolutism, which based its power on the most backward elements of an army recruited from peasants. The weakness of the Soviet was not its own weakness; it was the weakness of a purely urban revolution.

The fifty-day period was the period of the greatest power of the revolution. *The Soviet was its organ in the fight for public authority.* The class character of the Soviet was determined by the class differentiation of the city population and by the political antagonism between the proletariat and the capitalistic bourgeoisie. This antagonism manifested itself even in the historically limited field of a struggle against absolutism. After the October strike, the capitalistic bourgeoisie consciously blocked the progress of the revolution, the petty middle class turned out to be a nonentity, incapable of playing an independent role. The real leader of the urban revolution was the proletariat. Its class organization was the organ of the revolution in its struggle for power.

The struggle for power, for public authority—this is the central aim of the revolution. The fifty days of the Soviet's life and its bloody finale have shown that urban Russia is too narrow a basis for such a struggle, and that even within the limits of the urban revolution, a local organization cannot be the central leading body. For a national task the proletariat required an organization on a national scale. The St. Petersburg Soviet was a local organization, yet the need of a central organization was so great that it had to assume leadership on a national scale. It did what it could, still it remained primarily the *St. Petersburg Council of Workmen's Deputies.* The urgency of an all-Russian labor congress, which undoubtedly would have authority to form a central leading organ, was emphasized even at the time of the first Soviet. The December collapse made its realization impossible. The idea remained, an inheritance of the Fifty Days.

The idea of a Soviet has become ingrained in the consciousness of the workingmen as the first prerequisite to revolutionary action of the masses. Experience has shown that a Soviet is not possible or desirable under all circumstances. The objective meaning of the Soviet organization is to create conditions for disorganizing the government,

for "anarchy," in other words for a revolutionary conflict. The present lull in the revolutionary movement, the mad triumph of reaction, make the existence of an open, elective, authoritative organization of the masses impossible. There is no doubt, however, that *the first new wave of the revolution will lead to the creation of Soviets all over the country.* An All-Russian Soviet, organized by an All-Russian Labor Congress, will assume leadership of the local elective organizations of the proletariat. Names, of course, are of no importance; neither are details of organization; the main thing is: a centralized democratic leadership in the struggle of the proletariat for a popular government. History does not repeat itself, and the new Soviet will not have again to go through the experience of the Fifty Days. These, however, will furnish it a complete program of action.

This program is perfectly clear. To establish revolutionary cooperation with the army, the peasantry, and the plebeian lower strata of the urban bourgeoisie. To abolish absolutism. To destroy the material organization of absolutism by reconstructing and partly dismissing the army. To break up the entire bureaucratic apparatus. To introduce an eight-hour workday. To arm the population, starting with the proletariat. To turn the Soviets into organs of revolutionary self-government in the cities. To create Councils of Peasants' Delegates (Peasants' Committees) as local organs of the agrarian revolution. To organize elections to the Constituent Assembly and to conduct a preelection campaign for a definite program on the part of the representatives of the people.

It is easier to formulate such a program than to carry it through. If, however, the revolution ever wins, the proletariat cannot choose another. The proletariat will unfold revolutionary accomplishment such as the world has never seen. The history of Fifty Days will be only a poor page in the great book of the proletariat's struggle and ultimate triumph.

### *Speech to the Tsarist Court*

*Fifty-two members of the St. Petersburg Soviet were put on trial September 19, 1906, on the charge of "preparing*

*an armed uprising" against the existing "form of government." In his autobiography Trotsky depicted the trial as follows: "The yard of the court building and the adjoining streets were turned into a military camp. All the police of St. Petersburg were mobilized. But the trial itself was carried on with a certain amount of freedom; the reactionary government was out to disgrace the moderate Count Sergei Witte by exposing his 'liberalism,' his weakness in dealing with the revolution. About four hundred witnesses were called; and more than two hundred came and offered evidence. Workers, manufacturers, members of the secret police, engineers, servants, citizens, journalists, post-office officials, police chiefs, students, municipal councillors, janitors, senators, hooligans, deputies, professors, soldiers, all passed in file during the month of the trial and under the crossfire of the judge's bench, of the prosecution, of the attorneys for the defense, and of the defendants—especially the latter—reconstructed, line by line and stroke by stroke, the activity of the workers' Soviet." One of the highlights of the trial was a speech from the dock delivered by Trotsky in justification of the Soviet and of himself as its chairman.*

#### Messrs. Judges and Gentlemen of the Jury!

The main issue before the court, as was also the case during the preliminary investigation, is the question of the armed uprising. No matter how strange it may seem to the prosecution, this question was not placed on the agenda of any of the sessions of the Soviet of Workers' Deputies throughout the fifty days of the existence of the Soviet. The question of the armed uprising as such was not posed or discussed at a single session. Furthermore, we did not take up as such the questions of the Constituent Assembly, the democratic republic, or even the general strike and its principled meaning as a method of revolutionary struggle. These fundamental questions which have been debated for a number of years first in the revolutionary press and then at meetings and assemblies were not subjected to review by the Soviet of Workers' Deputies. I shall presently explain this and characterize the attitude of the Soviet of Workers' Deputies toward the armed uprising. But before passing to this question, which is the central one



from the standpoint of the court, I take the liberty of calling the court's attention to another question which is more general and less acute in character—the question of the employment of violence in general by the Soviet of Workers' Deputies. Did the Soviet recognize its right to employ violence, repression, in certain instances through one or another of its organs? My answer to a question posed in this general form is—yes!

I am no less aware than the prosecuting attorney that in every “normally” functioning government, regardless of its form, the monopoly of violence and repressions belongs to the ruling power. This is the “inviolable” right of state power; and towards this right the state power maintains an attitude of most jealous solicitude, being always on guard lest some private body infringe upon its monopoly of violence. In this way the state organization struggles for survival. One need only picture modern society concretely, envisage this complex and contradictory commonwealth, say in a vast country like Russia, in order to become immediately aware that in a modern social system, torn by antagonisms, repressions are absolutely inevitable. We are not anarchists, we are socialists. The anarchists call us “state-ists” because we recognize the historical necessity of the state and, therefore, the historical inevitability of state violence. But under the conditions created by the general strike which essentially consists in this, that it paralyzes the state machinery—under these conditions the old, long-outlived state power against which the political strike was directed proved to be completely impotent. It was absolutely incapable of regulating and safeguarding public order even by resorting to those barbaric measures which alone remained at its disposal. Meanwhile, the strike had propelled hundreds of thousands of workers from the factories into the streets where they began to live a social-political life. Who could lead them and introduce discipline in their ranks? What organ of the old state power? The police? The gendarmes? The departments of the *Okhrana* [Tsarist secret police]? I ask myself this question. And there is only one possible answer. No one except the Soviet of Workers' Deputies. No one else!

The Soviet, in directing this colossal elemental force, set itself the immediate task of reducing internal friction to a minimum, preventing excesses, and limiting the inevitable victims of the struggle to the smallest possible number. And

if that is the case, then as a result of the political strike which created it, the Soviet became nothing else but the organ of self-government of the revolutionary masses, the *organ of power*. It wielded command over the parts of the whole by the will of all. It was a democratic power which was obeyed voluntarily. But insofar as the Soviet was the organized power of a great majority, it was inevitably confronted with the necessity of employing repressions against those sections of the masses which were introducing anarchy among the unanimous ranks. To counterpose its power to these elements was deemed as its right by the Soviet of Workers' Deputies. It was its right as a new historical power, as the only power in the period of the complete moral, political, and technical bankruptcy of the old apparatus, as the sole guarantee of the inviolability of the individual and of public order in the best sense of these terms. The representatives of the old power, which rests entirely on bloody repressions, cannot dare to speak with moral indignation about the violent measures of the Soviet. The historical power in whose name the prosecutor speaks in this court is the organized violence of a minority over the majority! The new power, whose precursor was the Soviet, represents the organized will of the majority calling the minority to order. Because of this distinction the revolutionary right of the Soviet to existence stands above all juridical and moral speculations. . . .

The uprising of the masses, Messrs. Judges, is not something man-made but a historical event. It is the result of social relations and not the product of a plan. It is impossible to manufacture it; it is possible to foresee it. Through the operation of causes depending on us as little as they do on Tsarism, an open conflict had become unavoidable. Each day brought us closer and closer to it. For us, preparation for it meant doing everything in our power to reduce the victims of this irrepressible conflict to a minimum. Did we think that this required, first of all, that we prepare arms, draft a plan of military actions, divide the city into specific sections, in a word do everything that is done by military authorities in expectation of "disorders" when they divide St. Petersburg into sections, appoint colonels for each section, assign a certain number of machine guns and all the necessary equipment? No, that is not how we understood our role. To prepare for the inevitable uprising—and we,

Messrs. Judges, never *prepared an uprising*, as the prosecutor thinks and says, we *prepared for an uprising*—for us, this meant first and foremost to bring clarity into the minds of the people; to explain to them that an open conflict was inevitable; that they would be deprived of everything that had been granted them; that they could preserve their freedoms only by force; that a mighty organization of the revolutionary masses was indispensable; that it was necessary to meet the enemy head on; that they had to be prepared to go to the end in the struggle; that there was no other road. For us, this constituted the essence of the uprising.

What did we believe necessary for the uprising to be victorious? The sympathy of the troops! It was necessary first of all to attract the army to our side. To compel the soldiers to understand the shameful role they were playing and to summon them to joint action with the people and for the people—that is the kind of task we set ourselves first and foremost. I have already said that the November strike, which came as an unselfish outburst of direct solidarity with the sailors who were threatened with a death-sentence, was likewise of enormous political significance. It attracted the attention and sympathy of the army toward the revolutionary proletariat. This is where the prosecutor should have first of all sought to find the preparation for the armed uprising. But naturally the issue could not be decided by a single demonstration of protest and sympathy.

Under what conditions, then, did we think at the time and do we think now is it possible to expect the army to pass to the side of the revolution? What is needed for this? Machine guns? Rifles? Of course, if the workers possessed machine guns and rifles they would hold an enormous power in their hands. The very unavoidability of uprising would in large measure be eliminated thereby. A wavering army would surrender its weapons at the feet of an armed people. But the masses did not possess weapons, they did not and could not have them in large quantities. Does this mean that the masses are doomed to defeat? No! Important as weapons are, the main power does not lie in weapons, Messrs. Judges. No, not in weapons. *Not the capacity of the masses to kill but their great readiness to die*—this is what, Messrs. Judges, in the last analysis guarantees in our opinion the victory of the people's uprising.

When the soldiers march into the streets to quell the

crowds and come face to face with the crowds and become convinced that these crowds, this people will not leave the pavements until they gain what they must have, that they are ready to pile corpses upon corpses—when the soldiers see and are convinced that the people have come to struggle seriously, to the very end, then the hearts of the soldiers, as has happened in every revolution, must inevitably waver because the soldiers cannot fail to become dubious about the stability of the régime they are serving and cannot fail to believe in the victory of the people.

## REVOLUTIONARY PERSPECTIVES AND SECOND EXILE: 1906-1914

### *The Theory of the Permanent Revolution*

In 1906, while he was in prison awaiting trial, Trotsky formulated his theory of the Permanent Revolution. This was the most radical restatement of the prognosis of Socialist revolution since the Communist Manifesto. Trotsky first presented it in "Results and Perspectives," the concluding chapter in a volume of essays entitled *Our Revolution*. He borrowed the term and the concept from Karl Marx and applied them to Russia and the world in the twentieth century. Yet the theory of Permanent Revolution has been regarded as the quintessence of "Trotskyism." As such it was attacked in the mid-1920s by Stalin who counterposed his "socialism in one country." In the course of the struggle against Stalin, Trotsky felt obliged to explain again and to defend his views. This is how he did it in the Introduction to his *Permanent Revolution*, published in exile in 1930.

The permanent revolution, in the sense which Marx attached to this concept, means a revolution which makes no compromise with any single form of class rule, which does not stop at the democratic stage, which goes over to socialist measures and to war against reaction from without; that is, a revolution whose every successive stage is rooted in the preceding one and which can end only in complete liquidation of class society.

To dispel the chaos that has been created around the theory of the permanent revolution, it is necessary to distinguish three lines of thought that are united in this theory.

from *The Permanent Revolution* by Leon Trotsky, pp. 6-10

First, it embraces the problem of the transition from the democratic revolution to the socialist. This is in essence the historical origin of the theory.

The concept of the permanent revolution was advanced by the great Communists of the middle of the nineteenth century, Marx and his co-thinkers, in opposition to the democratic ideology which, as we know, claims that with the establishment of a 'rational' or democratic state all questions can be solved peacefully by reformist or evolutionary measures. Marx regarded the bourgeois revolution of 1848 as the direct prelude to the proletarian revolution. Marx "erred." Yet his error has a factual and not a methodological character. The Revolution of 1848 did not turn into the socialist revolution. But that is just why it also did not achieve democracy. As to the German Revolution of 1918, it was no democratic completion of the bourgeois revolution; it was a proletarian revolution decapitated by the Social Democrats; more correctly, it was a bourgeois *counterrevolution*, which was compelled to preserve pseudodemocratic forms after its victory over the proletariat.

Vulgar "Marxism" has worked out a pattern of historical development according to which every bourgeois society sooner or later secures a democratic régime, after which the proletariat, under conditions of democracy, is gradually organized and educated for socialism. The actual transition to socialism has been variously conceived: the avowed reformists picture this transition as the reformist filling of democracy with a socialist content (Jaurès); the formal revolutionists acknowledge the inevitability of applying revolutionary violence in the transition to socialism (Guesde).\* But both the former and the latter considered democracy and socialism, for all peoples and countries, as two stages in the development of society which are not only entirely distinct but also separated by great distances of time from each other. This view was predominant also among those Russian Marxists who, in the period of 1905, belonged to the Left Wing of the Second International. [George] Plekhanov, the brilliant progenitor of Russian Marxism, considered the idea of the dictatorship of the proletariat a delusion in contemporary Russia. The same standpoint was defended not only by the Mensheviks but also by the over-

\*Jean Jaurès and Jules Guesde were both theorists and leaders of the French Socialist Party before World War I.

whelming majority of the leading Bolsheviks, in particular by those present party leaders, without exception, who in their day were resolute revolutionary democrats but for whom the problems of the socialist revolution, not only in 1905 but also on the eve of 1917, still signified the vague music of a distant future.

The theory of the permanent revolution, which originated in 1905, declared war upon these ideas and moods. It pointed out that the democratic tasks of the backward bourgeois nations led directly, in our epoch, to the dictatorship of the proletariat and that the dictatorship of the proletariat puts socialist tasks on the order of the day. Therein lay the central idea of the theory. While the traditional view was that the road to the dictatorship of the proletariat led through a long period of democracy, the theory of the permanent revolution established the fact that for backward countries the road to democracy passed through the dictatorship of the proletariat. Thus democracy is not a régime that remains self-sufficient for decades, but is only a direct prelude to the socialist revolution. Each is bound to the other by an unbroken chain. Thus there is established between the democratic revolution and the socialist reconstruction of society a permanent state of revolutionary development.

The second aspect of the theory has to do with the socialist revolution as such. For an indefinitely long time and in constant internal struggle, all social relations undergo transformation. Society keeps on changing its skin. Each stage of transformation stems directly from the preceding. This process necessarily retains a political character, that is, it develops through collisions between various groups in the society, which is in transformation. Outbreaks of civil war and foreign wars alternate with periods of 'peaceful' reform. Revolutions in economy, technique, science, the family, morals, and everyday life develop in complex reciprocal action and do not allow society to achieve equilibrium. Therein lies the permanent character of the socialist revolution as such.

The international character of the socialist revolution, which constitutes the third aspect of the theory of the permanent revolution, flows from the present state of the economy and the social structure of humanity. Internationalism is no abstract principle but a theoretical and political reflection of the character of world economy, of the world

development of productive forces, and of the world scale of the class struggle. The socialist revolution begins on national foundations—but cannot be completed on these foundations alone. The maintenance of the proletarian revolution within a national framework can only be a provisional state of affairs, even though, as the experience of the Soviet Union shows, one of long duration. In an isolated proletarian dictatorship, the internal and external contradictions grow inevitably along with the successes achieved. If it remains isolated, the proletarian state must finally fall victim to these contradictions. The way out for it lies only in the victory of the proletariat of the advanced countries. Viewed from this standpoint, a national revolution is not a self-contained whole; it is only a link in the international chain. The international revolution constitutes a permanent process, despite temporary declines and ebbs.

The struggle of the epigones is directed, even if not always with the same clarity, against all three aspects of the theory of the permanent revolution. And how could it be otherwise, when it is a question of three inseparably connected parts of a whole? The epigones mechanically separate *democracy* and the *socialist* dictatorship. They separate the *national* socialist revolution from the *international*. They consider that, in essence, the conquest of power within national limits is not the initial act but the final act of the revolution; after that follows the period of reforms that lead to the national socialist society. In 1905, they did not even grant the idea that the proletariat could conquer power in Russia earlier than in Western Europe. In 1917, they preached the self-sufficing democratic revolution in Russia and spurned the dictatorship of the proletariat. In 1925–27, they steered a course toward national revolution in China under the leadership of the national bourgeoisie. Subsequently, they raised the slogan for China of the democratic dictatorship of the workers and peasants in opposition to the slogan of the dictatorship of the proletariat. They proclaimed the possibility of the construction of an isolated and self-sufficient socialist society in the Soviet Union. The world revolution became for them, instead of an indispensable condition for victory, only a favorable circumstance. This profound breach with Marxism was reached by the epigones [i.e., the Stalinists, whom Trotsky considers the epigones of Lenin] in the process of permanent struggle against the theory of the permanent revolution. . . .



## The New Resurgence

Trotsky often analyzed the ebb and flow of the historical process in which reaction alternates with revolution. In the following excerpt from his biography of Stalin, he describes such a change of tide that occurred in Russia around 1910, after years of triumphant counterrevolution and Piotr Stolypin's government. He shows in what postures the resurgent wave of revolution found Bolsheviki, Mensheviki—and—himself, the "conciliator."

For about five years (1906–11) Stolypin lorded it over the country. He exhausted all of the reaction's resources. The Third of June Régime managed to disclose its worthlessness in all spheres, but above all in the domain of the agrarian problem. Stolypin was obliged to descend from political combinations to the police club. And, as if the better to expose the utter bankruptcy of his system, Stolypin's assassin came from the ranks of his own secret police.

By 1910 the industrial revival became an indisputable fact. The revolutionary parties were confronted with the question: What effect will this break in the situation have on the political condition of the country? The majority of Social-Democrats maintained their schematic position: the crisis revolutionizes the masses, the industrial resurgence pacifies them. Both factions, Bolshevik as well as Menshevik, tended, therefore, to disparage or flatly deny the revival that had actually begun. The exception was the Vienna newspaper *Pravda* [i.e., Trotsky's paper], which, notwithstanding its conciliationist illusions, defended the very correct thought that the political consequences of the revival, as well as of the crisis, far from being automatic in character, are each time determined anew, depending on the preceding course of the struggle and on the entire situation in the country. Thus, following the industrial resurgence, in the course of which a very widespread strike struggle had managed to develop, a sudden decline in the situation might

from *Stalin* by Leon Trotsky, pp. 126–129

call forth a direct revolutionary resurgence, provided the other necessary conditions were present. On the other hand, after a long period of revolutionary struggle which ended in defeat, an industrial crisis, dividing and weakening the proletariat, might destroy its fighting spirit altogether. Or again, an industrial resurgence, coming after a long period of reaction, is capable of reviving the labor movement, largely in the form of an economic struggle, after which the new crisis might switch the energy of the masses onto political rails.

The Russo-Japanese War and the shocks of the revolution prevented Russian capitalism from sharing the worldwide industrial resurgence of 1903-07. In the meantime, the uninterrupted revolutionary battles, defeats, and repressions had exhausted the strength of the masses. The world industrial crisis, which broke out in 1907, extended the prolonged depression in Russia for three additional years, and far from inspiring the workers to engage in a new fight, dispersed them and weakened them more than ever. Under the blows of lockouts, unemployment, and poverty, the weary masses became definitely discouraged. Such was the material basis for the "achievements" of Stolypin's reaction. The proletariat needed the resuscitative font of a new industrial resurgence to revive its strength, fill its ranks, again feel itself the indispensable factor in production and plunge into a new fight.

At the end of 1910, street demonstrations—a sight long unseen—took place in connection with the deaths of the liberal Muromtsev, the erstwhile First Duma [Parliament] president, and Leo Tolstoy. The student movement entered a new phase. Superficially—such is the customary aberration of historical idealism—it might have seemed that the thin layer of the intellectuals was the breeding place of the political revival and that by the force of its own example it was beginning to attract the upper layer of the workers. As a matter of fact, the wave of revival was not proceeding from the top down but from the bottom up. Thanks to the industrial resurgence, the working class was gradually emerging from its torpor. But before the chemical changes that had transformed the masses became apparent, they were transmitted to the students through the intervening social groups. Since the university youth was easier to set in motion, the revival manifested itself first of all in the form of student disturbances. But to the properly prepared

observer it was clear beforehand that the demonstrations of the intellectuals were no more than a symptom of much more profound and significant processes within the proletariat itself.

Indeed, the graph of the strike movement soon began to climb. True, the number of strikers in 1911 amounted to a mere hundred thousand (the previous year it had not reached even half of that), but the slowness of the resurgence showed how strong was the torpor that had to be overcome. At any rate, by the end of the year the workers' districts looked quite different than at the beginning of the year. After the plentiful harvests of 1909 and 1910, which gave the impetus to the industrial resurgence, came a disastrous failure of crops in 1911, which, without stopping the resurgence, doomed twenty million peasants to starvation. The unrest, starting in the villages, again placed the agrarian question on the order of the day. The Bolshevik conference of January, 1912, had every right to refer to "the beginning of political revival." But the sudden break did not take place until the spring of 1912, after the famous massacre of the workers on the Lena River. In the deep *taiga* [thick Siberian forest] more than five thousand miles from St. Petersburg and over fourteen hundred miles from the nearest railway, the pariahs of the gold mines, who each year provided millions of rubles in profit to English and Russian stockholders, demanded an eight-hour day, an increase in wages, and abolition of fines. The soldiers, called out from Irkutsk, fired on the unarmed crowd. 150 killed, 250 wounded; deprived of medical aid, scores of the wounded died.

During the debate on the Lena events in the Duma, Minister of the Interior Makarov, a stupid official no worse and no better than any other of his contemporaries, declared, to the applause of the Rightist deputies, "This is what happened and this is what will happen again!" These amazingly brazen words produced an electric shock. At first from the factories of St. Petersburg, then from all over the country news about declarations and demonstrations of protest began to come in by telephone and telegraph. The repercussion of the Lena events was comparable only to the wave of indignation that had swept the toiling masses seven years before, following Bloody Sunday. "Perhaps never since the days of 1905," wrote a liberal newspaper, "have the streets of the capital been so alive."

In those days Stalin was in St. Petersburg, at liberty be-

tween two exiles. "The Lena shots broke the ice of silence," he wrote in the newspaper *Zvezda* [The Star], to which we shall have occasion to refer again, "and the river of popular resentment was set in motion. It has begun! . . . All that was evil and destructive in the contemporary régime, all that had ailed long-suffering Russia—all of it has merged into the one fact of the events on the Lena. That is why the Lena shots were the signal for strikes and demonstrations."

The strikes affected about three hundred thousand workers. The First of May strike set four hundred thousand marching. According to official data, a total of seven hundred and twenty-five thousand struck in 1912. The total number of workers increased by no less than twenty per cent during the years of industrial resurgence, while, because of the feverish concentration of production, their economic role assumed even greater importance. The revival in the working class affected all the other strata of the population. The hungry village stirred portentously. Flare-ups of dissatisfaction were observed in the army and navy. "In Russia the revolutionary resurgence," Lenin wrote to Gorky in August, 1912, "is not any other kind, but definitely revolutionary."

The new movement was not a repetition of the past, but its continuation. In 1905 the mighty January strike had been accompanied by a naïve petition to the Tsar. In 1912 the workers at once advanced the slogan of a democratic republic. The ideas, traditions, and organizational experience of 1905, enriched by the hard lessons learned during the years of reaction, fertilized the new revolutionary period. From the very beginning the leading role belonged to the workers. Inside the proletarian vanguard the leadership belonged to the Bolsheviks. That, in essence, predetermined the character of the future revolution, although the Bolsheviks themselves were not as yet clearly aware of that. By strengthening the proletariat and securing for it a tremendously important role in the economic and political life of the country, the industrial resurgence reinforced the foundation for the perspective of permanent revolution. The cleansing of the stables of the old régime could not be accomplished otherwise than with the broom of the proletarian dictatorship. The democratic revolution could conquer only by transforming itself into the socialist revolution and, thus, only by overcoming its own self.

Such continued to be the position of "Trotskyism." But it had its Achilles' heel: conciliationism, associated with the hope for the revolutionary resurrection of Menshevism. The new resurgence—"not any other kind, but definitely revolutionary"—struck an irreparable blow at conciliationism. Bolshevism relied on the revolutionary vanguard of the proletariat and taught it to lead the peasant poor behind it. Menshevism relied on the labor aristocracy and inclined toward the liberal bourgeoisie. The moment the masses again entered the arena of open conflict, there could have been no talk of "conciliation" between these two factions. The conciliators were forced into new positions: the revolutionists among them—with the Bolsheviks, the opportunists—with the Mensheviks. . . .

## THE FIRST WORLD WAR: 1914-1917

*War and the International*

*In October, 1914, just after the outbreak of the First World War, Trotsky, then living in Zurich, wrote a political pamphlet on the war and the Second International. This was the first extensive statement of antiwar policy by a Russian Socialist. It was primarily directed against the pro-war attitude of the German Social-Democrats. The German translation brought down on Trotsky an indictment in absentia for lese majesty and a prison sentence of several months from a German court. In 1918, after Trotsky had been appointed Russia's first Bolshevik Foreign Secretary, the booklet was published in the United States as The Bolsheviki and World Peace, with an introduction by Lincoln Steffens. It is said to have had a direct influence upon President Wilson in the formulation of the "Fourteen Points." Here is Trotsky himself expounding socialist internationalism.*

At the basis of the current war is the rising up of the productive forces, developed by capitalism, against the nation-state form of their exploitation. Our entire planet, its land and water areas, the earth's surface and its subsoil provide today the arena for a *worldwide* economy, the dependence of whose various parts upon each other has become indissoluble.

This work has been accomplished by capitalism. But capitalism also compels the capitalist states to fight in order to subordinate this world economy to the profit interests of the respective national bourgeoisies. The policy of imperialism first of all testifies to the fact that the old nation-

from *Fourth International* by Leon Trotsky, October, 1944, pp. 316-317, 318-319.

state, created in Europe through the revolutions and wars of 1789, 1815, 1848, 1859, 1864, 1866, 1870, has become outlived and has turned into an intolerable fetter upon the further development of the productive forces. The war of 1914 represents first of all the collapse of the *nation-state* as a self-sufficient economic arena. Nationalism can continue as a cultural, ideological, psychological factor—the economic basis has been cut from under its feet. Blind or hypocritical are all speeches to the effect that the present sanguinary struggle serves the cause of “national defense.” Just the contrary is true; the objective meaning of the war consists in its destroying the existing national economic nests in the name of a world economy. But imperialism is seeking to solve this task not along the principles of a rationally organized international productive cooperation but on the principle of an exploitation of world economy by the capitalist class of that victorious country which is to be transformed by this war from a Great Power into a World Power.

The war heralds the breakup of the nation-state; and, at the same time, also the crack-up of the *capitalist form* of economy. From within the nation-states capitalism has revolutionized the whole world economy, dividing the planet among the oligarchy of Great Powers, around whom move their satellites, the small states, kept alive by the rivalry among the big states. The further evolution of world economy on capitalist foundations signifies an uninterrupted struggle between the world powers for ever new partitions of the selfsame earth's surface as the object of capitalist exploitation. Economic rivalry under the aegis of militarism is being replaced by world banditry and devastation, which disorganize the very foundations of mankind's economic life. World production has risen up not only against nation-state fetters but also against the capitalist organization of economy that has now become transformed into barbarous disorganization.

The war of 1914 is the greatest historic convulsion of an economic system perishing from its own contradictions.

All the historical forces called upon to give guidance to bourgeois society, to speak in its name and to exploit it—the monarchies, the ruling parties, the diplomacy, the standing army, the Church—all serve notice, by the war of 1914, of their historical bankruptcy. Capitalism, as a system of human culture, has been safeguarded by them—and the

catastrophe to which this system has led is first of all *their* catastrophe. The first impact of events has raised national governments and armies to an unprecedented height, momentarily rallying the nations around them; but all the more terrible will be the downfall of the rulers when the actual meaning of unfolding events becomes revealed in all its truth and horror to the peoples now stunned by the roar of cannons.

The revolutionary answer of the masses will be the more powerful the more monstrous the shake-up to which they are now being subjected by history.

Capitalism has created the material prerequisites for a new, socialist economy. Imperialism has led the capitalist peoples into a blind-alley. The war of 1914 points the way out of the blind alley, forcefully driving the proletariat onto the road of the socialist revolution.

In the economically backward countries of Europe, the war is placing on the order of the day questions of a much earlier historical origin: the questions of democracy and of national unification. This is how matters stand, by and large, for the peoples of Russia, Austria-Hungary, and the Balkan peninsula. But these historically belated questions, which the previous epoch has bequeathed to the present one, do not at all alter the basic character of the events. Twenty-five million soldiers have been set on their feet not by the national aspirations of Serbs, Poles, Rumanians, or Finns, but by the imperialist interests of the bourgeoisies of the Great Powers. Having disrupted the European *status quo*, so carefully preserved for four and a half decades, imperialism has reopened all the old questions which the bourgeois revolution proved impotent to solve. But in the present epoch these questions are bereft of an independent character. With the preservation of Tsarism and Austria-Hungary, the creation of normal conditions for national existence and economic development in the Balkan peninsula is unthinkable. At the present time Tsarism represents an indispensable military reservoir for the financial imperialism of France and the conservative colonial might of England. Austria-Hungary serves as the main prop for the aggressive imperialism of Germany. Beginning as a local clash between Serbian nationalist terrorists and the Hapsburg political police, the present war has quickly unfolded its main content: the life-and-death struggle between Germany and England. At a time when simpletons and hypocrites



talk of defending national freedom and independence, the Anglo-German war is actually being waged for the freedom of imperialist exploitation of the peoples of India and Egypt on the one side, and for the sake of a new imperialist division of this earth's peoples, on the other. Awakened for its capitalist development on a national basis, Germany began by destroying in 1870-71 the continental hegemony of France. Today, when the blossoming of German industry on national foundations has made Germany the foremost capitalist power in the world, her future development runs up against the world hegemony of England.

Full and unlimited domination of the European continent is for Germany the necessary condition for the overthrow of her world enemy. Therefore imperialist Germany inscribes in her program first of all the integration of Central and Western Europe. Present-day Germany, Austria-Hungary, the Balkan peninsula, Turkey, Holland, the Scandinavian countries, Switzerland, Italy, and, if possible, France, after she has been bled white, together with Spain and Portugal must comprise a single economic and military unit—Greater Germany under the leadership of the existing German government. This program, carefully elaborated by the economists, jurists, and diplomats of German imperialism and realized by its strategists, is the most incontestable and at the same time the most shocking expression of the fact that capitalism finds its position intolerable within the constriction of the nation-state. In place of the national Great Power must come the imperialist World Power.

In these historical conditions the issue for the European proletariat cannot possibly involve the defense of an outlived national "fatherland" which has become the chief brake upon economic progress; involved here is the task of creating a new, more powerful and stable fatherland—the republican *United States of Europe*, as a transition to the United States of the World. To the impasse of imperialism, the proletariat can counterpose only the socialist organization of world economy as the practical program of the day. To war, as a method of solving the insoluble contradictions of capitalism at the apex of its development, the proletariat is compelled to counterpose its own method—socialist revolution.

The Balkan question as well as the question of the overthrow of Tsarism—these tasks bequeathed to us by *yester-*

*day's* struggle can be solved only in connection with the revolutionary solution of the tasks posed by *today's* and *tomorrow's* struggles.

For the Russian Social-Democracy the primary unpostponable task is the struggle against Tsarism, which is seeking in Austria and the Balkans an outlet for its state methods of plunder, barbarism, and violence. The Russian bourgeoisie, including the "radical" intelligentsia, has been completely corrupted by the enormous upswing of Russian industry in the last five years; has concluded a bloody alliance with the Romanov dynasty, which, with its new territorial seizures, must secure for impatient Russian capitalism its share of world booty. Despoiling and devastating Galicia, depriving its people even of those crumbs of freedom the Hapsburgs had allowed them, dismembering unhappy Persia, and seeking from behind the Bosphorus to cast a noose upon the peoples of the Balkan peninsula, Tsarism expects Russian liberalism, which it despises, to cover up this robber's work by means of declamation about the defense of Belgium and France. The war of 1914 signifies the complete liquidation of Russian liberalism; makes the Russian proletariat the sole bearer of the struggle for freedom and completely transforms the Russian revolution into an integral part of the social revolution of the European proletariat.

In our fight against Tsarism, in which we know no truce, we did not seek nor are we seeking assistance from Hapsburg or Hohenzollern militarism. We have preserved sufficient clarity of revolutionary vision to perceive that German imperialism is basically hostile to the idea of destroying Tsardom, its best ally, in the east, to which it is bound by ties of historical solidarity. But even if that were not the case; even if we grant that, in obeisance to the logic of military operations and contrary to the logic of its own political interests, German militarism will deal a death blow to Tsarism, even in this most unlikely case, we would still refuse to see in the Hohenzollerns any subjective or merely objective an ally. The destinies of the Russian revolution are intimately bound up with the destinies of European socialism; and we Russian Social-Democrats hold the internationalist position firmly enough to reject once and for all the idea that in exchange for a dubious step toward the emancipation of Russia we should consent to the crushing of the freedom of Belgium and France; and—what is more

—to the injection of imperialist poison into the German and Austrian proletariat.

We owe a great deal to the German Social-Democracy. We have all gone through its school; we have learned from its successes as well as its mistakes. For us it was not one of the parties of the International, but the "party"—*tout court*. We have always maintained and strengthened fraternal ties with the Austrian Social-Democracy. In our turn we were proud in the knowledge that we had contributed our modest share, paid for by more than one drop of our blood, to the conquest of universal suffrage in Austria, and the awakening of revolutionary tendencies within the German proletariat. We accepted without hesitation moral and material support from an elder brother who fought for common goals on the other side of our western frontier. But precisely out of respect to this past, and all the more so out of respect to the future, which will bind still more closely the working class of Russia with the proletariat of Germany and Austria, we indignantly spurn the "liberationist" assistance which German imperialism—alas! with the blessing of German socialism—is bringing us in the cannon which bear the Krupp imprint. And we hope that the indignant protests of Russian socialism will ring out loudly enough to be heard in Berlin and Vienna.

The collapse of the Second International is a tragic *fact*—it would be blindness or cowardice to shut one's eyes to this. The conduct of French socialism and of the greater section of English socialism constitutes as much a part of this collapse as the course pursued by the German and Austrian Social-Democracy. Purely diplomatic attempts to recreate the International—by means of mutual "amnesty"—will not advance us a single step. It is not a question of an episodic or temporary divergence, nor of differences of opinion on the "national" question. Involved is the capitulation of the oldest political parties in the historical test to which they have been submitted by the European war.

At first sight it might seem that the social revolutionary perspectives of the impending epoch of which we spoke above are completely illusory in view of the bankruptcy of the oldest socialist parties now revealed so catastrophically. But such a skeptical conclusion would be false, it would ignore the "good" will of the historical dialectic, just as we used to ignore all too frequently its "ill" will, so mercifully manifested in the fate of the International.

The war of 1914 heralds the floundering of the nation-states. The socialist parties of the epoch just concluded were *national* parties. All the ramifications of their organization, of their activity, and their psychology made them grow together with the nation-state; and, contrary to the solemn pledges of their congresses they came to the defense of the conservative state structures. . . . In their historical fall the nation-states have dragged down with them the national socialist parties.

What is perishing is not Socialism, but only its temporary historic expression. . . . As nation-states have become a brake on the productive forces, just so the old nationalist socialist parties have become the chief obstacle in the way of the proletarian revolutionary movement. They had to disclose all their backwardness, discredit all the limitations of their methods, bring down on the proletariat the disgrace and horror of internecine strife in order that the proletariat, through terrible disillusionment, might free itself of the prejudices and slavish habits of the preparatory epoch and finally become that to which it is being summoned by history: the revolutionary class fighting for power.

The Second International has not existed in vain. It has performed a gigantic cultural work unequalled in the world: the education and fusion of an oppressed class. The proletariat does not have to begin all over again. It will not enter the new road with empty hands. From the previous epoch it has inherited rich ideological arsenals. The new epoch will compel it to add to the old weapons of criticism the new criticism by means of—weapons.

We revolutionary Marxists have no grounds for despair. *The epoch which we are entering will be our epoch.* Marxism has not been vanquished. On the contrary the roar of cannons in all corners of Europe heralds not only the collapse of the historical organizations of the proletariat but also the victory of Marxist theory. What remains today of the hopes for a "peaceful" evolution, for the blunting of capitalist contradictions, or for a "planful growing" into socialism? The reformists who hoped to solve the social question through tariff agreements, consumers' societies, and parliamentary collaboration with bourgeois parties, are now transferring all their hopes to the victory of "national" arms. They expect that the property-owning classes will more readily agree to meet the needs of the proletariat, which has demonstrated its patriotism. This hope would be

completely dull-witted were it not for another hope that lurks behind it, a less "idealistic" expectation that armed victory will create for the national bourgeoisie a broader imperialist base of enrichment, at the expense of the bourgeoisies of other countries, and will permit it to share a part of its booty with the national proletariat—at the expense of the proletariat of other countries. *Social reformism has become converted in practice into social imperialism.* We have seen with our own eyes the annihilating liquidation of the hopes for a peaceful growth of the proletariat's well-being; the reformists are compelled to seek a way out of their blind alley by resorting, contrary to their own doctrine, to force—not the revolutionary force of the peoples against the ruling classes, but the military force of their ruling classes against other peoples.

After 1848 the German bourgeoisie refused to solve its problems by methods of revolution. It entrusted the feudal lords with the solution of the questions of bourgeois development by methods of war. The social process of the last half-century, having exhausted the national foundation of capitalist development, has placed the German proletariat face to face with the problem of revolution. Shying away from revolution, the reformists were compelled to reproduce the historical fall of bourgeois liberalism: they entrusted their ruling classes, that is, the selfsame feudal lords, with the solution of the proletarian question by methods of war. But here the historic analogy ends. The creation of nation-states did actually solve the bourgeois question for a whole epoch, while the long series of colonial wars after 1871 "supplemented" this solution, extending the arena for the development of capitalist forces. The epoch of *colonial wars*, waged by the nation-states, has led to the present war *between the nation-states—over colonies.* After the backward sections of the world were divided among the capitalist states, nothing has remained for the latter except to tear the colonies from one another. . . . However, the new division of colonies among the capitalist countries does not extend the basis of capitalist development but merely alters it: any gain for one side denotes an equal loss for the other. A temporary softening of class contradictions in Germany could therefore be obtained as a result of this war only through an extreme sharpening of the class war in France and England—and vice versa.

To this must be added another factor of decisive impor-

tance: *the capitalist awakening of the colonies themselves, which has received a powerful impulse from the present war.* The disorganization of the world economy signifies the revolutionizing of the colonial economy and this implies that the colonies are beginning to lose their colonial character. In consequence, whatever may be the military outcome of the present dogfight, the imperialist base of European capitalism will undergo, as a result of it, not an expansion, but a contraction. War not only fails to "solve" the working class question on the imperialist foundation but, on the contrary, it aggravates this question, confronting the capitalist world with the alternatives: either *permanent war* over the narrowing imperialist foundation or—the *proletarian revolution*.

If the war has grown over the head of the Second International, then its next consequences will grow over the head of the entire bourgeois world. We revolutionary socialists did not want the war. *But we do not fear it.* We do not fall into despair over the fact that the war has smashed the International, the old ideological-organizational form worn out by history. With the inexhaustible resources of proletarian socialism, the revolutionary epoch will create a new organizational form corresponding to the greatness of the new tasks. To this work we are applying ourselves amid the rattling of machine guns, the crash of old cathedrals, and the patriotic howling of capitalist jackals. Amidst this hellish music of death, we preserve our thought in all its clarity, our vision remains unclouded, and we feel ourselves to be the only creative force of the future. There are already many of us, many more than appears on the surface. Tomorrow there will be many more of us than today. On the day after tomorrow beneath our banner there will stand millions who today, sixty-seven years after the appearance of the *Communist Manifesto*, still have nothing to lose but their chains.

### *The Zimmerwald Manifesto*

*The first international socialist conference against the First World War, attended by thirty-eight delegates from eleven countries, met in Switzerland in the village of Zimmer-*

wald near Berne, September 5-8, 1915. Trotsky wrote the text of the famous manifesto that was "unanimously and with enthusiasm" adopted by the conference with only minor emendations.

### Workers of Europe!

The war has lasted for more than a year. Millions of corpses lie upon the battlefields; millions of men have been crippled for life. Europe has become a gigantic human slaughterhouse. All science, the work of many generations, is devoted to destruction. The most savage barbarity is celebrating its triumph over everything that was previously the pride of mankind.

Whatever may be the truth about the immediate responsibility for the outbreak of the war, one thing is certain: the war that has occasioned this chaos is the outcome of imperialism, of the endeavors of the capitalist classes of every nation to satisfy their greed for profit by the exploitation of human labor and of the treasures of nature.

Those nations which are economically backward or politically feeble are threatened with subjugation by the great Powers, which are attempting by blood and iron to change the map of the world in accordance with their exploiting interests. Whole peoples and countries, such as Belgium, Poland, the Balkan states, and Armenia, either as units or in sections, are menaced by annexation as booty in the bargaining for compensations.

As the war proceeds, its real driving forces become apparent in all their baseness. Piece by piece the veil which has hidden the meaning of this world catastrophe from the understanding of the peoples is falling down. In every country the capitalists who forge the gold of war profits from the blood of the people are declaring that the war is for national defense, democracy, and the liberation of oppressed nationalities. **THEY LIE!**

In reality they are actually burying on the fields of devastation the liberties of their own peoples, together with the independence of other nations. New fetters, new chains, new burdens are being brought into existence, and the workers of all countries, of the victorious as well as of the vanquished, will have to bear them. To raise civilization to a

from *The Bolsheviks and the World War* by Olga Hess Gankin and H. H. Fisher, pp. 329-333

higher level was the aim announced at the beginning of the war; misery and privation, unemployment and want, under-feeding and disease are the actual results. For decades and decades to come, the cost of the war will devour the strength of the peoples, imperil the work of social reform, and hamper every step on the path of progress.

Intellectual and moral desolation, economic disaster, political reaction—such are the blessings of this horrible struggle between nations.

Thus does the war unveil the naked form of modern capitalism, which has become irreconcilable not only with the interests of the working masses, not only with the circumstances of historic development, but even with the first conditions of human communal existence.

The ruling forces of capitalist society, in whose hands were the destinies of the nations, the monarchical and the republican governments, secret diplomacy, the vast employers' organizations, the middle-class parties, the capitalist press, the Church—all these forces must bear the full weight of responsibility for this war, which has been produced by the social order nourishing them and protecting them and which is being carried on for the sake of their interests.

Workers!

Exploited, deprived of your rights, despised—you were recognised as brothers and comrades at the outbreak of the war before you were summoned to march to the shambles, to death. And now, when militarism has crippled, lacerated, degraded, and destroyed you, the rulers are demanding from you the abandonment of your interests, of your aims, of your ideals—in a word, slavish submission to the "national truce." You are prevented from expressing your views, your feelings, your pain; you are not allowed to put forth your demands and to fight for them. The press is muzzled, political rights and liberties are trampled upon—thus is military dictatorship ruling today with the iron hand.

We cannot, we dare not, any longer remain inactive in the presence of a state of things that is menacing the whole future of Europe and of mankind. For many decades the Socialist working class has carried on the struggle against militarism. With growing anxiety its representatives at their national and international conferences have devoted themselves to the war peril, the outcome of an imperialism which was becoming more and more menacing. At Stuttgart,



Copenhagen, and Basle, the International Socialist Congresses indicated the path that the workers should follow.

But the Socialist Parties and working-class organizations which had taken part in determining this path have, since the outbreak of war, disregarded the obligations that followed therefrom. Their representatives have invited the workers to suspend the working-class struggle, the only possible and effective means of working-class emancipation. They have voted the ruling classes the credits for carrying on the war. They have put themselves at the disposal of their governments for the most varied services. They have tried through their press and their envoys to win over the neutrals to the governmental policies of their respective countries. They have given to their government Socialist ministers as hostages for the observance of the national truce, and thus have taken on themselves the responsibility for this war, its aims, its methods. And just as Socialist Parties failed separately, so did the most responsible representatives of Socialist Parties, of trade unions, or of national Socialist Bureau.

These facts constitute one of the reasons that the international working-class movement, even where sections of it did not fall a victim to the national panic of the first period of the war, or where it rose above it, has failed, even now, in the second year of the butchering of nations, to take up simultaneously in all countries an active struggle for peace.

In this intolerable situation we have met together, we representatives of Socialist Parties, of trade unions, or of minorities of them, we Germans, French, Italians, Russians, Poles, Latvians, Rumanians, Bulgarians, Swedes, Norwegians, Dutch, and Swiss, we who are standing on the ground not of national solidarity with the exploiting class but of the international solidarity of the workers and the working-class struggle. We have met together in order to join anew the broken ties of international relations and to summon the working class to reorganize and begin the struggle for peace.

The struggle is also the struggle for liberty, for brotherhood of nations, for socialism. The task is to take up this fight for peace—for a peace without annexations or war indemnities. Such a peace is possible only when every thought of violating the rights and liberties of the nations is condemned. There must be no enforced incorporation

either of wholly or partly occupied countries. No annexations, either open or masked, no forced economic union, made still more intolerable by the suppression of political rights. The right of nations to select their own government must be the immovable fundamental principle of international relations.

### Organized Workers!

Since the outbreak of the war you have put your energies, your courage, your steadfastness at the service of the ruling classes. Now the task is to enter the lists for your own cause, for the sacred aims of Socialism, for the salvation of the oppressed nations and the enslaved classes, by means of the irreconcilable working-class struggle.

It is the task and duty of the Socialists of the belligerent countries to begin this struggle with all their power. It is the task and duty of the Socialists of the neutral countries to support their brothers by all effective means in this fight against bloody barbarity.

Never in the history of the world has there been a more urgent, a more noble, a more sublime task, the fulfilment of which must be our common work. No sacrifice is too great, no burden too heavy, to attain this end: the establishment of peace among nations.

Working men and women! Mothers and fathers! Widows and orphans! Wounded and crippled! To all who are suffering from the war or in consequence of the war, we cry out, over the frontiers, over the smoking battlefields, over the devastated cities and hamlets.

*"Workers of all countries unite!"\**

\*Signatories were: for the German delegation: Georg Ledebour, Adolph Hoffman; for the French delegation: A. Bouderon, A. Merrheim; for the Italian delegation: G. E. Modigliani, Costantino Lazzari; for the Russian delegation: N. Lenin, Paul Axelrod, M. Bobroff; for the Polish delegation: St. Lapinski, A. Warski, Jakob Hanecki; for the Inter-Balkan Socialist Federation: (for the Rumanian delegation) C. Rakovsky; (for the Bulgarian delegation) Vasil Kolarov; for the Swedish and Norwegian delegation: Z. Höglund, Ture Nerman; for the Dutch delegation: H. Roland-Holst; for the Swiss delegation: Robert Grimm.

## 5

### THE 1917 REVOLUTION

#### *The Law of Uneven and Combined Development*

*Marx had assumed that the workers would first abolish capitalism in the most advanced countries of Western Europe. Yet they did it first in backward Russia. Trotsky, the leader of the October Revolution, is also its historian; and in his History of the Russian Revolution, he explains the unexpected turn of events by means of "the law of uneven and combined development," a remarkable historical generalization closely connected with his theory of Permanent Revolution.*

A backward country assimilates the material and intellectual conquests of the advanced countries. But this does not mean that it follows them slavishly, reproduces all the stages of their past. The theory of the repetition of historic cycles—expounded by Giovanni Battista Vico and his more recent followers—rests upon an observation of the orbits of old precapitalistic cultures, and in part upon the first experiments of capitalist development. A certain repetition of cultural stages in ever new settlements was in fact bound up with the provincial and episodic character of that whole process. Capitalism means, however, an overcoming of those conditions. It prepares and in a certain sense realizes the universality and permanence of man's development. By this a repetition of the forms of development by different nations is ruled out. Although compelled to follow after the advanced countries, a backward country does not take things in the same order. The privilege of

from *History of the Russian Revolution*, Vol. I, by Leon Trotsky, pp. 4-6, 13-14

historic backwardness—and such a privilege exists—permits, or rather compels, the adoption of whatever is ready in advance of any specified date, skipping a whole series of intermediate stages. Savages throw away their bows and arrows for rifles all at once, without traveling the road which lay between those two weapons in the past. The European colonists in America did not begin history all over again from the beginning. The fact that Germany and the United States have now economically outstripped England was made possible by the very backwardness of their capitalist development. On the other hand, the conservative anarchy in the British coal industry—as also in the heads of Ramsay MacDonald and his friends—is a paying up for the past when England played too long the role of capitalist pathfinder. The development of historically backward nations leads necessarily to a peculiar combination of different stages in the historic process. Their development as a whole acquires a planless, complex, combined character.

The possibility of skipping over intermediate steps is of course by no means absolute. Its degree is determined in the long run by the economic and cultural capacities of the country. The backward nation, moreover, not infrequently debases the achievements borrowed from outside in the process of adapting them to its own more primitive culture. In this the very process of assimilation acquires a self-contradictory character. Thus the introduction of certain elements of Western technique and training, above all military and industrial, under Peter I [1672–1725], led to a strengthening of serfdom as the fundamental form of labor organization. European armament and European loans—both indubitable products of a higher culture—led to a strengthening of Tsarism, which delayed in its turn the development of the country.

The laws of history have nothing in common with a pedantic schematism. Unevenness, the most general law of the historic process, reveals itself most sharply and complexly in the destiny of the backward countries. Under the whip of external necessity their backward culture is compelled to make leaps. From the universal law of unevenness thus derives another law which, for the lack of a better name, we may call the law of *combined development*—by which we mean a drawing together of the different stages of the journey, a combining of separate steps, an amalgam of archaic with more contemporary forms. Without this law, to be

taken of course in its whole material content, it is impossible to understand the history of Russia, and indeed of any country of the second, third, or tenth cultural class. . . .

Although with a few broken ribs, Tsarism came out of the experience of 1905 alive and strong enough. What changes in the correlation of forces were introduced by the eleven years' historical development dividing the prologue from the drama? Tsarism during this period came into still sharper conflict with the demands of historic development. The bourgeoisie became economically more powerful, but, as we have seen, its power rested on a higher concentration of industry and an increased predominance of foreign capital. Impressed by the lessons of 1905, the bourgeoisie had become more conservative and suspicious. The relative weight of the petty and middle bourgeoisie, insignificant before, had fallen still lower. The democratic intelligentsia, generally speaking, had no firm social support whatever. It could have a transitional political influence but could play no independent role: its dependence upon bourgeois liberalism had grown enormously. In these circumstances only the youthful proletariat could give the peasantry a program, a banner, and leadership. The gigantic tasks thus presented to the proletariat gave rise to an urgent necessity for a special revolutionary organization capable of quickly getting hold of the popular masses and making them ready for revolutionary action under the leadership of the workers. Thus the soviets of 1905 developed gigantically in 1917. That the soviets, we may remark here, are not a mere child of the historic backwardness of Russia, but a product of her combined development, is indicated by the fact that the proletariat of the most industrial country, Germany, at the time of its revolutionary high point—1918 to 1919—could find no other form of organization.

The revolution of 1917 still had as its immediate task the overthrow of the bureaucratic monarchy, but in distinction from the older bourgeois revolutions, the decisive force now was a new class formed on the basis of a concentrated industry and armed with new organizations, new methods of struggle. The law of combined development here emerges in its extreme expression: starting with the overthrow of a decayed medieval structure, the revolution in the course of a few months placed the proletariat and the Communist Party in power. . . .

## *The Bolsheviks and Lenin*

*It was not, however, any "laws" of history that made the revolution—men made it, determined in their action by those laws. Trotsky, the historian, portrays the Bolshevik party as a living political organism, subjected to the pressures of other tendencies and social forces and going through serious frictions, divisions, and crises at various turns in the revolution and in its own evolution. Its leaders were liable to waver and make mistakes, especially in Lenin's absence. Lenin, upon returning to Russia in April, 1917, from his Swiss exile had to intervene vigorously in order to guide his party upon the path leading to the October insurrection. In Trotsky's eyes, Lenin's leadership played a unique and decisive role in securing the victory of Bolshevism.*

On the 3rd of April, Lenin arrived in St. Petersburg from abroad. Only from that moment does the Bolshevik Party begin to speak out loud, and, what is more important, with its own voice.

For Bolshevism the first months of the revolution had been a period of bewilderment and vacillation. In the "manifesto" of the Bolshevik Central Committee, drawn up just after the victory of the insurrection, we read that "the workers of the shops and factories, and likewise the mutinied troops, must immediately elect their representatives to the Provisional Revolutionary Government." The manifesto was printed in the official organ of the Soviet without comment or objection, as though the question were a purely academic one. But the leading Bolsheviks themselves also regarded their slogans as purely demonstrative. They behaved not like representatives of a proletarian party preparing an independent struggle for power, but like the left wing of a democracy, which, having announced its principles, intended for an indefinite time to play the part of loyal opposition.

from *History of the Russian Revolution*, Vol. I, by Leon Trotsky, pp. 285-292, 329-331

Sukhanov asserts that at the sitting of the Executive Committee on March 1, the central question at issue was merely as to the conditions of the handing over of power. Against the thing itself—the formation of a bourgeois government—not one voice was raised, notwithstanding that out of thirty-nine members of the Executive Committee, eleven were Bolsheviks or their adherents, and moreover three members of the Bolshevik center, Zalutsky, Shliapnikov, and [Vyacheslav M.] Molotov,\* were present at the sitting.

In the Soviet on the next day, according to the report of Shliapnikov himself, out of 400 deputies present, only 19 voted against the transfer of power to the bourgeoisie—and this although there were already forty in the Bolshevik faction. The voting itself passed off in a purely formal parliamentary manner, without any clear counterproposition from the Bolsheviks, without conflict, and without any agitation whatever in the Bolshevik press.

On the 4th of March, the Bureau of the Bolshevik Central Committee adopted a resolution on the counterrevolutionary character of the Provisional Government, and the necessity of steering a course towards the democratic dictatorship of the proletariat and the peasantry. The St. Petersburg committee, rightly regarding this resolution as academic—since it gave no directives for today's action—approached the problem from the opposite angle. "Taking cognizance of the resolution on the Provisional Government adopted by the Soviet," it announces that "it will not oppose the power of the Provisional Government in so far as," etc. . . . In essence this was the position of the Mensheviks and Social Revolutionaries—only moved back to the second-line trenches. This openly opportunist resolution of the St. Petersburg committee contradicted only in a formal way the resolution of the Central Committee, whose academic character had meant nothing politically but putting up with an accomplished fact.

This readiness to submit silently, or with reservations, to the government of the bourgeoisie did not have by any means the entire sympathy of the party. The Bolshevik workers met the Provisional Government from the first as a hostile rampart unexpectedly grown up in their path. The

\*Zalutsky, Shliapnikov, and Molotov composed the central Bolshevik staff in Petrograd before the arrival of the principal leaders from exile and abroad.

Vyborg Committee\* held meetings of thousands of workers and soldiers, which almost unanimously adopted resolutions on the necessity for a seizure of power by the soviets. An active participant in this agitation, Dingelstedt, testifies: "There was not one meeting, not one workers' meeting, which would have voted down such a resolution from us if there had only been somebody to present it." The Mensheviks and Social Revolutionaries were afraid in those first days to appear openly before audiences of workers and soldiers with their formulation of the question of power. A resolution of the Vyborg workers, in view of its popularity, was printed and pasted up as a placard. But the St. Petersburg Committee put an absolute ban upon this resolution, and the Vyborg workers were compelled to submit.

On the question of the social content of the revolution and the prospects of its development, the position of the Bolshevik leadership was no less cloudy. Shliapnikov recalls: "We agreed with the Mensheviks that we were passing through the period of the breakdown of feudal relations, and that in their place would appear all kind of 'freedoms' proper to bourgeois relations." *Pravda* said in its first number: "The fundamental problem is to establish a democratic republic." In an instruction to the workers' deputies, the Moscow Committee\*\* announced: "The proletariat aims to achieve freedom for the struggle for socialism, its ultimate goal." This traditional reference to the "ultimate goal" sufficiently emphasizes the historic distance from socialism. Farther than this nobody ventured. The fear to go beyond the boundaries of a democratic revolution dictated a policy of waiting, of accommodation, and of actual retreat before the compromisers.

It is easy to imagine how heavily this political characterlessness of the center influenced the provinces. We will confine ourselves to the testimony of one of the Saratov\*\*\* organizations: "Our party after taking an active part in the insurrection has evidently lost its influence with the masses, and this has been caught up by the Mensheviks and Social

\*Vyborg was one of the main industrial and working class districts of St. Petersburg. The Vyborg Committee of the Bolsheviks was made up entirely of workers from the large factories there.

\*\*The Moscow Committee was the leading body of the Bolsheviks in the second urban center of the revolution.

\*\*\*Capital of the Saratov region, on the Volga, 495 miles southeast of Moscow.



Revolutionaries. Nobody knew what the slogans of the Bolsheviks were. . . . It was a very unpleasant picture."

The left Bolsheviks, especially the workers, tried with all their force to break through this quarantine. But they did not know how to refute the premise about the bourgeois character of the revolution and the danger of an isolation of the proletariat. They submitted, gritting their teeth, to the directions of the leaders. There were various conflicting currents in Bolshevism from the very first day, but no one of them carried its thoughts through to the end. *Pravda* reflected this cloudy and unstable intellectual state of the party and did not bring any unity into it. The situation became still more complicated toward the middle of March, after the arrival from exile of Kamenev\* and [Joseph V.] Stalin, who abruptly turned the helm of official party policy to the right.

Although a Bolshevik almost from the very birth of Bolshevism, Kamenev had always stood on the right flank of the party. Not without theoretical foundations or political instinct, and with a large experience of factional struggle in Russia and a store of political observations made in Western Europe, Kamenev grasped better than most Bolsheviks the general ideas of Lenin, but he grasped them only in order to give them the mildest possible interpretation in practice. You could not expect from him either independence of judgment or initiative in action. A distinguished propagandist, orator, journalist, not brilliant but thoughtful, Kamenev was especially valuable for negotiations with other parties and reconnoiters in other social circles—although from such excursions he always brought back with him a bit of some mood alien to the party. These characteristics of Kamenev were so obvious that almost nobody ever misjudged him as a political figure. Sukhanov remarks in him an absence of "sharp corners." "It is always necessary to lead him on a tow-line," he says. "He may resist a little, but not strongly." Stankevich writes to the same effect: Kamenev's attitude to his enemies "was so gentle that it seemed as though he himself were ashamed of the irreconcilableness of his position; in the committee he was certainly

\*Lev Kamenev. Prominent Old Bolshevik. Joined Social Democratic party in 1901 as a student in Moscow. Edited *Pravda* in 1914; chairman, Moscow Soviet, 1918–26; member of the Central Committee 1917–27. Intimate coworker of Lenin, brother-in-law of Trotsky. Executed by Stalin after first Moscow Trial.

not an enemy but merely an opposition." There is little to add to that.

Stalin was a totally different type of Bolshevik, both in his psychological makeup and in the character of his party work: a strong but theoretically and politically primitive organizer. Whereas Kamenev as a publicist stayed for many years abroad with Lenin, where stood the theoretical forge of the party, Stalin as a so-called "*practical*" without theoretical viewpoint, without broad political interests, and without a knowledge of foreign languages, was inseparable from the Russian soil. Such party workers appeared abroad only on short visits to receive instructions, discuss their further problems, and return again to Russia. Stalin was distinguished among the practicals for energy, persistence, and inventiveness in the matter of moves behind the scenes. Where Kamenev, as a natural result of his character, felt "embarrassed" by the practical conclusions of Bolshevism, Stalin on the contrary was inclined to defend the practical conclusions which he adopted without any mitigation whatever, uniting insistence with rudeness.

Notwithstanding their opposite characters, it was no accident that Kamenev and Stalin occupied a common position at the beginning of the revolution: they supplemented each other. A revolutionary conception without a revolutionary will is like a watch with a broken spring. Kamenev was always behind the time—or rather beneath the tasks—of the revolution. But the absence of a broad political conception condemns the most willful revolutionist to indecisiveness in the presence of vast and complicated events. Stalin, the empiric, was open to alien influences, not on the side of will but on the side of intellect. Thus it was that this publicist without decision, and this organizer without intellectual horizon, carried Bolshevism in March, 1917, to the very boundaries of Menshevism. Stalin proved even less capable than Kamenev of developing an independent position in the Executive Committee, which he entered as a representative of the party. There is to be found in its reports and its press not one proposal, announcement, or protest, in which Stalin expressed the Bolshevik point of view in opposition to the fawning of the "democracy" at the feet of liberalism. Sukhanov says in his *Notes of the Revolution*: "Among the Bolsheviks, besides Kamenev, there appeared in the Executive Committee in those days Stalin. . . . During

the time of his modest activity in the Executive Committee he gave me the impression—and not only me—of a gray spot which would sometimes give out a dim and inconsequential light. There is really nothing more to be said about him.” Although Sukhanov obviously underestimates Stalin as a whole, he nevertheless correctly describes his political characterlessness in the Executive Committee of the Compromisers.

On the 14th day of March, the manifesto “to the people of the whole world,” interpreting the victory of the February revolution in the interests of the Entente,\* and signifying the triumph of a new republican social patriotism of the French stamp, was adopted by the Soviet *unanimously*. That meant a considerable success for Kamenev and Stalin, but one evidently attained without much struggle. *Pravda* spoke of it as a “conscious compromise between different tendencies represented in the Soviet.” It is necessary to add that this compromise involved a direct break with the tendency of Lenin, which was not represented in the Soviet at all.

Kamenev, a member of the emigrant editorial staff of the central organ, Stalin, a member of the Central Committee, and Muranov, a deputy in the Duma who had also returned from Siberia, removed the old editors of *Pravda*, who had occupied a too “left” position, and on the 15th of March, relying on their somewhat problematical rights, took the paper into their own hands. In the program announcement of the new editorship, it was declared that the Bolsheviks would decisively support the Provisional Government “in so far as it struggles against reaction or counterrevolution.” The new editors expressed themselves no less categorically upon the question of war: While the German army obeys its emperor, the Russian soldier must “stand firmly at his post answering bullet with bullet and shell with shell.” “Our slogan is not the meaningless ‘down with war.’ Our slogan is pressure upon the Provisional Government with the aim of compelling it . . . to make an attempt to induce all the warring countries to open immediate negotiations . . . and until then every man remains at his fighting post!” Both the idea and its formulation are those of the defensists. This program of pressure upon an imperialist government with the aim of “inducing” it to adopt a peace-loving form

\*World War I alliance of England, France, and Russia against Germany and Austro-Hungary.

of activity, was the program of [Karl] Kautsky in Germany, Jean Longuet\* in France, MacDonald in England. It was anything but the program of Lenin, who was calling for the overthrow of imperialist rule. Defending itself against the patriotic press, *Pravda* went even further: "All 'defeatism,'" it said, "or rather what an indiscriminating press protected by the Tsar's censorship has branded with that name, died at the moment when the first revolutionary regiment appeared on the streets of St. Petersburg." This was a direct abandonment of Lenin. "Defeatism" was not invented by a hostile press under the protection of a censorship, it was proclaimed by Lenin in the formula: "The defeat of Russia is the lesser evil." The appearance of the first revolutionary regiment, and even the overthrow of the monarchy, did not alter the imperialist character of the war. "The day of the first issue of the transformed *Pravda*," says Shliapnikov, "was a day of rejoicing for the defensists. The whole Tauride Palace,\*\* from the businessmen in the committee of the State Duma to the very heart of the revolutionary democracy, the Executive Committee, was brimful of one piece of news: the victory of the moderate and reasonable Bolsheviks over the extremists. In the Executive Committee itself they met us with venomous smiles. . . . When that number of *Pravda* was received in the factories, it produced a complete bewilderment among the members of the party and its sympathizers, and a sarcastic satisfaction among its enemies. . . . The indignation in the party locals was enormous, and when the proletarians found out that *Pravda* had been seized by three former editors arriving from Siberia, they demanded their expulsion from the party." *Pravda* was soon compelled to print a sharp protest from the Vyborg district: "If the paper does not want to lose the confidence of the workers, it must and will bring the light of revolutionary consciousness, no matter how painful it may be, to the bourgeois owls." These protests from below

\*Kautsky was the foremost theoretician of the Second International and the German Social Democracy, who steered a middle course between Eduard Bernstein's revisionism and Rosa Luxemburg's radicalism. Longuet was a leader of the French Socialist party, editor of its organ *Le Populaire*, grandson of Karl Marx.

\*\*The Duma met in the right wing of this St. Petersburg building while the Soviet was formed and held its meetings during the first months of the revolution in the left wing of the same palace.

compelled the editors to become more cautious in their expressions, but did not change their policy. Even the first article of Lenin which got there from abroad passed by the minds of the editors. They were steering a rightward course all along the line. "In our agitation," writes Dingelstedt, a representative of the left wing, "we had to take up the principle of the dual power . . . and demonstrate the inevitability of this roundabout road to that same worker and soldier mass which, during two weeks of intensive political life, had been educated in a wholly different understanding of its tasks."

The policy of the party throughout the whole country naturally followed that of *Pravda*. In many soviets, resolutions about fundamental problems were now adopted unanimously; the Bolsheviks simply bowed down to the Soviet majority. At a conference of the soviets of the Moscow region, the Bolsheviks joined in the resolution of the social patriots on the war. And finally at the All-Russian Conference of the representatives of eighty-two soviets at the end of March and the beginning of April, the Bolsheviks voted for the official resolution on the question of power, which was defended by Dan.\* This extraordinary political rapprochement with the Mensheviks caused a widespread tendency towards unification. In the provinces the Bolsheviks and Mensheviks entered into united organizations. The Kamenev-Stalin faction was steadily converting itself into a left flank of the so-called revolutionary democracy, and was taking part in the mechanics of parliamentary "pressure" in the *couloirs* upon the bourgeoisie, supplementing this with a similar pressure upon the democracy. . . .

It remains to ask—and this is no unimportant question, although easier to ask than answer: How would the revolution have developed if Lenin had not reached Russia in April, 1917? If our exposition demonstrates and proves anything at all, we hope it proves that Lenin was not a demiurge of the revolution process, that he merely entered into a chain of objective historic forces. But he was a great link in that chain. The dictatorship of the proletariat was to be inferred from the whole situation, but it had still to be established. It could not be established without a party. The

\*Theodor Dan, Menshevik leader, active in the Soviets, member of the All-Russian Soviet Executive Committee until the October insurrection.

party could fulfill its mission only after understanding it. For that Lenin was needed. Until his arrival, not one of the Bolshevik leaders dared to make a diagnosis of the revolution. The leadership of Kamenev and Stalin was tossed by the course of events to the right, to the Social Patriots: between Lenin and Menshevism the revolution left no place for intermediate positions. Inner struggle in the Bolshevik Party was absolutely unavoidable. Lenin's arrival merely hastened the process. His personal influence shortened the crisis. Is it possible, however, to say confidently that the party without him would have found its road? We would by no means make bold to say that. The factor of time is decisive here, and it is difficult in retrospect to tell time historically. Dialectic materialism at any rate has nothing in common with fatalism. Without Lenin the crisis, which the opportunist leadership was inevitably bound to produce, would have assumed an extraordinarily sharp and protracted character. The conditions of war and revolution, however, would not allow the party a long period for fulfilling its mission. Thus it is by no means excluded that a disoriented and split party might have let slip the revolutionary opportunity for many years. The role of personality arises before us here on a truly gigantic scale. It is necessary only to understand that role correctly, taking personality as a link in the historic chain.

The "sudden" arrival of Lenin from abroad after a long absence, the furious cry raised by the press around his name, his clash with all the leaders of his own party and his quick victory over them—in a word, the external envelope of circumstance—make easy in this case a mechanical contrasting of the person, the hero, the genius, against the objective conditions, the mass, the party. In reality, such a contrast is completely one-sided. Lenin was not an accidental element in the historic development, but a product of the whole past of Russian history. He was embedded in it with deepest roots. Along with the vanguard of the workers, he had lived through their struggle in the course of the preceding quarter century. The "accident" was not his interference in the events, but rather that little straw with which Lloyd George tried to block his path. Lenin did not oppose the party from outside, but was himself its most complete expression. In educating it he had educated himself in it. His divergence from the ruling circles of the Bolsheviks meant the struggle of the future of the party against its past. If Lenin had not

been artificially separated from the party by the conditions of emigration and war, the external mechanics of the crisis would not have been so dramatic and would not have overshadowed to such a degree the inner continuity of the party development. From the extraordinary significance which Lenin's arrival received, it should only be inferred that leaders are not accidentally created, that they are gradually chosen out and trained up in the course of decades, that they cannot be capriciously replaced, that their mechanical exclusion from the struggle gives the party a living wound, and in many cases may paralyze it for a long period.

### *Speech in the Soviet Against the Coalition Government*

*On the request of the Russian Provisional Government Trotsky was released from the Canadian concentration camp where he had been interned by British authorities. On May 17, 1917, he arrived in St. Petersburg, where he was greeted by cheering crowds at the railroad station. The next day he made his first speech to the St. Petersburg (then called Petrograd) Soviet. This speech created a sensation. Trotsky was advocating the same line of policy as Lenin: against socialist participation in the bourgeois government, for "all power to the Soviets."*

News of the Russian Revolution found us in New York, but even in that great country, where the bourgeoisie dominates as nowhere else, the Russian Revolution has done its work. The American laborer has had some unfavorable things said about him. It is said that he does not support the revolution. But had you seen the American workman in February, you would have been doubly proud of your revolution. You would have understood that it has shaken not only Russia, not only Europe, but America. It

from *Documents of Russian History, 1914-1917* by Frank A. Golder, pp. 357-358

would have been clear to you, as to me, that it has opened a new epoch, an epoch of blood and iron, not in a war of nations, but in a war of the oppressed classes against the domineering classes. At all the meetings, the workers asked me to give you their warmest greetings. But I must tell you something about the Germans. I had an opportunity to come in close contact with a group of German proletarians. You ask me where? In a war prison camp. The bourgeois English Government arrested us as enemies and placed us in a war prison camp in Canada. About one hundred German officers and eight hundred sailors were here. They asked me how it happened that we, Russian citizens became prisoners of the English. When I told them that we were prisoners, not because we were Russians, but because we were Socialists, they said that they were slaves of their Government, of their William [Kaiser Wilhelm]. . . .

This talk did not please the German officers, and they made a complaint to the English commandant that we were undermining the loyalty of the sailors to the Kaiser. The English captain, anxious to preserve the allegiance of the German sailors to the Kaiser, forbade me to lecture to them. The sailors protested to the commandant. When we departed, the sailors accompanied us with music and shouted "Down with William! Down with the bourgeoisie! Long live the united international proletariat!" That which passed through the brains of the German sailors in passing through the minds of workers in all countries. The Russian Revolution is the prologue to the world revolution.

But I cannot conceal that I do not agree with everything that is going on here. I regard it as dangerous to join the Ministry. I do not believe that the Ministry can perform miracles. We had, before, a dual government, due to the opposing points of view of two classes. The coalition government will not remove that duality, but will merely transfer it into the Ministry. The revolution will not perish because of a coalition government. We should, however, keep three precepts in mind: 1. Trust not the bourgeoisie. 2. Control our own leaders. 3. Have confidence in our own revolutionary strength.

What do we recommend? I think that the next step should be the handing over all power to the Soviet of Workers' and Soldiers' Deputies. Only with authority concentrated in one hand [i.e. in the Soviet] can Russia be saved. Long live the Russian Revolution as the prologue to the world revolution.



## **Statement of Solidarity with the Bolshevik Leaders**

*In the following letter (dated July 23, 1917) addressed to the Provisional Government, Trotsky speaks as a fighter in the heat of battle. He wrote it after the "July days" of 1917. Immense and bloody demonstrations had taken place in St. Petersburg. The Bolshevik party, under attack from all other parties, was branded as an "agency of German imperialism" and was persecuted and driven underground. Lenin, being slandered as a German spy, fled from the Russian capital; and Trotsky, nominally not yet a member of the Bolshevik party, was about to be imprisoned. Just before his arrest he came out bravely and defiantly to defend the persecuted Bolsheviks and to proclaim his solidarity with them.*

### **Citizen Ministers:**

I have learned that in connection with the events of July 16-17, a warrant has been issued for the arrest of Lenin, Zinoviev, and Kamenev, but not for me. I should like, therefore, to call your attention to the following.

1. I agree with the main thesis of Lenin, Zinoviev, and Kamenev, have advocated it in the journal *Vpered* and in my public speeches.

2. My attitude toward the events of July 16-17 was the same as theirs.

a. Kamenev, Zinoviev, and I first learned of the proposed plans of the Machine-Gun and other regiments at the joint meeting of the Bureaus [Executive Committees] on July 16. We took immediate steps to stop the soldiers from coming out. Zinoviev and Kamenev put themselves in touch with Bolsheviks, and I with the "inward" organization to which I belong.

from *Documents of Russian History, 1914-1917* by Frank A. Golder, pp. 460-462

b. When, however, notwithstanding our efforts, the demonstration did take place, my comrade Bolsheviks and I made numerous speeches in front of the Tauride Palace, in which we came out in favor of the main slogan of the crowd: "All Power to the Soviets," but we, at the same time, called on those demonstrating, both the soldiers and civilians, to return to their homes and barracks in a peaceful and orderly manner.

c. At a conference which took place at the Tauride Palace late in the night of July 16-17 between some Bolsheviks and ward organizations, I supported the motion of Kamenev that everything should be done to prevent a recurrence of the demonstration on July 17. When, however, it was learned through the agitators, who arrived from the different wards, that the regiments and factory workers had already decided to come out, and that it was impossible to hold back the crowd until the government crisis was over, all those present agreed that the best thing to do was to direct the demonstration along peaceful lines and to ask the masses to leave their guns at home.

d. In the course of the day of July 17, which I spent in the Tauride Palace, I and the Bolshevik comrades more than once urged this course on the crowd.

3. The fact that I am not connected with *Pravda* and am not a member of the Bolshevik Party is not due to political differences, but to certain circumstances in our party history which have now lost all significance.

4. The attempt of the papers to convey the impression that I said that I have "nothing to do" with the Bolsheviks has about as much truth in it as the report that I have asked the authorities to protect me from the "violence of the mob," or the hundred other false rumors of that same press.

5. From all that I have said, it is clear that you cannot logically exclude me from the warrant of arrest which you have made out for Lenin, Kamenev, and Zinoviev. There can also be no doubt in your minds that I am just as uncompromising a political opponent of the Provisional Government as the above named comrades. Leaving me out merely emphasizes the counterrevolutionary high-handedness that lies behind the attack on Lenin, Zinoviev, and Kamenev.

## *The Congress of the Soviet Dictatorship*

*Trotsky was placed at the head of the St. Petersburg Soviet when the Bolsheviki won a majority of the workers' and soldiers' deputies in September. The next month he directed, through the Soviet's Military-Revolutionary Committee, the uprising against the Provisional Government of [Aleksandr F.] Kerensky. The first Bolshevik government was formed under Lenin; and its establishment as a proletarian dictatorship was ratified by the All-Russian Congress of Soviets convened in St. Petersburg on October 25 (November 7). Here Trotsky records this momentous event to which he had contributed so much as fighter and leader.*

In Smolny on the 25th of October the most democratic of all parliaments in the world's history was to meet. Who knows—perhaps also the most important.

Having got free of the influence of compromisist intellectuals, the local soviets had sent up for the most part workers and soldiers. The majority of them were people without big names, but who had proved themselves in action and won lasting confidence in their own localities. From the active army it was almost exclusively rank-and-file soldiers who had run the blockade of army committees and headquarters and come here as delegates. A majority of them had begun to live a political life with the revolution. They had been formed by an experience of eight months. They knew little, but knew it well. The outward appearance of the Congress proclaimed its makeup. The officers' chevrons, the eyeglasses and neckties of intellectuals to be seen at the first Congress had almost completely disappeared. A grey color prevailed uninterruptedly, in costumes and in faces. All had worn out their clothes during the war. Many of the city workers had provided themselves with soldiers' coats. The trench delegates were by no means a pretty picture: long unshaven, in old torn trenchcoats, with heavy

from *History of the Russian Revolution*, Vol. III, by Leon Trotsky, pp. 302, 323-325, 327-329, 337-340, 342-343

*papakhi* [tall fur hats] on their disheveled hair, often with cotton sticking out through a hole, with coarse, weather-beaten faces, heavy cracked hands, fingers yellowed with tobacco, buttons torn off, belts hanging loose, and long un-oiled boots wrinkled and rusty. The plebeian nation had for the first time sent up an honest representation made in its own image and not retouched. . . .

Lenin, whom the Congress has not yet seen, is given the floor for a report on peace. His appearance in the tribune evokes a tumultuous greeting. The trench delegates gaze with all their eyes at this mysterious being whom they had been taught to hate and whom they have learned without seeing him to love. "Now Lenin, gripping the edges of the reading stand, let little winking eyes travel over the crowd as he stood there waiting, apparently oblivious to the long rolling ovation, which lasted several minutes. When it finished, he said simply, 'We shall now proceed to construct the socialist order.'"

The minutes of the Congress are not preserved. The parliamentary stenographers, invited in to record the debates, had abandoned Smolny along with the Mensheviks and Social Revolutionaries. That was one of the first episodes in the campaign of sabotage. The secretarial notes have been lost without a trace in the abyss of events. There remain only the hasty and tendential newspaper reports, written to the tune of the artillery or the grinding of teeth in the political struggle. Lenin's speeches have suffered especially. Owing to his swift delivery and the complicated construction of his sentences, they were not easily recorded even in more favorable conditions. That initial statement which John Reed\* puts in the mouth of Lenin does not appear in any of the newspaper accounts. But it is wholly in the spirit of the orator. Reed could not have made it up. Just in that way Lenin must surely have begun his speech at the Congress of Soviets—simply, without unctiousness, with inflexible confidence: "We shall now proceed to construct the socialist order."

But for this it was first of all necessary to end the war. From his exile in Switzerland Lenin had thrown out the slogan: Convert the imperialist war into a civil war. Now it was time to convert the victorious civil war into peace. The speaker began immediately by reading the draft of a

\*American revolutionary journalist, author of *Ten Days That Shook the World*.

declaration to be published by the government still to be elected. The text had not been distributed, technical equipment being still very weak. The Congress drank in every word of the document as pronounced.

"The workers' and peasants' government created by the revolution of October 24-25, and resting upon the soviets of workers', soldiers' and peasants' deputies, proposes to all the warring peoples and their governments to open immediate negotiations for a just, democratic peace." Just conditions exclude annexations and indemnities. By annexations is to be understood the forceful accession of alien peoples or the retention of them against their will, either in Europe or in remote lands over the seas. "Herewith the government declares that it by no means considers the above indicated conditions of peace ultimative—that is, it agrees to examine any other conditions," demanding only the quickest possible opening of negotiations and the absence of any secrecy in their conduct. On its part the soviet government abolishes secret diplomacy and undertakes to publish the secret treaties concluded before October 25, 1917. Everything in these treaties directed toward the accruing of profit and privilege to the Russian landlords and capitalists, and the oppression of other peoples by the Great Russians, "the government declares unconditionally and immediately annulled." In order to enter upon negotiations, it is proposed to conclude an immediate armistice, for not less than three months at least. The workers' and peasants' government addresses its proposals simultaneously to "the governments and peoples of all warring countries... especially the conscious workers of the three most advanced countries," England, France and Germany, confident that it is they who will "help us successfully carry through the business of peace and therewith the business of liberating the toilers and the exploited masses of the population from all slavery and all exploitation."...

Listen nations! The revolution offers you peace. It will be accused of violating treaties. But of this it is proud. To break up the leagues of bloody predation is the greatest historic service. The Bolsheviks have dared to do it. They alone have dared. Pride surges up of its own accord. Eyes shine. All are on their feet. No one is smoking now. It seems as though no one breathes. The presidium, the delegates, the guests, the sentries, join in a hymn of insurrection

and brotherhood. "Suddenly, by common impulse"—the story will soon be told by John Reed, observer and participant, chronicler and poet of the insurrection—"we found ourselves on our feet, mumbling together into the smooth lifting unison of the Internationale. A grizzled old soldier was sobbing like a child. Alexandra Kollontai rapidly winked the tears back. The immense sound rolled through the hall, burst windows and doors, and soared into the quiet sky." Did it go altogether into the sky? Did it not go also to the autumn trenches, that hatchwork upon unhappy, crucified Europe, to her devastated cities and villages, to her mothers and wives in mourning? "*Arise ye prisoners of starvation! Arise ye wretched of the earth!*" The words of the song were freed of all qualifications. They fused with the decree of the government, and hence resounded with the force of a direct act. Everyone felt greater and more important in that hour. The heart of the revolution enlarged to the width of the whole world. "We will achieve emancipation. . . ." The spirit of independence, of initiative, of daring, those joyous feelings of which the oppressed in ordinary conditions are deprived—the revolution had brought them now. ". . . with our own hand!" The omnipotent hand of those millions who had overthrown the monarchy and the bourgeoisie would now strangle the war. The Red Guard from the Vyborg district, the gray soldier with his scar, the old revolutionist who had served his years at hard labor, the young black-bearded sailor from the *Aurora*—all vowed to carry through to the end this "last and deciding fight." "We will build our own new world!" We will build! In that word, eagerly spoken from the heart, was included already the future years of the civil war and the coming five-year periods of labor and privation. "Who was nothing shall be all!" All! If the actualities of the past have often been turned into song, why shall not a song be turned into the actuality of the future? Those trenchcoats no longer seemed the costumes of galley slaves. The *papakhi* with their holes and torn cotton took a new aspect above those gleaming eyes. "The race of man shall rise again!" Is it possible to believe that it will not rise from the misery and humiliation, the blood and filth of this war?"

"The whole praesidium, with Lenin at its head, stood and sang with excited enraptured faces and shining eyes." Thus testifies a skeptic, gazing with heavy feelings upon an alien triumph. "How much I wanted to join it," confesses Suk-

hanov, "to fuse in one feeling and mood with that mass and its leaders! But I could not." The last sound of the anthem died away, but the Congress remained standing, a fused human mass enchanted by the greatness of that which they had experienced. And the eyes of many rested on the short, sturdy figure of the man in the tribune with his extraordinary head, his high cheekbones and simple features, altered now by the shaved beard, and with that gaze of his small, slightly Mongol eyes which looked straight through everything. For four months he had been absent. His very name had almost separated itself from any living image. But no. He was not a myth. There he stood among his own—how many now of "his own"!—holding the sheets of a message of peace to the peoples of the world in his hand. Even those nearest, those who knew well his place in the party, for the first time fully realized what he meant to the revolution, to the people, to the peoples. It was he who had taught them; it was he who had brought them up. Somebody's voice from the depth of the hall shouted a word of greeting to the leader. The hall seemed only to have awaited the signal. Long live Lenin! The anxieties endured, the doubts overcome, pride of initiative, triumph of victory, gigantic hopes—all poured out together in one volcanic eruption of gratitude and rapture. The skeptical observer dryly remarks: "Undoubted enthusiasm of mood. . . . They greeted Lenin, shouted hurrah, threw their caps in the air. They sang the Funeral March in memory of the victims of the war—and again applause, shouts, throwing of caps in the air." . . .

"Trotsky rose to defend a government of Bolsheviks only," writes Sukhanov, himself wholly in sympathy with Avilov and having inspired Karelin\* behind the scenes. "He was very clear, sharp, and in much absolutely right. But he refused to understand in what consisted the center of the argument of his opponents. . . ." The center of the argument consisted of an ideal diagonal. In March they had tried to draw it between the bourgeoisie and the compromisist soviets. Now Sukhanov dreamed of a diagonal between the compromisist democracy and the dictatorship of the proletariat. But revolutions do not develop along diagonals.

"They have tried to frighten us more than once with a possible isolation of the Left Wing," said Trotsky. "Some

\*Karelin was a spokesman for the Left Social Revolutionaries.

days back when the question of insurrection was first openly raised, they told us that we were headed for destruction. And in reality if you judged the grouping of forces by the political press, then insurrection threatened us with inevitable ruin. Against us stood not only the counterrevolutionary bands, but also the defensists of all varieties. The Left Social Revolutionaries, only one wing of them, courageously worked with us in the Military Revolutionary Committee. The rest occupied a position of watchful neutrality. And nevertheless even with these unfavorable circumstances and when it seemed that we were abandoned by all, the insurrection triumphed. . . .

"If the real forces were actually against us, how could it happen that we won the victory almost without bloodshed? No, it is not we who are isolated, but the government and the so-called democrats. With their wavering, their compromisism, they have erased themselves from the ranks of the authentic democracy. Our great superiority as a party lies in the fact that we have formed a coalition with the class forces, creating a union of the workers, soldiers, and poorest peasants.

"Political groupings disappear, but the fundamental interests of the classes remain. That party conquers which is able to feel out and satisfy the fundamental demands of a class. . . . We pride ourselves upon the coalition of our garrison, chiefly composed of peasants, with the working class. This coalition has been tried by fire. The St. Petersburg garrison and proletariat went hand in hand into that great struggle which is the classic example in the history of revolutions among all peoples.

"Avilov has spoken of the vast difficulties which stand before us. To remove those difficulties he proposes that we form a coalition. But he makes no attempt to lay bare his formula and tell us what coalition. A coalition of groups, or classes, or simply a coalition of newspapers? . . .

"They tell us the split in the democracy is a misunderstanding. When Kerensky is sending shock troops against us, when with the consent of the Central Executive Committee we are deprived of the telephone at the most critical moment of our struggle with the bourgeoisie, when they deal us blow after blow—is it possible to talk of misunderstanding?

"Avilov says to us: There is little bread, we must have a coalition with the defensists. Do you imagine that this



coalition will increase the quantity of bread? The problem of bread is the problem of a program of action. The struggle with economic collapse demands a definite system from below, and not political groupings on top.

"Avilov speaks of a union with the peasantry: But again of what peasantry is he talking? Today and right here, a representative of the peasants of Tver province demanded the arrest of Avksentiev.\* We must choose between this Tver peasant and Avksentiev who has filled the prison with members of the peasant committees. A coalition with the kulak [wealthy farmer] elements of the peasantry we firmly reject in the name of a coalition of the working class and the poorer peasant. We are with the Tver peasants against Avksentiev. We are with them to the end and inseparably.

"Whoever now chases the shadow of coalition is totally cutting himself off from life. The Left Social Revolutionaries will lose support among the masses to the extent that they venture to oppose our party. Every group which opposes the party of the proletariat, with whom the village poor have united, cuts himself off from the revolution.

"Openly and before the face of the whole people we raised the banner of insurrection. The political formula of this insurrection was: All power to the soviets—through the Congress of Soviets. They tell us: You did not await the Congress with your uprising. We thought of waiting, but Kerensky would not wait. The counterrevolutionists were not dreaming. We as a party considered this our task: to make it genuinely possible for the Congress of Soviets to seize the power. If the Congress had been surrounded with junkers, how could it have seized the power? In order to achieve this task, a party was needed which would wrench the power from the hands of the counterrevolution and say to you: 'Here is the power and you've got to take it!'

"Notwithstanding that the defensists of all shades stopped at nothing in their struggle against us, we did not throw them out. We proposed to the Congress as a whole to take the power. How utterly you distort the perspective, when after all that has happened you talk from this tribune of our irreconcilability. When a party surrounded with a

\*Avksentiev was leader of the Social Revolutionary party, president of the Executive Committee of the Peasants' Congress, president of the Council of the Republic, and Minister of the Interior in various of the coalition governments.

cloud of gunpowder smoke, comes up to them and says, 'Let us take the power together!' they run to the city дума and unite there with open counterrevolutionists! They are traitors to the revolution with whom we will never unite!

"For the struggle for peace, says Avilov, we must have a coalition with the compromisers. At the same time he acknowledges that the Allies do not want to make peace. . . . The Allied imperialists laughed, says Avilov, at the oleomargarine delegate Skobelev. Nevertheless if you form a bloc with the oleomargarine democrats, the cause of peace is assured!

"There are two roads in the struggle for peace. One road is to oppose to the Allied and enemy governments the moral and material force of revolution. The other is a bloc with Skobelev, which means a bloc with Tereshchenko\* and complete subjection to Allied imperialism. In our proclamation on peace we address ourselves simultaneously to the governments and the peoples. That is a purely formal symmetry. Of course we do not think to influence the imperialist governments with our proclamations, although as long as they exist we cannot ignore them. We rest all our hope on the possibility that our revolution will unleash the European revolution. If the revolting peoples of Europe do not crush imperialism, then we will be crushed—that is indubitable. Either the Russian revolution will raise the whirlwind of struggle in the west, or the capitalists of all countries will crush our revolution. . . ."

"There is a third road," says a voice from the benches.

"The third road," answers Trotsky, "is the road of the Central Executive Committee—on the one hand sending delegates to the West European workers, and on the other forming a union with the Kishkins and Konovalovs.\*\* That is a road of lies and hypocrisy which we will never enter.

"Of course we do not say that only the day of insurrection of the European workers will be the day that the peace treaty is signed. This also is possible: that the bourgeoisie, frightened by an approaching insurrection of the oppressed,

\*A member of the Constitutional Democrat party, Minister of Foreign Affairs in the reconstituted Provisional Government following Milukov's withdrawal.

\*\*Kishkin was a leader of the Moscow Kadets, Minister of Public Charities, close colleague of Kerensky; Konovalov was a Moscow industrialist, Minister of Trade and Industry in the first coalition and vice-president of the last coalition government.

will hasten to make peace. The dates are not set. The concrete forms cannot be foretold. It is important and it is necessary to define the method of struggle, a method identical in principle both in foreign and domestic politics. A union of the oppressed here and everywhere—that is our road.”

The delegates of the Congress, says John Reed, “greeted him with an immense crusading acclaim, kindling to the daring of it, with the thought of championing mankind.” At any rate it could not have entered the mind of any Bolshevik at that time to protest against placing the fate of the Soviet Republic, in an official speech in the name of the Bolshevik party, in direct dependence upon the development of the international revolution. . . .

The agenda of the Congress was completed! The soviet government was created. It had its program. The work could begin. And there was no lack of it. At 5:15 in the morning Kamenev closed the Constituent Congress of the soviet régime. To the stations! Home! To the front! To the factories and barracks! To the mines and the far-off villages! In the decrees of the Soviet, the delegates will carry the leaven of the proletarian revolution to all corners of the country.

On that morning the central organ of the Bolshevik party, again under the old name *Pravda*, wrote: “They wanted us to take the power alone, so that we alone should have to contend with the terrible difficulties confronting the country. . . . So be it! We take the power alone, relying upon the voice of the country and counting upon the friendly help of the European proletariat. But having taken the power, we will deal with the enemies of revolution and its saboteurs with an iron hand. They dreamed of a dictatorship of Kornilov. . . . We will give them the dictatorship of the proletariat. . . .”

## 6

### THE RED ARMY AND THE CIVIL WAR: 1918-1921

#### *Infantry Regulations and Orders of the General Staff of the Revolution*

*Trotsky organized and commanded the Red Army during the Civil War when the young Soviet Republic was forced to fight on twenty-one fronts against foreign intervention and internal counterrevolution. As Commissar of War and Naval Affairs, he strove to imbue the Red Army with the equalitarian ideals and the internationalist spirit of the socialist revolution. Here are two brief samples of his Regulations and Orders of the Day. The second order was a greeting to the Third World Congress of the Communist International held in Moscow on June 13, 1921.*

“You are an equal among comrades,” the Infantry Regulations instructed the Red Army man, “Your superiors are your more experienced and better educated brothers. In combat, during training, in the barracks, or at work you must obey them. Once you have left the barracks you are absolutely free. . . .” “If you are asked in what way you fight, you answer: ‘I fight with the rifle, the bayonet, and the machine gun. But I also fight with the word of truth. I address that to the enemy’s soldiers who are themselves workers and peasants so that they should know that in truth I am their brother, not their enemy.’”

from *The Prophet Unarmed: Trotsky, 1921-1929* by Isaac Deutscher, p. 26

#### Warriors of the Red Army!

For the third time the World Congress of the Communist  
from *Fourth International*, August, 1945, p. 237

International convenes in Moscow.

It is a great joy and honor for the workers, peasants, and Red soldiers of Russia to greet within the walls of the Red capital the best representatives of the world working class.

Red warriors! For three and a half years you have defended the first Toilers' Republic in the world against the uninterrupted predatory attempts and attacks of the brigands and oppressors of all countries. On the Volga and the Obi, on the Northern Dvina and the Neva, on the Berезина and the Dnieper, on the Don and the Kuban, you have fought and died under the banner of the International. You have shed your blood in defending Soviet Russia—the fortress of the world proletariat. At the same time you have defended the heart of Soviet Russia—Red Moscow. You have assured to the representatives of the world working class the opportunity to come together under your protection in order to elaborate the further ways and methods of waging the struggle against capitalist coercion—in the name of the fraternity, liberty, and happiness of all oppressed mankind.

On June 17, in the name of the entire Red Army, the Moscow garrison will solemnly greet our dear guests, our brothers in struggle. Revolutionary fighters—Red soldiers, commanders, commissars! Let us join in a fervent cheer for the Communist International!

### *Terrorism in War and Revolution*

*In 1920, in the military train from which he inspected the fronts of the civil war, Trotsky wrote Terrorism and Communism, a reply to Karl Kautsky's attacks upon the policies of the embattled Bolshevik government. He was not defending terrorism as such: "Methods of compulsion and terrorization . . ." he stated, "have up to now benefited and continue to benefit in an infinitely higher degree, the cause of reaction . . . than that of historical progress. . . ." Yet he defended against Kautsky and other pacifist critics "the historical justification of the proletarian revolution." "The root idea of the book is that history has not yet found any other way of securing mankind's progress than that of*

*pitting the revolutionary violence of the progressive class against the conservative violence of the reactionary classes." And he invoked examples from the revolutionary history of England, France, and the United States.*

.... In the seventeenth century England carried out two revolutions. The first, which brought forth great social upheavals and wars, brought amongst other things the execution of King Charles I, while the second ended happily with the accession of a new dynasty. The British bourgeoisie and its historians maintain quite different attitudes to these two revolutions: the first is for them a rising of the mob—the "Great Rebellion"; the second has been handed down under the title of the "Glorious Revolution." The reason for this difference in estimates was explained by the French historian, Augustin Thierry. In the first English revolution, in the "Great Rebellion," the active force was the people, while in the second the people were almost "silent." Hence, it follows that, in surroundings of class slavery, it is difficult to teach the oppressed masses good manners. When provoked to fury they use clubs, stones, fire, and the rope. The court historians of the exploiters are offended at this. But the great event in modern "bourgeois" history is, nonetheless, not the "Glorious Revolution," but the "Great Rebellion."

The greatest event in modern history after the Reformation and the "Great Rebellion," and far surpassing its two predecessors in significance, was the great French Revolution of the eighteenth century. To this classical revolution there was a corresponding classical terrorism. Kautsky is ready to forgive the terrorism of the Jacobins, acknowledging that they had no other way of saving the republic. But by this justification after the event no one is either helped or hindered. The Kautskies of the end of the eighteenth century (the leaders of the French Girondists) saw in the Jacobins the personification of evil. Here is a comparison, sufficiently instructive in its banality, between the Jacobins and the Girondists from the pen of one of the bourgeois French historians: "Both one side and the other desired the republic." But the Girondists "desired a free, legal, and merciful republic. The Montagnards desired a despotic and

terrorist republic. Both stood for the supreme power of the people; but the Girondist justly understood all by the people, while the Montagnards considered only the working class to be the people. That was why only to such persons, in the opinion of the Montagnards, did the supremacy belong." The antithesis between the noble champions of the Constituent Assembly and the bloodthirsty agents of the revolutionary dictatorship is here outlined fairly clearly, although in the political terms of the epoch.

The iron dictatorship of the Jacobins was evoked by the monstrously difficult position of revolutionary France. Here is what the bourgeois historian says of this period: "Foreign troops had entered French territory from four sides. In the north, the British and the Austrians, in Alsace, the Prussians, in Dauphine and up to Lyons, the Piedmontese, in Roussillon the Spaniards. And this at a time when civil war was raging at four different points: in Normandy, in the Vendée, at Lyons, and at Toulon." To this we must add internal enemies in the form of numerous secret supporters of the old régime, ready by all methods to assist the enemy.

The severity of the proletarian dictatorship in Russia, let us point out here, was conditioned by no less difficult circumstances. There was one continuous front, on the north and south, in the east and west. Besides the Russian White Guard armies of Kolchak, Denikin, and others, there are attacking Soviet Russia, simultaneously or in turn: Germans, Austrians, Czecho-Slovaks, Serbs, Poles, Ukrainians, Rumanians, French, British, Americans, Japanese, Finns, Estonians, Lithuanians. . . . In a country throttled by a blockade and strangled by hunger, there are conspiracies, risings, terrorist acts, and destruction of roads and bridges.

"The government, which had taken on itself the struggle with countless external and internal enemies, had neither money nor sufficient troops nor anything except boundless energy, enthusiastic support on the part of the revolutionary elements of the country, and the gigantic courage to take all measures necessary for the safety of the country, however arbitrary and severe they were." In such words did once upon a time Plekhanov describe the government of the—Jacobins.

Let us now turn to the revolution which took place in the second half of the nineteenth century, in the country of "democracy"—in the United States of North America. Although the question was not the abolition of property

altogether, but only of the abolition of property in Negroes, nevertheless the institutions of democracy proved absolutely powerless to decide the argument in a peaceful way. The Southern states, defeated at the presidential elections in 1860, decided by all possible means to regain the influence they had hitherto exerted in the question of slave-owning; and uttering, as was right, the proper sounding words about freedom and independence, rose in a slaveowners' insurrection. Hence inevitably followed all the later consequences of civil war. At the very beginning of the struggle, the military government in Baltimore imprisoned in Fort McHenry a few citizens, sympathizers with the slaveholding South, in spite of habeas corpus. The question of the lawfulness or the unlawfulness of such action became the object of fierce disputes among so-called "high authorities." The judge of the Supreme Court decided that the President had neither the right to suspend the operation of habeas corpus nor to give plenipotentiary powers to that end to the military authorities. "Such, in all probability, is the correct Constitutional solution of the question," says one of the first historians of the American Civil War [Lieut.-Colonel Fletcher]. "But the state of affairs was to such a degree critical and the necessity of taking decisive measures against the population of Baltimore so great, that not only the Government but the people of the United States also supported the most energetic measures."

Some goods that the rebellious South required were secretly supplied by the merchants of the North. Naturally, the Northerners had no other course but to introduce methods of repression. On August 6, 1861, the President confirmed a resolution of Congress as to "the confiscation of property used for insurrectionary purposes." The people, in the shape of the most democratic elements, were in favor of extreme measures. The Republican Party had a decided majority in the North, and persons suspected of secessionism, *i.e.*, of sympathizing with the rebellious Southern states, were subjected to violence. In some Northern towns, and even in the states of New England, famous for their order, the people frequently burst into the offices of newspapers which supported the revolting slaveowners and smashed their printing presses. It occasionally happened that reactionary publishers were smeared with tar, decorated with feathers, and carried in such array through the public squares until they swore an oath of loyalty to the Union.



The personality of a planter smeared in tar bore little resemblance to the "end-in-itself"; so that the categorical imperative of Kautsky suffered in the civil war of the states a considerable blow. But this is not all. "The government, on its part," the historian tells us, "adopted repressive measures of various kinds against publications holding views opposed to its own: and in a short time the hitherto free American press was reduced to a condition *scarcely superior to that prevailing in the autocratic European States.*" The same fate overtook the freedom of speech. "In this way," Lieut.-Colonel Fletcher continues, "the American people at this time denied itself the greater part of its freedom. It should be observed," he moralizes, "that *the majority of the people* was to such an extent occupied with the war, and to such a degree imbued with the readiness for any kind of sacrifice to attain its end, that it not only did not regret its vanished liberties, but scarcely even noticed their disappearance."

Infinitely more ruthlessly did the bloodthirsty slaveowners of the South employ their uncontrollable hordes. "Wherever there was a majority in favor of slavery," writes the Count of Paris, "public opinion behaved despotically to the minority. All who expressed pity for the national banner . . . were forced to be silent. But soon this itself became insufficient; as in all revolutions, the indifferent were forced to express their loyalty to the new order of things. . . . Those who did not agree to this were given up as a sacrifice to the hatred and violence of the mass of the people. . . . In each center of growing civilization (Southwestern states) vigilance committees were formed, composed of all those who had been distinguished by their extreme views in the electoral struggle. . . . A tavern was the usual place of their sessions, and a noisy orgy was mingled with a contemptible parody of public forms of justice. A few madmen, sitting around a desk on which gin and whisky flowed, judged their present and absent fellow citizens. The accused, even before having been questioned, could see the rope being prepared. He who did not appear at the court learned his sentence when falling under the bullets of the executioner concealed in the forest. . . ." This picture is extremely reminiscent of the scenes which day by day took place in the camps of Denikin, Kolchak, Yudenich, and the other heroes of Anglo-Franco-American "democracy." . . .

The Russian proletariat was the first to enter the path of socialist revolution, and the Russian bourgeoisie, politically helpless, was emboldened to struggle against its political and economic expropriation only because it saw its elder sister in all foreign countries still in power and still maintaining economic, political, and to a certain extent, military supremacy.

If our November revolution had taken place a few months, or even a few weeks, after the establishment of the rule of the proletariat in Germany, France, and England, there can be no doubt that our revolution would have been the most "peaceful," the most "bloodless" of all possible revolutions on this sinful earth. But this historical sequence—the most "natural" at the first glance, and, in any case, the most beneficial for the Russian working class—found itself infringed—not through our fault, but through the will of events. Instead of being the last, the Russian proletariat proved to be the first. It was just this circumstance, after the first period of confusion, that imparted desperation to the character of the resistance of the classes which had ruled in Russia previously, and forced the Russian proletariat, in a moment of the greatest peril, foreign attacks, and internal plots and insurrections, to have recourse to severe measures of State terror. No one will now say that those measures proved futile. But, perhaps, we are expected to consider them "intolerable"?

The working class, which seized power in battle, had as its object and its duty to establish that power unshakably, to guarantee its own supremacy beyond question, to destroy its enemies' hankering for a new upheaval, and thereby to make sure of carrying out Socialist reforms. Otherwise there would be no point in seizing power.

The revolution "logically" does not demand terrorism, just as "logically" it does not demand an armed insurrection. What a profound commonplace! But the revolution does require of the revolutionary class that it should attain its end by all methods at its disposal—if necessary, by an armed rising; if required, by terrorism. A revolutionary class which has conquered power with arms in its hands is bound to, and will, suppress, rifle in hand, all attempts to tear the power out of its hands. Where it has against it a hostile army, it will oppose to it its own army. Where it is confronted with armed conspiracy, attempt at murder, or rising,

it will hurl at the heads of its enemies an unsparing penalty. Perhaps Kautsky has invented other methods? Or does he reduce the whole question to the *degree* of repression, and recommend in all circumstances imprisonment instead of execution?

The question of the form of repression, or of its degree, of course, is not one of "principle." It is a question of expediency. In a revolutionary period, the old ruling party now overthrown, which does not reconcile itself with the stability of the new order, and proves this by its desperate struggle, cannot be terrorized by the threat of imprisonment, as it does not believe in the duration of the new order. It is just this simple but decisive fact that explains the widespread recourse to shooting in a civil war.

Or perhaps Kautsky wishes to say that execution is not expedient, that "classes cannot be cowed." This is untrue. Terror is helpless—and then only "in the long run"—if it is employed by reaction against a historically rising class. But terror can be very efficient against a reactionary class which does not want to leave the scene of operations. *Intimidation* is a powerful weapon of policy, both internationally and internally. War, like revolution, is founded upon intimidation. A victorious war, generally speaking, destroys only an insignificant part of the conquered army, intimidating the remainder and breaking their will. The revolution works in the same way: it kills individuals and intimidates thousands. In this sense, the Red Terror is not distinguishable from the armed insurrection of which it is the direct continuation. The State terror of a revolutionary class can be condemned "morally" only by a man who, on principle, rejects (in words) every form of violence whatsoever—consequently, every war and every rising. For this, one has to be merely and simply a hypocritical Quaker.

"But, in that case, in what do your tactics differ from the tactics of Tsarism?" we are asked by the high priests of Liberalism and Kautskianism.

You do not understand this, holy men? We shall explain to you. The terror of Tsarism was directed against the proletariat. The gendarmerie of Tsarism throttled the workers who were fighting for the Socialist order. Our Extraordinary Commissions shoot landlords, capitalists, and generals who are striving to restore the capitalist order. Do you grasp this . . . distinction? Yes? For us Communists it is quite sufficient. . . .

## THE FIRST FIVE YEARS OF THE COMMUNIST INTERNATIONAL: 1919-1924

### *Thoughts on the Progress of the Proletarian Revolution*

*In April, 1919, during one of his inspections of the fronts, Trotsky wrote the following reflections on the progress—and the setbacks—of international Socialist revolution. This was shortly after the founding congress of the Third International and just after Hungary and Bavaria had come under Red governments.*

Once upon a time the Church had a saying: "The light shineth from the East." In our generation the revolution began in the East. From Russia it passed over into Hungary, from Hungary to Bavaria and, doubtless, it will march westward through Europe. This march of events is taking place contrary to prejudices, allegedly Marxist and rather widespread among broad circles of intellectuals, and not those of Russia alone.

The revolution through which we are now living is proletarian, and the proletariat is strongest in the old capitalist countries where it is much larger numerically, better organized, more class-conscious. It is seemingly in the nature of things to expect that the revolution in Europe ought to unfold approximately along the same paths as those of capitalist development: England—the firstborn capitalist country, to be followed by France, to be followed by Germany, Austria, and finally, at the bottom of the list—Russia.

It may be said that in this erroneous conception lay the  
from *The First Five Years of the Communist International*,  
Vol. I, by Leon Trotsky, pp. 50-63

original sin of Menshevism, the theoretical ground for its future downfall. In accordance with this "Marxism," adjusted to petty-bourgeois horizons, all the countries of Europe must, in inexorable succession, pass through two stages: the feudal-serf stage and the bourgeois-democratic stage, in order to reach socialism. According to Dan and Potressov,\* Germany in 1910 was only beginning to consummate her bourgeois-democratic revolution, in order later to prepare on this foundation the socialist revolution. Just what these gentlemen meant by "socialist revolution" they could never explain. Incidentally, they did not even feel the need for such an explanation, inasmuch as the socialist revolution was relegated by them to the Hereafter. It is hardly surprising that they took it . . . for a piece of Bolshevik insolence, when along the road of history they did meet up with the revolution. From the viewpoint of this flat and bare historical gradualism, nothing seemed so monstrous as the idea that the Russian revolution, upon attaining victory, could place the proletariat in power; that the victorious proletariat, even if it so desired, would be unable to keep the revolution within the framework of bourgeois democracy. Despite the fact that this historical prognosis was reached almost a decade and a half before the 1917 October Revolution, the Mensheviks, sincerely in their fashion, considered the conquest of political power by the proletariat to be an accident and an "adventure." No less sincerely did they consider the Soviet régime to be a product of the backwardness and barbarousness of Russian conditions. The mechanism of bourgeois democracy was held by these egotistic ideologists of the semi-enlightened Babbitts to be the highest expression of human civilization. They counterposed the Constituent Assembly to the soviets approximately in the manner that an automobile may be counterposed to a peasant cart.

However, the events continued to unfold in conflict with the "common sense" and with the socially indispensable prejudices of an average middle-class vulgarian. First of all, despite the existence of the Constituent Assembly with all its democratic boons implicit in Weimar there arose in Germany a party which is becoming stronger and stronger and which has immediately attracted the most heroic

\*Potressov was a prominent right-wing Menshevik.

elements among the proletariat—a party on whose banner is inscribed: "All Power to the Soviets." No one takes note of the creative labors of the Scheidemannist\* Constituent Assembly, no one in the world is interested in it. The entire attention not only of the German people but of all mankind is fixed on the gigantic struggle between the ruling clique of the Constituent Assembly and the revolutionary proletariat, a struggle which immediately proved to be outside the framework of legalized Constituent "democracy."

In Hungary and Bavaria this process has already gone beyond that. In these countries, in place of formal democracy, this relic of the past which has come to act as a brake on the future of revolution, has appeared a truly genuine democracy in the form of the rule of the victorious proletariat.

But while the march of events proceeds not at all in accordance with the itinerary of housebroken gradualists, who long pretended to be Marxists not only in public but also in private, this very march of revolutionary developments demands an explanation. The fact is that the revolution began and led to the victory of the proletariat in the most backward major country of Europe—Russia.

Hungary is unquestionably the more backward half of the former Austro-Hungarian monarchy, which as a whole, in the sense of capitalist and even cultural-political development, stood between Russia and Germany. Bavaria, where, following Hungary, Soviet power has been established, represents with respect to capitalist development not the advanced but, on the contrary, the backward section of Germany. Thus the proletarian revolution, after starting in the most backward country of Europe, keeps mounting upwards, rung by rung, toward countries more highly developed economically.

What is the explanation for this "incongruity"?

The oldest capitalist country in Europe and the world is—England. Meanwhile England, especially during the last half-century, has been from the standpoint of the proletarian revolution the most conservative country. The consistent social-reformists, *i.e.*, those who try to make both

\*Philip Scheidemann was a German Social Democratic leader. As Secretary of State in the cabinet of Prince Max of Baden, he proclaimed the German Republic on Nov. 9, 1918, became its first prime minister, helped smash the Spartacus revolt. Resigned in 1919 over refusal to sign the Versailles Treaty.

ends meet, hence drew all the conclusions they needed, asserting that it was precisely England that indicated to other countries the possible paths of political development and that in the future the entire European proletariat would renounce the program of the social revolution. For the Marxists, however, the "incongruity" between England's capitalist development and her Socialist movement, as conditioned by a temporary combination of historical forces, did not contain anything disheartening. It was England's early entry onto the path of capitalist development and world robbery that created a privileged position not only for her bourgeoisie but also for a section of her working class. England's insular position spared her the direct burden of maintaining militarism on land. Her mighty naval militarism, although requiring huge expenditures, rested nevertheless on numerically small cadres of hirelings and did not require a transition to universal military service. The British bourgeoisie skillfully utilized these conditions in order to separate the top layer of the working class from its lower strata, creating an aristocracy of "skilled" labor and instilling into it a trade-unionist caste spirit. Flexible despite all its conservatism, the parliamentary machinery of Great Britain and the incessant rivalry between two historical parties—the Liberals and the Tories—a rivalry which at times assumed rather tense form although remaining quite hollow in content—invariably created, when the need arose, an artificial political safety valve for the discontent of the working masses. This was supplemented by the fiendish dexterity of the ruling bourgeois clique in the business of spiritually crippling and bribing, quite "exquisitely" at times, the leaders of the working class. Thus, thanks to England's early capitalist development, her bourgeoisie disposed of resources that enabled them systematically to counteract the proletarian revolution. Within the proletariat itself, or more correctly, within its upper layer, the same conditions gave shape to the most extreme conservative tendencies, which manifested themselves in the course of decades prior to the World War. . . . While Marxism teaches that class relations arise in the process of production and that these relations correspond to a certain level of productive forces and further that all forms of ideology and, first and foremost politics correspond to class relations, this does not at all mean that among politics, class groupings, and produc-

tion there exist simple mechanical relations, calculable by the four rules of arithmetic. On the contrary, the reciprocal relations are extremely complex. It is possible to interpret dialectically the course of a country's development, including its revolutionary development, only by proceeding from the action, reaction, and interaction of all the material and superstructural factors, national and worldwide alike, and not through superficial juxtapositions or through formal analogies.

England accomplished her bourgeois revolution in the seventeenth century; France—at the end of the eighteenth century. France was for a long time the most advanced, the most “cultured” country on the European continent. The French social-patriots still sincerely believed, even at the beginning of this war, that the entire fate of mankind rotated around Paris. But once again, just because of her early bourgeois civilization, France developed powerful conservative tendencies within her capitalism. The slow organic growth of capitalism did not mechanically destroy French handicrafts but pulled them along, simply relegating them to different positions, assigning them a more and more subordinate role. The revolution, by selling the feudal estates at auction to the peasantry, created the French village, extremely viable, tenacious, stubborn and petty bourgeois. The Great French Revolution of the eighteenth century, bourgeois both in its most extreme objectives as well as results, was at the same time profoundly national—in the sense that it rallied round itself the majority of the nation and, first and foremost, all of its creative classes. For a century and a quarter this revolution established the bond of common remembrances and traditions between a considerable section of the French working class and the left elements of bourgeois democracy. [Jean] Jaurès was the greatest and last representative of this conservative ideological bond. Under these conditions France's political atmosphere couldn't fail to infect broad layers of the French proletariat, especially the semi-handicraftsmen with petty-bourgeois illusions. Conversely, it was precisely the rich revolutionary past that gave the French proletariat an inclination to settle scores with the bourgeoisie at the barricades. The character of the class struggle, lacking clarity in theory but extremely tense in practice, kept the French bourgeoisie constantly on guard and compelled it to go over early to the export of finance capital. While on the one hand



seducing the popular masses, including the workers, by a dramatic display of antidynastic, anticlerical, republican, radical, and other tendencies, the French bourgeoisie, on the other hand, availed itself of the advantages accruing from its primogeniture and from its position of world usurer in order to check the growth of new and revolutionizing forms of industrialism within France herself. An analysis of the economic and political conditions of French evolution, and furthermore not only on a national but on an international scale, can alone provide an explanation of why the French proletariat, split up after the heroic eruption of the Paris Commune into groups and sects, anarchist on the one wing and "possibilist" on the other, proved incapable of engaging in open revolutionary class action, of struggling directly for state power.

For Germany the period of vigorous capitalist flowering began after the victorious wars of 1864, 1866, 1871. On the soil of national unity, drenched by the golden flood of French billions, there rose a glittering reign of boundless profiteering, but also unprecedented technical progress. In contrast to the French proletariat, the working class of Germany grew at an extraordinary rate and expended most of its energies on gathering, fusing, and organizing its own ranks. In its irresistible upsurge, the working class of Germany got great satisfaction from adding up its automatically growing forces in the reports of parliamentary elections or in the statements of trade-union treasuries. The victorious competition of Germany on the world market created conditions equally favorable for the growth of the trade unions as well as for the unquestionable improvement in the living standard of a section of the working class. In these circumstances the German Social Democracy became a living—and later on even more moribund—incarnation of organizational fetishism. With its roots deeply intertwined with the national state and national industry, and in the process of adaptation to the entire complexity and entanglement of German social-political relations, which are a combination of modern capitalism and medieval barbarism, the German Social Democracy along with the trade unions under its leadership became in the end the most counter-revolutionary force in the political evolution of Europe. The danger of such a degeneration of the German Social Democracy had long ago been pointed out by Marxists, although we must admit that no one had foreseen how catastrophic

would be the character of this process in the end. Only by throwing the dead weight of the old party off its back has the advanced German proletariat now been able to enter the road of open struggle for political power.

As regards the development of Austria-Hungary, it is impossible from the viewpoint of interest to us to say anything which would not likewise apply in a clearer form to the development of Russia. The belated development of Russian capitalism immediately imparted to it an extremely concentrated character. When in the forties of the last century, Knopf established English textile factories in the central Moscow area, and when the Belgians, the French, and the Americans transplanted to the virginal Ukrainian and Novorussian steppes the huge metallurgical enterprises constructed in accordance with the latest word in European and American technology, they did not consult textbooks to learn whether they should wait until Russian handicraft developed into manufacture, while manufacture in its turn brought us to the large-scale factory. On this ground, i.e., on the ground of poorly digested economic textbooks, there once arose the famous but essentially puerile controversy over whether Russian capitalism was "natural" or "artificial" in character. If one were to vulgarize Marx and look upon English capitalism not as the historical starting moment of capitalist development but rather as the all-imperative stereotype, then Russian capitalism would appear as an artificial formation, implanted from without. But if we analyze capitalism in the spirit of Marx's genuine teachings, that is, as an economic process which first evolved a typical national form and which then outgrew this national framework and evolved world ties, and which in order to bring the backward countries under its sway sees no need of returning to the tools and usages of its infant days, but employs instead the last word in technology, the last word in capitalist exploitation and political blackmail—if we analyze capitalism in this spirit, then the development of Russian capitalism with all its peculiarities will appear wholly "natural," as an indispensable, component part of the world capitalist process.

This applies not alone to Russia. The railways which have cut across Australia were not the "natural" outgrowth of the living conditions either of the Australian aborigines or of the first generations of malefactors who were, beginning with the epoch of the French revolution, shipped off

to Australia, by the magnanimous English metropolises. The capitalist development of Australia is natural only from the standpoint of the historical process taken on a world scale. On a different scale, on a national, provincial scale it is, generally speaking, impossible to analyze a single one of the major social manifestations of our epoch.

Just because Russian large-scale industry violated the "natural" order of succession of national economic development, by taking a gigantic economic leap over transitional epochs, it thereby prepared not only the possibility but the inevitability of the proletarian leap over the epoch of bourgeois democracy.

The ideologist of democracy, Jaurès, pictured democracy as the nation's supreme tribunal, rising above the warring classes. However, inasmuch as the warring classes—the capitalist bourgeoisie and the proletariat—not only constitute opposite poles within the nation but are also its chief and decisive elements, what remains as the supreme tribunal, or more correctly the court of arbitration, are the intermediate elements—the petty bourgeoisie and at its head the democratic intelligentsia. In France, with her centuries-long history of handicrafts and of handicraft urban culture, with her struggles of city communes and, later, her revolutionary battles of bourgeois democracy, and, finally, with her conservatism of a petty-bourgeois variety, democratic ideology has until recently still rested on some solid historic soil. An ardent defender of the interests of the proletariat and profoundly devoted to socialism, Jaurès, as the tribune of a democratic nation, came out against imperialism. Imperialism, however, has demonstrated quite convincingly that it is mightier than "the democratic nation" whose political will imperialism is so easily able to falsify by means of the parliamentary mechanism. In July, 1914, the imperialist oligarchy, on its way to war, strode over the tribune's corpse, while in March, 1919, through the "supreme tribunal" of the democratic nation, it officially exonerated the murderer of Jaurès, thereby dealing a mortal blow to the last remaining democratic illusions of the French working class. . . .

In Russia these illusions from the outset did not have any kind of support beneath them. With the ponderous sluggishness of its meager development our country didn't have time to create an urban handicraft culture. The citizenry of a provincial town like Okurov is equipped for

pogroms, which once so greatly alarmed Gorky, but it is, without a doubt, unequipped for an independent democratic role. Just because England's development had occurred "according to Marx," the development of Russia, according to this same Marx, had to proceed in an entirely different way. Nurtured under the high pressure of foreign finance capital and aided by foreign technology, Russian capitalism in the course of a few decades gave form to a million-headed working class, which cut like a sharp wedge into the milieu of All-Russian political barbarism. Without the massive traditions of the past behind them, the Russian workers, in contrast to the Western European proletariat, took on not only traits of cultural backwardness and ignorance—which the semi-literate, indigenous urban citizens never wearied of pointing out—but also traits of mobility, initiative, and receptivity to the most extreme ideas inherent in their class position. If Russia's economic backwardness conditioned the spasmodic, "catastrophic" development of capitalism, which immediately acquired the most concentrated character in Europe, then the same universal backwardness of the country and the spasmodic, "catastrophic" development of the Russian proletariat permitted the latter to become—of course only for a segment of a historical period—the most irreconcilable, the most self-sacrificing bearer of the idea of social revolution in Europe and throughout the world.

Capitalist production in its "natural" evolution is constantly expanding reproduction. Technology keeps rising, the amount of material boons keeps growing, the mass of the population becomes proletarianized. Expanded capitalist production deepens capitalist contradictions. The proletariat grows numerically, constitutes an ever larger proportion of the country's population, becomes organized and educated, and thus forms an ever growing power. But this does not at all mean to say that its class enemy—the bourgeoisie—remains at a standstill. On the contrary, expanded capitalist production presupposes a simultaneous growth of the economic and political might of the big bourgeoisie. It not only accumulates colossal riches but also concentrates in its hands the state apparatus of administration, which it subordinates to its aims. With an ever perfected art it accomplishes its aims through ruthless cruelty alternating with democratic opportunism. Imperialist capitalism is able to

utilize more proficiently the forms of democracy in proportion as the economic dependence of the petty bourgeoisie upon big capital becomes more cruel and insurmountable. And the big bourgeoisie is increasingly able, by means of universal suffrage, to turn this economic dependence into a political one.

A mechanical conception of the social revolution reduces the historical process to an uninterrupted numerical growth and a steadily mounting organizational strength of the proletariat until, comprising "the overwhelming majority of the population," the proletariat without a battle, or virtually without a fight, takes into its own hands the machinery of bourgeois economy and the state, like a fruit ripe for plucking. In reality, however, the growth of the proletariat's productive role parallels the growth of the bourgeoisie's might. As the proletariat becomes organizationally integrated and politically educated, the bourgeoisie is in its turn impelled to perfect its apparatus of government to arouse against the proletariat ever newer layers of the population, including the so-called new third estate, *i.e.*, the professional intellectuals who play a most prominent role in the mechanics of capitalist economy. The antagonistic social forces gain in strength simultaneously.

The more powerful a country's capitalism—all other conditions being equal—the greater is the inertia of "peaceful" class relations; and all the more powerful must be the impulse necessary to shake either of the hostile classes—the proletariat or the bourgeoisie—out of the state of relative equilibrium and to transform the class struggle into open civil war. Once it has flared, the civil war—all other conditions being equal—will be the more bitter and stubborn, the higher the country's attained level of capitalist development; the stronger and more organized both of the enemies are; the greater the amount of material and ideological resources at the disposal of both.

The conceptions of proletarian revolution which prevailed in the Second International did not in reality transcend the framework of a self-sufficient national capitalism. England, Germany, France, Russia were regarded as independent worlds moving in one and the same orbit towards socialism, and located along the different stages of the way to it. The hour of the coming of Socialism was supposed to strike when capitalism attained its utmost limits of maturity and thereby the bourgeoisie was compelled to surrender

its place to the proletariat, as the builder of socialism. This nationally limited conception of capitalist development still provides the theoretical and psychological grounds of social patriotism: "Socialists" of each country deem themselves duty-bound to defend the national state as the natural and self-sufficient foundation of socialist development.

But this conception is false to the core and profoundly reactionary. By becoming worldwide, capitalist development thereby snapped those threads which in the past epoch bound the fate of the social revolution with the fate of one or another more highly developed capitalist country. The closer capitalism knit together the countries of the whole world into a single complex organism the more inexorably did social revolution, not only in the sense of its common destiny but also in the sense of its place and time of origin, become dependent upon the development of imperialism as a world factor, and dependent primarily upon those military conflicts which imperialism must inevitably provoke and which, in their turn, must shake the equilibrium of the capitalist system to its roots.

The great imperialist war is that frightful instrument by means of which history has disrupted the "organic," "evolutionary," "peaceful" character of capitalist development. Growing out of capitalist development as a whole, and at the same time appearing before the national consciousness of each individual capitalist country as an external factor, imperialism acts as if to discount the difference in levels attained by the development of the respective capitalist countries. At one and the same time, they were all drawn into the imperialist war,\* their productive foundations, their class relations were shaken simultaneously. Given this condition, the first countries to be driven out of the state of unstable capitalist equilibrium were those whose internal social energy was weakest, *i.e.*, precisely those countries youngest in terms of capitalist development.

Here an analogy virtually imposes itself—the analogy between the inception of imperialist war and the inception

\*Here are some theses one might propose for a Kautskyan dissertation: "Russia intervened prematurely in the imperialist war. She ought to have remained on the sidelines and devoted her energies to developing her productive forces on the basis of national capitalism. This would have provided an opportunity for the social relations to mature for the social revolution. The proletariat might have arrived to power within the framework of democracy." And so on and so forth. [Trotsky's note.]

of civil war. Two years before the great world slaughter [World War I], the Balkan war erupted. Basically, the self-same forces and tendencies operated in the Balkans as throughout the rest of Europe. These forces were inexorably leading capitalist mankind to a bloody catastrophe. But in the great imperialist countries there likewise operated a mighty inertia of resistance both in domestic as well as foreign relations. Imperialism found it easier to push the Balkans into war precisely because on this peninsula there were smaller weaker states, with a much lower level of capitalist and cultural development—and consequently with less of the inertia of “peaceful” development.

The Balkan war—which arose as a consequence of subterranean earthquakes, not of Balkan but of European imperialism, as the direct forerunner of the world conflict—attained, however, an independent significance for a certain period. Its course and its immediate outcome were conditioned by the resources and forces available on the Balkan peninsula. Hence the comparatively brief duration of the Balkan war. A few months sufficed to test the national capitalist forces on the poverty-stricken peninsula. With an earlier start the Balkan war found an easier solution. The World War started later precisely because each of the belligerents kept glancing fearfully down into the abyss toward which it was being dragged by unbridled class interests. Germany’s extraordinarily augmented power, counterposed to the ancient power of Great Britain, constituted, as is well known, the historical mainspring of the war, but this same power long kept the enemies from an open break. When the war did break out, however, the power of both camps conditioned the prolonged and bitter character of the conflict.

The imperialist war, in its turn, drove the proletariat to civil war. And here we observe an analogous order: Countries with a younger capitalist culture are the first to enter civil war inasmuch as the unstable equilibrium of class forces is most easily disrupted precisely in these countries.

Such are the general reasons for a phenomenon which seems inexplicable at first sight, namely, that in contradistinction to the direction of capitalist development from West to East, the proletarian revolution unfolds from East to West. But since we are dealing with a most complex process, it is quite in the nature of things that upon these indicated basic causes there arise countless secondary causes, some of which tend to reinforce and aggravate the

action of the chief factors while others tend to weaken it.

In the development of Russian capitalism, the leading role was played by European financial and industrial capital, particularly and especially that of—France. I have already underscored that the French bourgeoisie in developing its usurious imperialism was guided not only by economic but also by political considerations. Fearful of the growth of the French proletariat in size and power, the French bourgeoisie preferred to export its capital and to reap profits from Russian industrial enterprises; the task of curbing the Russian workers was therewith unloaded on the Russian Tsar. In this way the economic might of the French bourgeoisie also rested directly on the labor of the Russian proletariat. This gave a certain positive strength to the French bourgeoisie in its relations with the French proletariat; and, conversely, this imparted also some additional force to the Russian proletariat in its relations with the Russian (but not with the world) bourgeoisie. What has just been said applies essentially to all old capitalist countries exporting capital. The social might of the English bourgeoisie rests on the exploitation not only of the English proletariat but also of the colonial toiling masses. Not only does this make the bourgeoisie richer and socially stronger, but this also secures to it the possibility of a much wider arena for political maneuvers, both through rather far-reaching concessions to its native proletariat as well as through exerting pressure on it by means of the colonies (import of raw materials and labor forces, transfer of industrial enterprises into the colonies, formation of colonial troops, etc., etc.)

In view of the foregoing reciprocal relations, our October Revolution was an uprising not only against the Russian bourgeoisie but also against English and French capitalism; and this, furthermore, not only in a general historical sense—as the beginning of the European revolution—but in the most direct and immediate sense. In expropriating the capitalists and refusing to pay Tsarist state debts, the Russian proletariat thereby dealt a cruel blow to the social power of the European bourgeoisie. This alone suffices to explain why the counterrevolutionary intervention of the Entente imperialists was inevitable. On the other hand, the same intervention was rendered possible only because the Russian proletariat found itself placed by history in a position which compelled it to accomplish the revolution be-



fore this could be accomplished by its older and much stronger European brothers. Hence flow those supreme difficulties which the Russian proletariat is compelled to overcome upon taking power.

The Social-Democratic philistines have sought to conclude from this that there was no need for us to carry our struggle into the streets in October. Unquestionably it would have been far more "economical" for us to have begun our revolution after the English, the French, and the German revolutions. But, in the first place, history does not at all offer so free a choice to the revolutionary class; and nobody has yet proved that the Russian proletariat could be assured of a revolution "economical" in character. Secondly, the very question of revolutionary "economy" of forces has to be reviewed not on a national but on a world scale. Precisely because of the entire preceding development, the task of initiating the revolution, as we have already seen, was not placed on an old proletariat with mighty political and trade-union organizations, with solid traditions of parliamentarianism and trade unionism, but upon the young proletariat of a backward country. History took the line of least resistance. The revolutionary epoch burst in through the most weakly barricaded door. Those extraordinary and truly superhuman difficulties which thereupon fell on the Russian proletariat have prepared, have hastened, and have to a certain degree made easier the revolutionary work that lies still ahead for the Western European proletariat.

In our analysis there is not an atom of "messianism." The revolutionary "birthright" of the Russian proletariat is only temporary. The mightier the opportunist conservatism among the upper strata of the German, French, or English proletariat, the more grandiose will be the power of revolutionary onslaught by the proletariat of these countries, a power which the proletariat is already generating in Germany. The dictatorship of the Russian working class will be able to consolidate itself finally and to develop a genuine, all-sided Socialist construction only from the hour when the European working class frees us from the economic yoke and especially the military yoke of the European bourgeoisie, and having overthrown the latter, comes to our assistance with its organization and its technology. Concurrently the leading revolutionary role will pass over to the working class with the greater economic and organizational power. If today the center of the Third International

lies in Moscow then tomorrow—of this we are profoundly convinced—this center will shift westward: to Berlin, to Paris, to London. However joyously the Russian proletariat has greeted the representatives of the world working class within the Kremlin walls, it will with even great joy send its own representatives to the Second Congress of the Communist International in one of the Western European capitals. For a World Communist Congress in Berlin or Paris would signify the complete triumph of the proletarian revolution in Europe and consequently throughout the world.

## THE TASKS OF SOVIET RECONSTRUCTION: 1921-1926

### *Russia and the Capitalist World*

*Today the economic race between the USA and the USSR holds the center of world attention. Forty years ago the Soviet economy had not even fully recuperated from the disruption and devastation of the First World War and civil wars. The New Economic Policy, instituted in 1921, was widely interpreted as evidence that Russia was moving toward the restoration of capitalism through an enforced retreat to market relations. Trotsky already struggled for a quicker rate of industrialization and economic advance. For this purpose he sought to impress Soviet opinion with the length of Russia's industrial lag behind the West. In the following passage, written in 1925, he compared the economic indices of the USA and the USSR. This was a piece of pioneering work in comparative statistics and economics. Presently, such comparisons were virtually banned and were to remain banned till the end of the Stalin era.*

We shall have accomplished a huge task—not only quantitatively, but also qualitatively—when we attain the prewar level, given the present historical conditions. . . . But only the realization of this accomplishment will bring us to the starting point from which our real economic race with world capital begins.

The final lines of the commentary by the State Planning Commission formulated the total task as follows: "To retain the positions gained and to advance, at every point where this is permitted by the economic situation, consistently year by year, toward socialism—*though it be only step by step* from *Whither Russia?* by Leon Trotsky, pp. 64-71

step." Taken too literally, these lines might give rise to false conclusions. The words "though it be only step by step," each year, in the advance toward socialism, might be interpreted as implying that the rate of speed is more or less a matter of indifference, and that if only the diagonal of the parallelogram of forces tends toward Socialism, we must ultimately attain the goal. Such an inference would be entirely wrong, and the State Planning Commission never intended to say any such thing. For, as a matter of fact, the rate of speed is precisely the decisive element! It is only the higher speed of the State industry and the State trade, as compared with private capital, that enabled them to secure a "socialistic" *diagonal* of the parallelogram of forces for the period we have covered. But far more important is the relation of the speed of our total development to the speed of the world economy. This question is not touched upon directly in the memorandum of the State Planning Commission. We therefore consider it all the more important to discuss the matter very fully, since this new criterion will serve to the same extent for determining our successes and failures in the next effort, as the criterion of the "pre-war level" has served to measure the successes of our reconstruction period.

It is quite evident that as we adapt ourselves to the world market, not only our prospects but also our dangers will increase. The basis, as of so many other conditions, is here again the dispersed form of our peasant economy, our technical backwardness, and the present immense production superiority of world capitalism as compared with us. This plain statement of the case by no means contradicts the fact that the socialist mode of production—in its methods, tendencies, and possibilities—is incomparably stronger than the capitalist mode of production. The lion is stronger than the dog; but an old dog may be stronger than the lion's cub. The young lion's best chances of survival are in his growing up, in the strengthening of his teeth and claws, which is merely a matter of time.

In what is old capitalism decisively superior to youthful socialism, at least for the present? Not in the values available, the vaults full of gold, or the total mass of accumulated and appropriated wealth. The accumulated resources of the past are not without their importance, but they are not the decisive factor. A living society cannot live for long on its old stock; it will cover its needs with the products

of current labor. In spite of its wealth, ancient Rome could not resist the advancing "barbarians" when the latter became the bearers of a labor productivity higher than that of the decaying slave economy. The bourgeois society of France, awakened by the Great Revolution, simply appropriated the riches that had been accumulated by the Italian city-republics since the Middle Ages. If America's labor productivity should drop below the European level, America would find but little assistance in the \$4,500,000,000 in gold that she has stored in her bank vaults. But the fundamental economic superiority of bourgeois states consists in the fact that capitalism, *for the present, still* produces cheaper and better goods than socialism. In other words, *for the present*, productivity of labor is still considerably higher in the countries that are living in accordance with the law of inertia of the old capitalist civilization than it is in that country which is beginning to apply socialist methods under conditions of inherited barbarism.

We are acquainted with the fundamental law of history: victory *ultimately* goes to *that* system which raises human society onto a higher economic level. The historic dispute will be decided—and of course not at once—by the comparative coefficients of labor productivity.

The whole question at present is this: In what direction, and at what speed, will the mutual relation between our economy and that of the capitalist world alter in the next few years?

Our economics may be compared with the capitalist economics in various directions and in various ways. The capitalist economy itself is of course quite varied. Our comparison may be static, *i.e.*, it may use as a point of departure the economic condition at the present moment; or, it may be dynamic, *i.e.*, it may be based on a comparison of the speeds of evolution. We may compare the national income of the capitalist countries with our national income. Or, we may compare the coefficients of the expansion of production. All such comparisons and contrasts have their point—some more, others less—as long as their relation and their mutual dependence are borne in mind. We shall take the liberty to give a number of examples below in order to illustrate our thought more fully.

In the United States of America, the capitalist process has reached a culmination. The present material superiority of capitalism over Socialism may be excellently illustrated

by studying this superiority at the point at which it is most marked.

The Council of the American Industrial Committees recently published a table from which we take a few figures. The population of the United States amounts to about six percent of the total population of the earth and produces 21 percent of the cereals, 32 percent of the other food plants, 52 percent of the cotton, 53 percent of the forestry products, 62 percent of the pig iron, 60 percent of the steel, 57 percent of the paper, 60 percent of the copper, 46 percent of the lead, and 72 percent of the petroleum of the entire world. The United States owns one-third of the world's wealth. It possesses 38 percent of the world's water power, 59 percent of its telegraph and telephone lines, 40 percent of the railroad mileage, and 90 percent of the automobiles.

The power of [electric] current produced by the public power stations of the Soviet Union will rise to 775,000 kilowatts next year [1926]. In the United States, the amount of current produced last year was already 15,000,000 kilowatts. As for the power stations of the factories, our census of the year 1920 shows their total current to be almost 1,000,000 kilowatts; in the United States, about 10,500,000 kilowatts were recorded in the same period.

A general expression of the productivity of labor is found in the national income, the calculation of which is, as is well known, a matter of great difficulty. According to the data of our Central Statistical Department, the national income of the Soviet Union in 1923-24 was about 100 rubles per capita; that of the United States, on the other hand, about 550 rubles per capita. Foreign statisticians, however, give the figure of the national income of the United States not as 550, but as 1,000 rubles per head. This shows that the average productivity of labor, conditioned by the available machinery, organization, working routine, etc., may be ten times, and surely not less than six times, as great as in our country.

These figures, important though they may be, by no means make it certain that we shall be defeated in this historical struggle; not only because the capitalist world does not consist of America alone; not only because immense *political* forces are concerned in the historical struggle, which have been created by the entire preceding economic development; but particularly for the reason that the fur-

ther course of the economic evolution of North America itself is a huge unknown quantity. The productive forces of the United States are by no means fully employed, and the lowering of the percentage of employment signifies simultaneously a lowering of the productive forces. The United States is by no means adequately supplied with sales markets. The problem of sales is becoming daily a more and more disturbing one. It is not at all impossible that in the near future the comparison coefficient of the productivity of labor may tend to adjust itself by reason of two causes: by our figure going up, and by the American figure going down. This, of course, applies far more emphatically to Europe, whose production level is already far below that of the United States.

One thing is evident: the superiority of the capitalist technique and economy is as yet a mighty one; a steep ascent is imminent; the tasks and difficulties are truly colossal. A path of safety can be found only with the aid of the measuring sticks of world economy.

## 9

### THE STRUGGLE AGAINST STALINIST BUREAUCRATISM: 1923-1929

#### *A Letter to Party Meetings*

*Trotsky's call for rapid industrialization was one of the points in the controversy between him and the "Troika" (Stalin, Zinoviev, and Kamenev) in 1923, just before Lenin's death. More fundamental, however, were his attacks on the growing bureaucratism in party and state, and his demands for a "revival of proletarian democracy." So strong was the response to these demands that in the fall of 1923 the Political Bureau found itself compelled to adopt a resolution promising to restore freedom of expression and criticism, at least within the Communist Party. Stalin, Zinoviev, and Kamenev saw to it that the promise should remain a dead letter. Thereupon Trotsky published a series of articles later collected in a pamphlet called The New Course. The life-and-death battle within Soviet ruling circles had begun. The letter below appeared in Pravda, December 10, 1923.*

In the debates and articles of recent times, it has been underlined that "pure," "complete," "ideal" democracy is not realizable and that in general for us it is not an end in itself. That is incontestable. But it can be stated with just as much reason that pure, absolute centralism is unrealizable and incompatible with the nature of a mass party, and that it can no more be an end in itself than can the party apparatus. Democracy and centralism are two aspects of party organization. The question is to harmonize them in the most correct manner, that is, the manner best corresponding from *The New Course* by Leon Trotsky, pp. 90-95



to the situation. During the last period there was no such equilibrium. The center of gravity was wrongly placed in the apparatus. The initiative of the party was reduced to the minimum. Thence, the habits and the procedures of leadership, fundamentally contradicting the spirit of revolutionary proletarian organization. The excessive centralization of the apparatus at the expense of initiative engendered a feeling of *uneasiness*, an uneasiness which, at the extremities of the party, assumed an exceedingly morbid form and was translated, among other things, in the appearance of illegal groupings directed by elements indubitably hostile to Communism. At the same time, the whole of the party disapproved more and more of bureaucratic methods in coping with questions. The idea, or at the very least the feeling, that bureaucratism threatened to get the party into a blind alley, had become pretty general. Voices were raised to point out the danger. The [Politburo's] resolution on the new course is the first official expression of the change that has taken place in the party. It will be realized to the degree that the party, that is, its four hundred thousand members, will want to realize it and will succeed in doing so.

In a number of articles, efforts are being made to demonstrate that in order to give life to the party, it is necessary to begin by raising the level of its members, after which everything else, that is, workers' democracy, will come of its own accord. It is incontestable that we must raise the ideological level of our party in order to enable it to accomplish the gigantic tasks devolving upon it. But precisely because of this, such a purely *pedagogical*, professorial way of putting the question is insufficient and, hence, erroneous. To persist in it is to produce unfailingly an aggravation of the crisis.

The party cannot raise its level except by accomplishing its essential tasks, by the collective leadership that displays the initiative of the working class and the proletarian state. The question must be approached not from the *pedagogical* but from the *political* point of view. The application of workers' democracy cannot be made dependent upon the degree of "preparation" of the party members for this democracy. A party is a party. We can make stringent demands upon those who want to enter and stay in it; but once they are members, they ought to participate most actively, by that fact, in all the work of the party.

Bureaucratism kills initiative and thus prevents the elevation of the general level of the party. That is its cardinal defect. As the apparatus is made up inevitably of the most experienced and most meritorious comrades, it is upon the political training of the young Communist generations that bureaucratism has its most grievous repercussions. Also, it is the youth, the most reliable barometer of the party, that reacts most vigorously against party bureaucratism.

Nevertheless, it should not be thought that our system of solving questions—settled almost exclusively by the party functionaries—has no influence on the older generation, which incarnates the political experience and the revolutionary traditions of the party. There too the danger is very great. It is not necessary to speak of the immense, not only national but also international, authority of the group of our party veterans; that is universally recognized. But it would be a crude mistake to regard it as *absolute*. *It is only by a constant active collaboration with the new generation, within the framework of democracy, that the old guard can preserve itself as a revolutionary factor.* Otherwise, it may ossify and become unwittingly the most consummate expression of bureaucratism.

History offers us more than one case of degeneration of "the old guard." Let us take the most recent and striking example: that of the leaders of the parties of the Second International. We know that Wilhelm Liebknecht, Bebel, Singer, Viktor Adler, Kautsky, Bernstein, Lafargue, Guesde, and many others were the direct pupils of Marx and Engels. Yet, we know that in the atmosphere of parliamentarism and under the influence of the automatic development of the party and the trade union apparatus, all these leaders turned, in whole or in part, to opportunism. We saw that on the eve of the war, the formidable apparatus of the Social Democracy, covered with the authority of the old generation, had become the most powerful brake upon revolutionary progress. And we, the "elders," we ought to say to ourselves plainly that our generation, which naturally enjoys the leading role in the party is not *absolutely* guaranteed against the gradual and imperceptible weakening of the revolutionary and proletarian spirit in its ranks, if the party were to tolerate the further growth and stabilization of bureaucratic methods which transform the youth into the passive material of education and inevitably create an estrangement between the apparatus and the mass, the old

and the young. The only means the party can employ against this indubitable danger is a serious, profound, radical change of attitude toward party democracy and the increasingly large influx into its midst of working-class elements.

I shall not dwell here upon the juridical definitions of party democracy, nor upon the limits imposed upon it by the party statutes. However important they may be, these questions are secondary. We shall examine them in the light of our experience and will introduce into them the necessary modifications. But what must be modified before anything else is the spirit that reigns in our organizations. Every unit of the party must return to collective initiative, to the right of free and comradely criticism—exercised fearlessly and unflinching—the right of organizational self-determination. It is necessary to regenerate and renovate the party apparatus and to make it feel that it is nothing but the tool of the collective will.

The party press has recently presented not a few examples that characterize the already ossified bureaucratic degeneration of party morals and relations. The answer to the first word of any criticism is: "Let's have your membership card!" Before the publication of the decision of the Central Committee on the "new course," the mere pointing out of the need of modifying the internal party régime was regarded by bureaucratized functionaries as heresy, as factionalism, as an infraction of discipline. And now the bureaucrats are ready formally to "take note" of the "new course," that is, *to nullify it bureaucratically*. The renovation of the party apparatus—naturally within the clear-cut framework of the statutes—must aim at replacing the mummified bureaucrats with fresh elements closely linked with the life of the collectivity, or capable of assuring such a link. And before anything else, the leading posts must be cleared out of those who, at the first word of criticism, of objection, or of protest, brandish the thunderbolts of penalties before the critic. The "new course" must begin by making everyone feel that from now on nobody will dare terrorize the party.

It is entirely insufficient for our youth to repeat after us our formulæ. It must conquer the revolutionary formulæ, it must assimilate them, work out its own opinions, its own physiognomy; it must be capable of fighting for its views with the courage which arises out of the depths of convic-

tion and independence of character. Out of the party with passive obedience, with mechanical levelling by the authorities, with suppression of personality, with servility, with careerism! A Bolshevik is not merely a disciplined man; he is a man who in each case and on each question forges a firm opinion of his own and defends it courageously and independently, not only against his enemies, but inside his own party. Today, perhaps, he will be in the minority in his organization. He will submit, because it is his party. But this does not always signify that he is in the wrong. Perhaps he saw or understood before the others did a new task or the necessity of a turn. He will persistently raise the question a second, a third, a tenth time, if need be. Thereby he will render his party a service, helping it meet the new task fully armed or carry out the necessary turn without organic upheavals, without factional convulsions.

Yes, our party would be unable to discharge its historic mission if it were chopped up into factions. That should not and will not happen. It will not decompose in this way because its autonomous collectivity, its organism resists that. But it can combat successfully the dangers of factionalism only by developing and consolidating the new course toward workers' democracy. *Bureaucratism of the apparatus is precisely one of the principal sources of factionalism.* It ruthlessly represses criticism and drives the discontent back into the depths of the organization. It tends to put the label of factionalism upon any criticism, any warning. Mechanical centralism is necessarily complemented by factionalism, which is at once a malicious caricature of democracy and a potential political danger....

### *Theses on Revolution and Counterrevolution*

*On November 26, 1926, at the height of the struggle of the Left Opposition with the Stalin-Bukharin "bloc," Trotsky jotted down in his diary a series of reflections on the meaning of the unfolding events, the flux and reflux of revolution, and the ascendancy of the Stalinist reaction. The*

*following "theses" express the quintessence of his analysis. They have so far appeared in print only once, in the Fourth International, October, 1941.*

1. Revolutions have always in history been followed by counterrevolutions. Counterrevolutions have always thrown society back, but never as far back as the starting point of the revolution. The succession of revolutions and counterrevolutions is the product of certain fundamental features in the mechanics of class society, the only society in which revolutions and counterrevolutions are possible.

2. Revolution is impossible without the participation of the masses. This participation is in its turn possible only when the oppressed masses connect their hopes for a better future with the idea of revolution. In a sense the hopes engendered by the revolution are always exaggerated. This is due to the mechanics of class society, the terrible plight of the overwhelming majority of the popular masses, the objective need of concentrating the greatest hopes and efforts in order to insure even the most modest progress, and so on.

3. But from these same conditions comes one of the most important—and moreover, one of the most common—elements of the counterrevolution. The conquests gained in the struggle do not correspond, and in the nature of things cannot *directly* correspond, with the expectations of the broad backward masses awakened for the first time in the course of the revolution. The disillusionment of these masses, their return to routine and futility, is as much an integral part of the postrevolutionary period as is the passage into the camp of "law and order" of those "satisfied" classes or layers of classes that had participated in the revolution.

4. Closely bound up with these processes, parallel processes of a different and, to a large measure, of an opposite character take place in the camp of the ruling classes. The awakening of the broad backward masses upsets the ruling classes from their accustomed equilibrium, deprives them of direct support as well as confidence, and thus enables the revolution to seize a great deal more than it is later able to hold.

from *Fourth International* by Leon Trotsky, October, 1941, pp. 251-252

5. The disillusionment of a considerable section of the oppressed masses in the immediate conquests of the revolution and—directly connected with this—the decline of the political energy and activity of the revolutionary class engender a revival of confidence among counterrevolutionary classes—both among those overthrown by the revolution but not shattered completely, as well as among those which aided the revolution at a certain phase, but were thrown back into the camp of reaction by the further development of the revolution. . . .

20. It would be wrong to ignore the fact that the proletariat today (1926) is considerably less receptive to revolutionary perspectives and to broad generalizations than it was during the October revolution and in the ensuing few years. The revolutionary party cannot passively adapt itself to every shift in the moods of the masses. But it must not ignore alterations produced by profound historic causes either.

21. The October Revolution, to a greater extent than any other in history, aroused the greatest hopes and passions in the popular masses, first of all, the proletarian masses. After the immense sufferings of 1917–21, the proletarian masses have considerably improved their lot. They cherish this improvement, hopeful of its further development. But at the same time their experience has shown them the extreme gradualness of this improvement which has only now brought them back to the prewar standard of living. This experience is of incalculable significance to the masses, especially the older generation. They have grown more cautious, more skeptical, less directly responsive to revolutionary slogans, less receptive to major generalizations. These moods, which unfolded after the ordeals of the civil war and after the successes of economic restoration, and have not yet been undone by new shifts of class forces—these moods constitute the basic political background of party life. These are the moods which bureaucratism—as an element of “law and order” and “tranquillity”—banks on. The attempt of the opposition to pose new questions before the party ran up against precisely these moods.

22. The older generation of the working class, which made two revolutions, or made the last one, beginning with 1917, is now nervous, exhausted, and, in large measure, fearful of all convulsions bound up with the perspectives of war, havoc, famine, epidemics, and so on.

A bogie is being made out of the theory of the Permanent Revolution precisely for the purpose of exploiting the psychology of a considerable section of the workers, who are not at all careerists, but who have put on weight, acquired families. The version of the theory which is being utilized for this, is of course in no way related to old disputes, long relegated to the archives, but simply raises the phantom of new convulsions—heroic “invasions,” violations of “law and order,” a threat to the attainments of the reconstruction period, a new period of great efforts and sacrifices. Making a bogie out of the Permanent Revolution is, in essence, speculation upon the moods of those in the working class, including party members, who have grown smug, fat, and semi-conservative. . . .

24. The young generation, only now growing up, lacks experience of the class struggle and the necessary revolutionary temper. It does not explore for itself, as did the previous generation, but falls immediately into an environment of the most powerful party and governmental institutions, party tradition, authority, discipline, etc. For the time being this renders it more difficult for the young generation to act an independent role. The question of the correct orientation of the young generation of the party and of the working class acquires a colossal importance.

25. Parallel with the above indicated processes, there has been an extreme growth in the role played in the party and the state apparatus by a special category of old Bolsheviks, who were members or worked actively in the party during the 1905 period; who then, in the period of reaction left the party, adapted themselves to the bourgeois régime, and occupied a more or less prominent position within it; who were defensists, like the entire bourgeois intelligentsia, and who, together with the latter, were propelled forward in the February revolution (of which they did not even dream at the beginning of the war); who were staunch opponents of the Leninist program and of the October Revolution; but who returned to the party after victory was secured or after the stabilization of the new régime, about the time when the bourgeois intelligentsia stopped its sabotage. These elements . . . are, naturally, elements of the conservative type. They are generally in favor of stabilization, and generally against every opposition. The education of the party youth is largely in their hands.

Such is the combination of circumstances which in the

recent period of party development has determined the change in the party leadership and the shift of party policy to the right.

26. The official adoption of the theory of "Socialism in one country" signifies the theoretical sanction of those shifts which have already taken place, and of the first open break with Marxist tradition.

27. The elements of bourgeois restoration lie in: a) the situation of the peasantry, who do not want the return of the landlords but are still not interested materially in socialism (hence the importance of our political ties with the poor peasants); b) the moods of considerable layers of the working class, in the lowering of revolutionary energy, in the fatigue of the older generation, in the increased specific weight of the conservative elements.

### **Criticism of the Theory of "Socialism in One Country"**

*The Communist International, founded in 1919, adopted its first program only in 1928, after discussions on early drafts in 1922 and 1925. The final draft, largely the work of Bukharin, who was still in league with Stalin, proclaimed and sanctioned the dogma of "socialism in one country." In the summer of 1928, during his exile to Alma-Ata, near the Chinese frontier, Trotsky wrote a full-scale criticism of that draft program and sent it to the Sixth Congress of the Communist International, then assembled in Moscow. The criticism was suppressed by Stalin, but Trotsky published it later abroad as The Third International after Lenin. Here is what he says about the idea of socialism in one country.*

In our epoch, the epoch of imperialism, of world economy and world politics under the hegemony of finance capital, not a single communist party can establish its program by proceeding solely or mainly from its own national conditions and tendencies of development. This also holds entirely for the party that wields state power

from *The Third International After Lenin* by Leon Trotsky, pp. 3-4, 5, 16-17, 22, 35-36, 66-67



within the boundaries of the USSR. On August 4, 1914 [the date England declared war on Germany], the death knell sounded for all national programs. The revolutionary party of the proletariat can base itself only upon an international program corresponding to the character of the present epoch, the epoch of the highest development and of the collapse of capitalism. An international communist program is in no case the sum total of national programs or an amalgam of their common features. Such a program must proceed directly from an analysis of the conditions and tendencies of world economy and of the world political system taken as a whole in all its connections and contradictions, that is, with the mutually antagonistic interdependence of its separate parts. In the present epoch, to a much larger extent than in the past, the national orientation of the proletariat must and can flow only from a world orientation and not *vice versa*. Herein lies the basic and primary difference between communist internationalism and all varieties of national socialism.

Basing ourselves upon these considerations, we wrote in January of this year: "We must begin work to draft a program of the Comintern (Bukharin's program is a bad program of a national section of the Comintern and not a program of a world communist party)." (*Pravda*, January 15, 1928.)

We have kept insisting upon these considerations since 1923-24 when the question of the United States of America arose in its full scope as a problem of world politics and, in the most direct sense, of *European* politics.

In recommending the new draft, *Pravda* wrote that a communist program "differs radically from the program of the international social democracy not only in the substance of its central postulates but also in the characteristic internationalism of its structure." (*Pravda*, May 29, 1928.)

In this somewhat cloudy formulation is obviously expressed the idea which we stated above and which was formerly stubbornly rejected. One can only welcome the break with the first draft presented by Bukharin, which did not even provoke a serious exchange of opinion; nor, for that matter, did it offer any grounds for one. Whereas the first draft gave a bald schematic description of the development of one abstractly considered country towards socialism, the new draft seeks to take world economy as a whole as the basis for determining the fate of its individual parts;

but, unfortunately, it does this, as we shall show, inconsistently and ineffectively.

Linking up countries and continents that stand on different levels of development into a system of mutual dependence and antagonism, leveling out the various stages of their development and at the same time immediately enhancing the differences between them, and ruthlessly counterposing one country to another, world economy has become a mighty reality which holds sway over the economic life of individual countries and continents. This basic fact alone invests the idea of a world communist party with a supreme reality. Bringing world economy as a whole to the highest phase of development generally attainable on the basis of private property, imperialism, as the draft states quite correctly in its introduction, "aggravates to an extreme tension the contradiction between the growth of the productive forces of world economy and the national-state barriers."

Without grasping the meaning of this proposition, which was vividly revealed to mankind for the first time during the last imperialist war, we cannot take a single step towards the solution of the major problems of world politics and revolutionary struggle.

. . . The international revolution should be regarded as an interconnected process which cannot be predicted in all its concreteness and order of occurrence, but which is absolutely clear-cut in its general historical outline. Unless the latter is understood, a correct political orientation is entirely out of the question.

However, matters appear quite differently if we proceed from the idea of a socialist development which is occurring and is even being completed in one country. We have today a "theory" which teaches that it is possible to build socialism completely in one country and that the relations of that country with the capitalist world can be established on the basis of "neutralizing" the world bourgeoisie (Stalin). The necessity to call for a [socialist] United States of Europe falls away, or is at least diminished, if this essentially national-reformist and not revolutionary-internationalist point of view is adopted. But this call is, from our viewpoint, important and vitally necessary because it implies a condemnation of the idea of an isolated socialist development. For the proletariat of every European country, even more so than for the USSR— . . . it will be most necessary to

spread the revolution to neighboring countries and to support insurrections there, arms in hand, not out of any abstract considerations of international solidarity . . . , but because of those vital considerations which Lenin formulated hundreds of times—namely when he argued that without *timely* aid from the international revolution, we shall be unable to hold out. The slogan of the Soviet United States [of Europe] corresponds to the dynamics of the proletarian revolution, which does not break out simultaneously in all countries, but which passes from country to country and requires the closest bond among them, especially on the European arena, both with a view to defense against the most powerful external enemies, and with a view to economic construction. . . .

. . . it is not difficult to understand that . . . Marx and Engels, even prior to the imperialist epoch, had arrived at the conclusion that, on the one hand, the “unevenness,” i.e., the sporadic historic development, stretches the proletarian revolution over an entire epoch in the course of which nations will enter the revolutionary flood one after another; while, on the other hand, the organic interdependence of countries, developing toward an international division of labor, excludes the possibility of socialism in one country. The Marxian doctrine, which posits that the socialist revolution can begin only on a national basis, while the achievement of socialism in one country is impossible, has been rendered *doubly and trebly true*. . . . On this point, Lenin merely developed and concretized Marx’s own formulation and Marx’s own answer to this question. . . .

. . . Stalin said in November, 1926: “The party always took as its starting point the idea that the victory of socialism in one country means the possibility to build socialism in that country, and that this task can be accomplished with the forces of a single country.”

We already know that the party *never took this as its starting point*. On the contrary, “in many of our works, in all our speeches, and in our entire press,” as Lenin said, the party proceeded from the opposite position, which found its highest expression in the program of the C.P.S.U. [Communist Party of the Soviet Union] But one would imagine that at least Stalin himself “always” proceeded from this false view that “socialism can be built with the forces of one country.” Let us check up.

What Stalin's views on this question were in 1905 or 1915 we have absolutely no means of knowing as there are no documents whatever on the subject. But in 1924, Stalin outlined Lenin's views on the building of socialism, as follows:

"The overthrow of the power of the bourgeoisie and the establishment of a proletarian government in one country does not yet guarantee the complete victory of socialism. The main task of socialism—the *organization of socialist production*—still remains ahead. Can this task be accomplished, can the final victory of socialism in one country be attained, without the joint efforts of the proletariat of several advanced countries? *No, this is impossible.* To overthrow the bourgeoisie, the efforts of one country are sufficient—the history of our revolution bears this out. For the final victory of socialism, *for the organization of socialist production, the efforts of one country, particularly of such a peasant country as Russia are insufficient.* For this the efforts of the proletarians of several advanced countries are necessary. . . .

"Such, on the whole, are *the characteristic features of the Leninist theory of the proletarian revolution.*"

One must concede that the "characteristic features of the Leninist theory" are outlined here quite correctly. In the later editions of Stalin's book this passage was altered to read in just the opposite way and the "characteristic features of the Leninist theory" were proclaimed within a year as . . . Trotskyism. . . .

The theory of socialism in one country inexorably leads to an underestimation of the difficulties which must be overcome and to an exaggeration of the achievements gained. One could not find a more antisocialist and antirevolutionary assertion than Stalin's statement to the effect that "socialism has already been 90 percent realized in the USSR." This statement seems to be especially meant for a smug bureaucrat. In this way one can hopelessly discredit the idea of a socialist society in the eyes of the toiling masses. The Soviet proletariat has achieved great successes, great—if we take into consideration the conditions under which they have been attained and the low cultural level inherited

from the past. But these achievements weigh little on the scales of the socialist ideal. Harsh truth and not sugary falsehood is needed to fortify the worker, the agricultural laborer, and the poor peasant, who see that in the eleventh year of the revolution, poverty, misery, unemployment, bread lines, illiteracy, homeless children, drunkenness, and prostitution have not abated around them. Instead of telling them tales about our 90-percent socialism, we must say to them that our economic level, our social and cultural conditions, are much closer to capitalism, a backward and uncultured capitalism at that, than to socialism. We must tell them that we shall enter on the path of *real* socialist construction only when the proletariat of the most advanced countries has captured power; that it is necessary to work unremittingly for this, using both levers—the short lever of our internal economic efforts and the long lever of the international proletarian struggle.

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

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

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

### *The Soviet Thermidor*

*Trotsky gave his most systematic analysis of the Stalinist regime in The Revolution Betrayed. He completed it just*

before the first "Moscow trial" in 1936, and just before the Norwegian Government decided to intern him and his wife. In this work Trotsky sought to answer four fundamental questions about the USSR: 1. What had the Russian Revolution accomplished? 2. What accounted for the victory of Stalinism? 3. What was the nature of the Soviet Union? 4. What were its prospects?

Because of its nationalized means of production and planned economy, the Soviet Union had immense achievements to its credit in industry, urbanization, education, social services, etc. These gave proof of the superiority of socialist forms and methods. However, the isolated and still backward economy suffered from low productivity of labor and severe shortages of consumer goods. The meager national income and conflicts over its distribution resulted in a new division of society, with the ruling stratum headed by Stalin promoting its own privileges and omnipotence. Because of socialist relations of production on the one hand, and gross inequalities, poverty, and a despotic political system on the other, the Soviet Union could best be characterized as a "degenerate workers' state" standing halfway between capitalism and socialism. Such a state must move along one of two contrary lines of development. Either the workers and peasants would eventually overthrow the totalitarian bureaucracy and achieve their freedom—or else the avaricious, uncontrolled bureaucracy would prepare the way for a reversion to capitalism. While Trotsky championed the first line, he concluded that "in the last analysis, the question will be decided by a struggle of living social forces, on both the national and the world arena." Here are the most striking passages of Trotsky's analysis.

The historian of the Soviet Union cannot fail to conclude that the policy of the ruling bureaucracy upon great questions has been a series of contradictory zig-zags. The attempt to explain or justify them by "changing circumstances" obviously won't hold water. To guide means, at least in some degree, to exercise foresight. The Stalin faction have not in the slightest degree foreseen the inevitable results of the development; they have been caught

from *The Revolution Betrayed* by Leon Trotsky, pp. 86-94, 105-107, 112-114, 254-256

napping every time. They have reacted with mere administrative reflexes. The theory of each successive turn has been created after the fact, and with small regard for what they were teaching yesterday. On the basis of the same irrefutable facts and documents, the historian will be compelled to conclude that the so-called "Left Opposition" offered an immeasurably more correct analysis of the processes taking place in the country, and far more truly foresaw their further development.

This assertion is contradicted at first glance by the simple fact that the faction which could not see ahead was steadily victorious, while the more penetrating group suffered defeat after defeat. That kind of objection, which comes automatically to mind, is convincing, however, only for those who think rationalistically and see in politics a logical argument or a chess match. A political struggle is in its essence a struggle of interests and forces, not of arguments. The quality of the leadership is, of course, far from a matter of indifference for the outcome of the conflict, but it is not the only factor and, in the last analysis, is not decisive. Each of the struggling camps, moreover, demands leaders in its own image.

The February revolution raised Kerensky and [Irakly G.] Tsereteli to power, not because they were "cleverer" or "more astute" than the ruling Tsarist clique, but because they represented, at least temporarily, the revolutionary masses of the people in their revolt against the old régime. Kerensky was able to drive Lenin underground and imprison other Bolshevik leaders, not because he excelled them in personal qualifications, but because the majority of the workers and soldiers in those days were still following the patriotic petty bourgeoisie. The personal "superiority" of Kerensky, if it is suitable to employ such a word in this connection, consisted in the fact that he did not see farther than the overwhelming majority. The Bolsheviks in their turn conquered the petty-bourgeois democrats, not through the personal superiority of their leaders, but through a new correlation of social forces. The proletariat had succeeded at last in leading the discontented peasantry against the bourgeoisie.

The consecutive stages of the great French Revolution, during its rise and fall alike, demonstrate no less convincingly that the strength of the "leaders" and "heroes" that replaced each other consisted primarily in their corre-

spondence to the character of those classes and strata which supported them. Only this correspondence, and not any irrelevant superiorities whatever, permitted each of them to place the impress of his personality upon a certain historic period. In the successive supremacy of Mirabeau, Brissot, Robespierre, Barras, and Bonaparte, there is an obedience to objective law incomparably more effective than the special traits of the historic protagonists themselves.

It is sufficiently well-known that every revolution up to this time has been followed by a reaction, or even a counter-revolution. This, to be sure, has never thrown the nation all the way back to its starting point, but it has always taken from the people the lion's share of their conquests. The victims of the first reactionary wave have been, as a general rule, those pioneers, initiators, and instigators who stood at the head of the masses in the period of the revolutionary offensive. In their stead people of the second line, in league with the former enemies of the revolution, have been advanced to the front. Beneath this dramatic duel of *coryphées* on the open political scene, shifts have taken place in the relations between classes, and, no less important, profound changes in the psychology of the recently revolutionary masses.

Answering the bewildered questions of many comrades as to what has become of the activity of the Bolshevik party and the working class—where is its revolutionary initiative, its spirit of self-sacrifice and plebeian pride—why, in place of all this, has appeared so much vileness, cowardice, pusillanimity, and careerism—Rakovsky referred to the life story of the French revolution of the eighteenth century and offered the example of [François Noël] Babeuf, who on emerging from the L'Abbaye prison likewise wondered what had become of the heroic people of the Parisian suburbs. A revolution is a mighty devourer of human energy, both individual and collective. The nerves give way. Conscience is shaken and characters are worn out. Events unfold too swiftly for the flow of fresh forces to replace the loss. Hunger, unemployment, the death of the revolutionary cadres, the removal of the masses from administration, all this led to such a physical and moral impoverishment of the Parisian suburbs that they required three decades before they were ready for a new insurrection.

The axiom-like assertions of the Soviet literature, to the effect that the laws of bourgeois revolutions are "inappli-



cable" to a proletarian revolution, have no scientific content whatever. The proletarian character of the October revolution was determined by the world situation and by a special correlation of internal forces. But the classes themselves were formed in the barbarous circumstances of Tsarism and backward capitalism, and were anything but made to order for the demands of a socialist revolution. The exact opposite is true. It is for the very reason that a proletariat still backward in many respects achieved in the space of a few months the unprecedented leap from a semi-feudal monarchy to a socialist dictatorship, that the reaction in its ranks was inevitable. This reaction has developed in a series of consecutive waves. External conditions and events have vied with each other in nourishing it. Intervention followed intervention. The revolution got no direct help from the west. Instead of the expected prosperity of the country an ominous destitution reigned for long. Moreover, the outstanding representatives of the working class either died in the civil war, or rose a few steps higher and broke away from the masses. And thus after an unexampled tension of forces, hopes and illusions, there came a long period of weariness, decline, and sheer disappointment in the results of the revolution. The ebb of the "plebeian pride" made room for a flood of pusillanimity and careerism. The new commanding caste rose to its place upon this wave.

The demobilization of the Red Army of five million played no small role in the formation of the bureaucracy. The victorious commanders assumed leading posts in the local Soviets, in economy, in education, and they persistently introduced everywhere that régime which had ensured success in the civil war. Thus on all sides the masses were pushed away gradually from actual participation in the leadership of the country.

The reaction within the proletariat caused an extraordinary flush of hope and confidence in the petty-bourgeois strata of town and country, aroused as they were to new life by the NEP [New Economic Policy], and growing bolder and bolder. The young bureaucracy, which had arisen at first as an agent of the proletariat, began now to feel itself a court of arbitration between the classes. Its independence increased from month to month.

The international situation was pushing with mighty forces in the same direction. The Soviet bureaucracy became more self-confident, the heavier the blows dealt to

the world working class. Between these two facts there was not only a chronological, but a causal connection, and one which worked in two directions. The leaders of the bureaucracy promoted the proletarian defeats; the defeats promoted the rise of the bureaucracy. The crushing of the Bulgarian insurrection and the inglorious retreat of the German workers' party in 1923, the collapse of the Estonian attempt at insurrection in 1924, the treacherous liquidation of the General Strike in England and the unworthy conduct of the Polish workers' party at the installation of [Jozef] Pilsudski [as premier] in 1926, the terrible massacre of the Chinese revolution in 1927, and, finally, the still more ominous recent defeats in Germany and Austria—these are the historic catastrophes which killed the faith of the Soviet masses in world revolution and permitted the bureaucracy to rise higher and higher as the sole light of salvation.

As to the causes of the defeat of the world proletariat during the last thirteen years, the author must refer to his other works, where he has tried to expose the ruinous part played by the leadership in the Kremlin, isolated from the masses and profoundly conservative as it is, in the revolutionary movement of all countries. Here we are concerned primarily with the irrefutable and instructive fact that the continual defeats of the revolution in Europe and Asia, while weakening the international position of the Soviet Union, have vastly strengthened the Soviet bureaucracy. Two dates are especially significant in this historic series. In the second half of 1923, the attention of the Soviet workers was passionately fixed upon Germany, where the proletariat, it seemed, had stretched out its hand to power. The panicky retreat of the German Communist Party was the heaviest possible disappointment to the working masses of the Soviet Union. The Soviet bureaucracy straightway opened a campaign against the theory of "permanent revolution" and dealt the Left Opposition its first cruel blow. During the years 1926 and 1927 the population of the Soviet Union experienced a new tide of hope. All eyes were now directed to the East where the drama of the Chinese revolution was unfolding. The Left Opposition had recovered from the previous blows and was recruiting a phalanx of new adherents. At the end of 1927 the Chinese revolution was massacred by the hangman, Chiang Kai-shek, into whose hands the Communist International had literally be-

trayed the Chinese workers and peasants. A cold wave of disappointment swept over the masses of the Soviet Union. After an unbridled baiting in the press and at meetings, the bureaucracy finally, in 1928, ventured upon mass arrests among the Left Opposition.

To be sure, tens of thousands of revolutionary fighters gathered around the banner of the Bolshevik-Leninists. The advanced workers were indubitably sympathetic to the Opposition, but that sympathy remained passive. The masses lacked faith that the situation could be seriously changed by a new struggle. Meantime the bureaucracy asserted: "For the sake of an international revolution, the Opposition proposes to drag us into a revolutionary war. Enough of shake-ups! We have earned the right to rest. We will build the socialist society at home. Rely upon us, your leaders!" This gospel of repose firmly consolidated the *apparatchiki* [party functionaries] and the military and state officials and indubitably found an echo among the weary workers, and still more the peasant masses. Can it be, they asked themselves, that the Opposition is actually ready to sacrifice the interests of the Soviet Union for the idea of "Permanent Revolution"? In reality, the struggle had been about the life interests of the Soviet state. The false policy of the International in Germany resulted ten years later in the victory of Hitler—that is, in a threatening war danger from the West. And the no less false policy in China reinforced Japanese imperialism and brought very much nearer the danger in the East. But periods of reaction are characterized above all by a lack of courageous thinking.

The Opposition was isolated. The bureaucracy struck while the iron was hot, exploiting the bewilderment and passivity of the workers, setting their more backward strata against the advanced, and relying more and more boldly upon the kulak and the petty-bourgeois ally in general. In the course of a few years, the bureaucracy thus shattered the revolutionary vanguard of the proletariat.

It would be naïve to imagine that Stalin, previously unknown to the masses, suddenly issued from the wings full-armed with a complete strategical plan. No indeed. Before he felt out his own course, the bureaucracy felt out Stalin himself. He brought it all the necessary guarantees: the prestige of an old Bolshevik, a strong character, narrow vision, and close bonds with the political machine as the sole source of his influence. The success which fell upon

him was a surprise at first to Stalin himself. It was the friendly welcome of the new ruling group, trying to free itself from the old principles and from the control of the masses, and having need of a reliable arbiter in its inner affairs. A secondary figure before the masses and in the events of the revolution, Stalin revealed himself as the indubitable leader of the Thermidorian bureaucracy, as first in its midst.

The new ruling caste soon revealed its own ideas, feelings, and, more important, its interests. The overwhelming majority of the older generation of the present bureaucracy had stood on the other side of the barricades during the October revolution. (Take, for example, the Soviet ambassadors only: Troyanovsky, Maisky, Potemkin, Suritz, Khinchuk, etc.) Or at best they had stood aside from the struggle. Those of the present bureaucrats who were in the Bolshevik camp in the October days played in the majority of cases no considerable role. As for the young bureaucrats, they have been chosen and educated by the elders, frequently from among their own offspring. These people could not have achieved the October revolution, but they were perfectly suited to exploit it.

Personal incidents in the interval between these two historic chapters were not, of course, without influence. Thus the sickness and death [in January, 1924] of Lenin undoubtedly hastened the denouement. Had Lenin lived longer, the pressure of the bureaucratic power would have developed, at least during the first years, more slowly. But as early as 1926 Krupskaya said, in a circle of Left Oppositionists: "If Ilych [Lenin] were alive, he would probably already be in prison." The fears and alarming prophecies of Lenin himself were then still fresh in her memory, and she cherished no illusions as to his personal omnipotence against opposing historic winds and currents.

The bureaucracy conquered something more than the Left Opposition. It conquered the Bolshevik party. It defeated the program of Lenin, who had seen the chief danger in the conversion of the organs of the state "from servants of society to lords over society." It defeated all these enemies, the Opposition, the party, and Lenin, not with ideas and arguments, but with its own social weight. The leaden rump of the bureaucracy outweighed the head of the revolution. That is the secret of the Soviet Thermidor. . . .

We have defined the Soviet Thermidor as a triumph of the bureaucracy over the masses. We have tried to disclose the historic conditions of this triumph. The revolutionary vanguard of the proletariat was in part devoured by the administrative apparatus and gradually demoralized, in part annihilated in the civil war, and in part thrown out and crushed. The tired and disappointed masses were indifferent to what was happening on the summits. These conditions, however, important as they may have been in themselves, are inadequate to explain why the bureaucracy succeeded in raising itself above society and getting its fate firmly into its own hands. Its own will to this would in any case be inadequate; the arising of a new ruling stratum must have deep social causes.

The victory of the Thermidorians over the Jacobins in the eighteenth century was also aided by the weariness of the masses and the demoralization of the leading cadres, but beneath these essentially incidental phenomena a deep organic process was taking place. The Jacobins rested upon the lower petty bourgeoisie lifted by the great wave. The revolution of the eighteenth century, however, corresponding to the course of development of the productive forces, could not but bring the great bourgeoisie to political ascendancy in the long run. The Thermidor was only one of the stages in this inevitable process. What similar social necessity found expression in the Soviet Thermidor? We have tried already in one of the preceding chapters to make a preliminary answer to the question why the gendarme triumphed. We must now prolong our analysis of the conditions of the transition from capitalism to socialism, and the role of the state in this process. Let us again compare theoretic prophecy with reality. "It is still necessary to suppress the bourgeoisie and its resistance," wrote Lenin in 1917, speaking of the period which should begin immediately after the conquest of power, "but the organ of suppression here is now the majority of the population, and not the minority as has heretofore always been the case. . . . In that sense the state *is beginning to die away*." In what does this dying away express itself? Primarily in the fact that "in place of special institutions of a privileged minority (privileged officials, commanders of a standing army), the majority itself can directly carry out" the functions of suppression. Lenin follows this with a statement axiomatic and unanswerable: "The more universal becomes the very ful-

fillment of the functions of the state power, the less need is there of this power." The annulment of private property in the means of production removes the principal task of the historic state—defense of the proprietary privileges of the minority against the overwhelming majority.

The dying away of the state begins, then, according to Lenin, on the very day after the expropriation of the expropriators—that is, before the new régime has had time to take up its economic and cultural problems. Every success in the solution of these problems means a further step in the liquidation of the state, its dissolution in the socialist society. The degree of this dissolution is the best index of the depth and efficacy of the socialist structure. We may lay down approximately this sociological theorem: The strength of the compulsion exercised by the masses in a workers' state is directly proportional to the strength of the exploitive tendencies, or the danger of a restoration of capitalism, and inversely proportional to the strength of the social solidarity and the general loyalty to the new régime. Thus the bureaucracy—that is, the "privileged officials and commanders of a standing army"—represents a special kind of compulsion which the masses cannot or do not wish to exercise, and which, one way or another, is directed against the masses themselves. . . .

The basis of bureaucratic rule is the poverty of society in objects of consumption, with the resulting struggle of each against all. When there are enough goods in a store, the purchasers can come whenever they want to. When there are few goods, the purchasers are compelled to stand in line. When the lines are very long, it is necessary to appoint a policeman to keep order. Such is the starting point of the power of the Soviet bureaucracy. It "knows" who is to get something and who has to wait.

A raising of the material and cultural level ought, at first glance, to lessen the necessity of privileges, narrow the sphere of application of "bourgeois law," and thereby undermine the standing ground of its defenders, the bureaucracy. In reality the opposite thing has happened: the growth of the productive forces has been so far accompanied by an extreme development of all forms of inequality, privilege, and advantage, and therewith of bureaucratism. That too is not accidental.

In its first period, the Soviet régime was undoubtedly far

more equalitarian and less bureaucratic than now. But that was an equality of general poverty. The resources of the country were so scant that there was no opportunity to separate out from the masses of the population any broad privileged strata. At the same time the "equalizing" character of wages, destroying personal interestedness, became a brake upon the development of the productive forces. Soviet economy had to lift itself from its poverty to a somewhat higher level before fat deposits of privilege became possible. The present state of production is still far from guaranteeing all necessities to everybody. But it is already adequate to give significant privileges to a minority, and convert inequality into a whip for the spurring on of the majority. That is the first reason why the growth of production has so far strengthened not the socialist, but the bourgeois features of the state.

But that is not the sole reason. Alongside the economic factor dictating capitalistic methods of payment at the present stage, there operates a parallel political factor in the person of the bureaucracy itself. In its very essence it is the planter and protector of inequality. It arose in the beginning as the bourgeois organ of a workers' state. In establishing and defending the advantages of a minority, it of course draws off the cream for its own use. Nobody who has wealth to distribute ever omits himself. Thus out of a social necessity there has developed an organ which has far outgrown its socially necessary function and become an independent factor and therewith the source of great danger for the whole social organism.

The social meaning of the Soviet Thermidor now begins to take form before us. The poverty and cultural backwardness of the masses has again become incarnate in the malignant figure of the ruler with a great club in his hand. The deposed and abused bureaucracy, from being a servant of society, has again become its lord. On this road it has attained such a degree of social and moral alienation from the popular masses that it cannot now permit any control over either its activities or its income.

The bureaucracy's seemingly mystic fear of "petty speculators, grafters, and gossips" thus finds a wholly natural explanation. Not yet able to satisfy the elementary needs of the population, the Soviet economy creates and resurrects at every step tendencies to graft and speculation. On the other side, the privileges of the new aristocracy awaken in

the masses of the population a tendency to listen to anti-Soviet "gossips"—that is, to anyone who, albeit in a whisper, criticizes the greedy and capricious bosses. It is a question, therefore, not of specters of the past, not of the remnants of what no longer exists, not, in short, of the snows of yesterday, but of new, mighty, and continually reborn tendencies to personal accumulation. The first still very meager wave of prosperity in the country, just because of its meagerness, has not weakened, but strengthened, these centrifugal tendencies. On the other hand, there has developed simultaneously a desire of the unprivileged to slap the grasping hands of the new gentry. The social struggle again grows sharp. Such are the sources of the power of the bureaucracy. But from those same sources comes also a threat to its power. . . .

To define the Soviet régime as transitional, or intermediate, means to abandon such finished social categories as *capitalism* (and therewith "state capitalism") and also *socialism*. But besides being completely inadequate in itself, such a definition is capable of producing the mistaken idea that from the present Soviet régime a transition *only* to socialism is possible. In reality a backslide to capitalism is wholly possible. A more complete definition will of necessity be complicated and ponderous.

The Soviet Union is a contradictory society, halfway between capitalism and socialism, in which: (a) the productive forces are still far from adequate to give the state property a socialist character; (b) the tendency toward primitive accumulation created by want breaks out through innumerable pores of the planned economy; (c) norms of distribution preserving a bourgeois character lie at the basis of a new differentiation of society; (d) the economic growth, while slowly bettering the situation of the toilers, promotes a swift formation of privileged strata; (e) exploiting the social antagonisms, a bureaucracy has converted itself into an uncontrolled caste alien to socialism; (f) the social revolution, betrayed by the ruling party, still exists in property relations and in the consciousness of the toiling masses; (g) a further development of the accumulating contradictions can as well lead to socialism as back to capitalism; (h) on the road to capitalism the counterrevolution would have to break the resistance of the workers; (i) on the road to socialism the workers would have to overthrow the bureau-



cracy. In the last analysis, the question will be decided by a struggle of living social forces, in both the national and the world arenas.

Doctrinaires will doubtless not be satisfied with this hypothetical definition. They would like categorical formulae: yes—yes and no—no. Sociological problems would certainly be simpler if social phenomena had always a finished character. There is nothing more dangerous, however, than to throw out of reality, for the sake of logical completeness, elements which today violate your scheme and tomorrow may wholly overturn it. In our analysis, we have above all avoided doing violence to dynamic social formations which have had no precedent and have no analogies. The scientific task, as well as the political, is not to give a finished definition to an unfinished process, but to follow all its stages, separate its progressive from its reactionary tendencies, expose their mutual relations, foresee possible variants of development, and find in this foresight a basis for action.

# 10

EUROPE: 1923–1940

## *Italy: How Mussolini Triumphed*

*Throughout the years of Trotsky's third exile (1929–40) fascism was spreading over Europe. Trotsky sought to explain to the workers the essence of that phenomenon in order to equip them for the struggle against it. The following description of the factors responsible for the victory of Italian Fascism is taken from What Next?, one of Trotsky's pamphlets on the menace of Hitlerism, written in 1932.*

At the moment that the "normal" police and military resources of the bourgeois dictatorship, together with their parliamentary screens, no longer suffice to hold society in a state of equilibrium—the turn of the Fascist régime arrives. Through the Fascist agency, capitalism sets in motion the masses of the crazed petty bourgeoisie and bands of the declassed and demoralized lumpenproletariat—all the countless human beings whom finance capital itself has brought to desperation and frenzy. From Fascism the bourgeoisie demands a thorough job; once it has resorted to methods of civil war, it insists on securing [social] peace for years. And the Fascist agency, utilizing the petty bourgeoisie as a battering ram and overwhelming all obstacles in its path, does a thorough job. After Fascism is victorious, it gathers into its hands, as in a vise of steel, directly and immediately, all the organs and institutions of sovereignty, the executive, administrative, and educational powers of the state: the entire state apparatus together with the army, the municipalities, the universities, the schools, the press, the trade unions, and the cooperatives. When a state turns Fascist, it doesn't mean only that the forms and methods of government are changed in accordance with

from *Fascism: What It Is* by Leon Trotsky, pp. 12–14

the patterns set by Mussolini—the changes in this sphere are ultimately of minor importance but it means, first of all and for the most part, that the workers' organizations are annihilated; that the proletariat is reduced to an amorphous state; and that a system of administration is created which penetrates deeply into the masses and serves to prevent any independent crystallization of the proletariat. Therein precisely is the gist of Facism. . . .

Italian Fascism was the immediate outgrowth of the betrayal by the reformists of the uprising of the Italian proletariat. From the time the [First World] War ended, there was an upward trend in the revolutionary movement in Italy, until, in September, 1920, it resulted in the seizure of factories and industries by the workers. The dictatorship of the proletariat was an actual fact; all that was lacking was to organize it and to draw from it all the necessary conclusions. The social democracy took fright and beat a retreat. After its bold and heroic exertions, the proletariat was left facing the void. The disruption of the revolutionary movement became the most important factor in the growth of Fascism. In September, the revolutionary advance came to a standstill; and November already witnessed the first major demonstration of the Fascists (the seizure of Bologna).

True, the proletariat, even after the September catastrophe, was capable of waging defensive battles. But the Social Democrats thought of one thing only—how to withdraw the workers from under fire at the cost of one concession after another. They hoped that the docile conduct of the workers would set bourgeois "public opinion" against the Fascists. Moreover, the reformists even banked strongly upon the help of King Victor Emmanuel III. Till the last hour, they restrained the workers with might and main from giving battle to Mussolini's bands. It availed them nothing. The crown along with the upper crust of the bourgeoisie swung over to the side of Fascism. Seeing, at the last moment, that Fascism was not to be checked by docility, the Social Democrats issued a call to the workers for a general strike. Their proclamation suffered a fiasco. They had dampened the powder so long lest it should explode, that when finally, with a trembling hand, they did apply a burning fuse to it, the powder did not catch.

Two years after its inception, Fascism was in power. It entrenched itself, thanks to the fact that the first period of

its domination coincided with a boom, which followed the depression of 1921–22. The Fascists crushed the retreating proletariat by the onrushing forces of the petty bourgeoisie. But this was not achieved at a single blow. Even after he had assumed power, Mussolini proceeded on his course with due caution: he lacked as yet ready-made models. During the first two years, not even the constitution was altered. The Fascist government took on the character of a coalition. In the meantime the Fascist bands were busy at work with clubs, knives, and pistols. Only thus gradually came into being that Fascist régime which consisted in the complete strangulation of all independent mass organizations.

Mussolini attained this at the cost of bureaucratizing the Fascist party itself. After utilizing the striking force of the petty bourgeoisie, Mussolini strangled it within the vise of the bourgeois state. He couldn't have done otherwise, for the disillusionment of the masses he had rallied was rapidly becoming the most immediate danger ahead of him. Once Fascism turns bureaucratic, it resembles closely other forms of military and police dictatorship. It no longer possesses its former social support. The chief reserve of Fascism—the petty bourgeoisie—is exhausted. Only historical inertia enables the Fascist government to keep the proletariat in a state of dispersion and helplessness.

### *Germany: The Rise of Hitlerism*

*The extremely concise passage, quoted below, on the historical preconditions of fascism comes from the last article Trotsky wrote, just before Stalin's assassin struck him down in August, 1940. (It was transcribed from the text he recorded on a dictaphone). This brief paragraph contains the quintessence of Europe's political experience between the two world wars.*

*The Germany of the Weimar Republic had gone through the "cycle" (which Trotsky describes) until Nazism set out on its march to power, against the background of the 1929 world crisis. The German labor movement, the largest in Europe, was split between Social Democrats and communists. Trotsky urged that the onrush of Nazism be met by*

*the united strength of the entire working class of the Social Democratic and Communist parties, and of the reformist and Communist trade unions. This "united front" policy was rejected by the Social Democratic leaders on the one hand and by the Communist leaders on the other. The latter held, with Stalin, that Nazis and Social Democrats (or "Social Fascists") should be regarded not as opponents but as "twins." Moreover, Stalin and the German communist leader Ernst Thälmann ordered the communists to vote with the Nazis when they tried to oust the Social Democratic government in Prussia through a referendum in the summer of 1930. Trotsky untiringly warned against the blind drift into catastrophe. He forecast that Nazism in power would crush the entire German labor movement, unleash world war, and attack the Soviet Union. In reply, the Communist press denounced him as "an accomplice of the social fascists," a "panic-monger," and "adventurer," an "agent of German capitalism," etc. Early in 1933 Hitler seized power without meeting with any serious resistance. The tragedy of Germany under the swastika began to unfold.*

*The following selections deal with different aspects of these developments. The second extract is taken from the introduction to *What Next?* Like the third selection, which is taken from *Fascism: What It Is*, it was written in 1932. The fourth article written in June, 1933, contains what is probably Trotsky's most profound analysis of Hitlerism and a forecast of the Second World War.*

#### THE CYCLE OF FASCIST DEVELOPMENT

... Both theoretical analysis as well as the rich historical experience of the last quarter of a century have demonstrated with equal force that Fascism is each time the final stage of a specific political cycle composed of the following phases: a most acute crisis of capitalist society; the growth of the radicalization of the working class; the growth of sympathy toward the working class and a yearning for change on the part of the rural and urban petty bourgeoisie; the extreme confusion of the big bourgeoisie; its cowardly and treacherous maneuvers aimed at

from *Fourth International* by Leon Trotsky, October, 1940, pp. 129-130

avoiding the revolutionary climax; the exhaustion of the proletariat and its growing confusion and indifference; the aggravation of the social crisis; the despair of the petty bourgeoisie, its yearning for change, the mass neurosis of the petty bourgeoisie, its readiness to believe in miracles; its readiness for violent measures; and the growth of its hostility towards the proletariat, which has deceived its expectations. These are the premises for a swift formation of a Fascist party and its victory.

### THE CRISIS OF GERMAN CAPITALISM

Capitalism in Russia proved to be the weakest link in the chain of imperialism, because of its extreme backwardness. In the present crisis, German capitalism reveals itself as the weakest link for the diametrically opposite reason: precisely because it is the most advanced capitalist system. . . . The more highly geared the productive forces of Germany become and the more dynamic power they acquire the more they are strangled within the state system of Europe—a system akin to some “system” of cages within an impoverished provincial zoo. At every turn of events German capitalism is thrown up against those very problems which it had once attempted to solve by means of war. Acting through the Hohenzollern government, the German bourgeoisie girded itself to “organize Europe.” Acting through the régime of Brüning-Curtius\* it attempted . . . to form a customs union with Austria. It is to such a pathetic level that its problems, potentialities, and perspectives have been reduced! But even the customs union was not to be attained. Like the witch’s house in the fairy tale, the entire European system rests on chicken legs. The great

from *What Next?* by Leon Trotsky, pp. 9–14

\*Heinrich Brüning, centrist party leader who became Chancellor of Germany, March, 1930, dissolved the Reichstag three months later and ruled by emergency decree. Compelled to resign in 1931 after proposing the breakup of some of the East German Junker estates. Julius Curtius, Minister of Foreign Affairs (1929–31), who resigned in 1931 because French opposition brought about the failure of an economic agreement with Austria.

and salutary supremacy of France was in danger of toppling over, should a few million Austrians unite with Germany.

For Europe in general, and primarily for Germany, no advance is possible along the capitalist road. Any temporary resolution of the present crisis achieved by the automatic interplay of the forces of capitalism itself—on the bones of the workers—would signify only the resurrection at the next stage of the contradictions of capitalism in still more acute and concentrated forms.

In terms of world economy, Europe is on the downward trend. Already the forehead of Europe is ineradicably plastered with American labels: the Dawes plan, the Young plan, Hoover's debt moratorium. Europe is placed thoroughly on American rations.

The decay of capitalism results in social and cultural decomposition. The road is barred for further systematic differentiation within the nation, for the further growth of the proletariat brought about by the diminution of the intermediate classes. Further prolongation of the crisis can bring in its trail only the pauperization of the petty bourgeoisie and the transformation of ever increasing groups of workers into the lumpenproletariat. This threat, more than any other, grips advanced capitalist Germany by the throat.

The most rotten portion of capitalist Europe is the social democratic bureaucracy. It entered history under the banner of Marx and Engels. It had assigned for its goal the overthrow of the rule of the bourgeoisie. The powerful upsurge of capitalism caught it up and dragged it in its wake. In the name of reform it renounced revolution, first by its actions and later by its very words. Kautsky, forsooth, for a long time still used the phraseology of revolution, adapting it to the needs of reformism. Bernstein\* on the contrary, demanded the renunciation of revolution: for capitalism was entering the period of peaceful development without crises and without wars. A paragon of prophecy! Apparently, between Kautsky and Bernstein there was an irreconcilable divergence. Actually, however, they symmetrically complemented one another as the right and left boots on the feet of reformism.

The war [of 1914] came. The social democracy supported

\*Eduard Bernstein, German socialist, influenced by Fabianism, who, beginning in 1898, advocated an evolutionary rather than revolutionary road to socialism.

the war in the name of future prosperity. Instead of prosperity decay set in. The question was no longer whether the inevitability of revolution should be deduced from the inadequacy of capitalism; or whether one should aim at reconciling the workers with capitalism by means of reforms. The new policies of the social democracy now consisted of saving bourgeois society by sacrificing reforms.

But even this was not yet the last stage of decline. The crisis that is convulsing capitalism obliged the social democracy to sacrifice the fruits of long economic and political struggle and thus to press down the German workers to the level of existence of their fathers, grandfathers, and great grandfathers. There is no historic spectacle more tragic and at the same time more repulsive than this nauseating disintegration of reformism amid the wreckage of all its conquests and hopes. The theater nowadays is straining for modernism. Let them stage more often [Gerhart] Hauptmann's "The Weavers": this most modern of dramas. But the director of the theater must not forget to reserve the dress circle for the leaders of the social democracy.

Incidentally, these leaders are in no mood for the theater just now; they have reached the utmost limits of their adaptability. There is a level beneath which the working class of Germany cannot drop willingly for any length of time. Moreover, the bourgeois régime, fighting for its existence, is in no mood to recognize that level. The emergency decrees of Brüning are only the beginning of a reconnoitering. Brüning's régime rests upon the cowardly and perfidious support of the social-democratic bureaucracy, which in its turn depends upon the sullen, half-hearted support of a section of the proletariat. The system based on bureaucratic decrees is unstable, unreliable, temporary. Capitalism requires another, more decisive policy. The support of the social democracy with its one eye ever cocked on its own workers, is not only insufficient for capitalist purposes, but has already become irksome. The period of half-way measures has passed. In order to try to find a way out, the bourgeoisie must rid itself of all pressure exerted by workers' organizations; and it must eliminate, destroy, and utterly crush these organizations.

At this juncture, the historic role of Fascism begins. Fascism sets on their feet those classes that are immediately above the proletariat and who are ever in dread of being forced down into proletarian ranks; it organizes and mili-



tarizes them with the help of finance capital shielded by the official state, and it directs them to the extirpation of proletarian organizations, from the most revolutionary to the most moderate.

Fascism is not merely a system of reprisals, of brutal force, and of police terror; Fascism is a particular governmental system based on the uprooting of all elements of proletarian democracy within bourgeois society. The task of Fascism lies not only in destroying the Communist advance guard but in holding the entire class in a state of forced fragmentization. To this end the physical annihilation of the most revolutionary section of the workers does not suffice. It is also necessary to smash all independent and voluntary organizations, to demolish all the defensive bulwarks of the proletariat, and to uproot whatever has been achieved during three-quarters of a century by the social democracy and the trade unions. For, in the last analysis, the Communist party also bases itself on these achievements.

The social democracy has prepared all the conditions necessary for the triumph of Fascism. But by this fact it has also prepared the conditions for its own political liquidation. It is absolutely correct to place on the social democrats the responsibility for the emergency legislation of Brüning and for the danger of Fascist barbarism. It is absolute balderdash to identify social democracy with Fascism.

By its policies during the revolution of 1848, the liberal bourgeoisie prepared the stage for the triumph of counter-revolution, which in turn emasculated liberalism. Marx and Engels lashed the German liberal bourgeoisie no less sharply than [Ferdinand] Lassalle\* did, and their criticism was more profound than his. But when the Lassalleans lumped the feudal counterrevolution together with the liberal bourgeoisie into "one reactionary mass," Marx and Engels were justly outraged by this false ultraradicalism. The erroneous position of the Lassalleans turned them on several occasions into involuntary aids of the monarchy, despite the general progressive nature of their work, which was infinitely more important and consequential than the achievements of liberalism.

The theory of "social Fascism" reproduces the basic error of the Lassalleans on a new historical background.

\*Great propagandist, orator, and organizer who founded in 1863 the General Association of German Workers, the first socialist mass movement in that country.

After dumping National Socialists and social democrats into one Fascist pile, the Stalinist bureaucracy flies headlong into such activities as backing the Hitler referendum; which in its own fashion is in no wise better than were Lassalle's alliances with Bismarck.

In the present phase, German Communism in its struggle against the social democracy must base itself on two inseparable facts: (a) the political responsibility of the social democracy for the strength of Fascism; and (b) absolute irreconcilability between Fascism and those workers' organizations on which the social democracy itself depends.

The contradictions within German capitalism have at present reached such a state of tension that an explosion is inevitable. The adaptability of the social democracy has reached that limit beyond which lies self-annihilation. The mistakes of the Stalinist bureaucracy have reached that limit beyond which lies catastrophe. Such is the threefold formula that characterizes the situation in Germany. Everything is now poised on the knife's edge.

#### THE TRAGEDY OF THE GERMAN PROLETARIAT

The most powerful proletariat of Europe—the most powerful according to its place in production, its social weight, and the strength of its organizations—has manifested no resistance to Hitler since his arrival to power and his first violent attacks against the workers' organizations. This is the fact on which one must base all future strategic calculations.

It would be patently stupid to believe that the subsequent evolution of Germany will go the Italian way; that Hitler will strengthen his domination gradually, step by step. . . . No, the further fate of National Socialism will have to be drawn from the analysis of the German and international conditions, and not from purely historical analogies. But this much is already evident: If, from September, 1930, onwards, we demanded of the Communist International a short range policy in Germany, it is now necessary to work out a policy for the long term. Before any *decisive* battle becomes possible again, the proletarian vanguard will have to reorient itself, that is to say, to understand what has hap-

pened, fix the responsibilities for the great historical defeat, trace out the new road, and in this manner regain confidence in itself.

The criminal role of the social democracy requires no commentary: the Communist International was created fourteen years ago precisely in order to wrest the proletariat from the demoralizing influence of the social democracy. If it has not succeeded up to the present time, if the German proletariat found itself impotent, disarmed, and paralyzed at the moment of the greatest historical test, the direct and immediate blame falls upon the leadership of the post-Leninist Comintern. There is the first conclusion that must immediately be drawn.

Under the perfidious blows of the Stalinist bureaucracy, the Left Opposition [the Trotskyists] maintained to the very end its fidelity to the official party. The Bolshevik-Leninists [Trotskyists] now share the fate of all the other Communist organizations: our militants are arrested, our publications forbidden, our literature confiscated. Hitler even hurried to ban the *Bulletin of the Opposition* appearing in the Russian language. But if, together with the whole proletarian vanguard, the Bolshevik-Leninists bear the consequences of the first serious victory of Fascism, they cannot and will not bear even a shadow of the responsibility for the official policy of the Comintern.

Since 1923, that is, since the beginning of the struggle against the Left Opposition, the Stalinist leadership, even if indirectly, assisted the social democracy with all its strength to derail, to befuddle, to enfeeble the German proletariat: it halted, it curbed the workers when the conditions dictated a courageous revolutionary offensive; it proclaimed the approach of the revolutionary situation when that situation was gone; it worked up agreements with petty-bourgeois phrasemongers and windbags; it limped impotently at the tail of the social democracy under cover of the policy of the united front; it proclaimed the "third period" and the struggle for the "conquest of the streets" under conditions of a political ebb and of weakness of the Communist party; it replaced the serious struggle by leaps, adventures, or parades; it isolated the Communists from the mass trade unions; in face of the aggressive bands of the National Socialists it identified the social democracy with Fascism and rejected the united front with the mass workers' organizations; it sabotaged the slightest initiative for a united

workers' defense, at the same time it systematically deceived the workers as to the real relationship of forces, distorted the facts, passed off friends as enemies and enemies as friends—and drew the noose tighter and tighter around the neck of the party, not permitting it to breathe freely any longer, nor to speak, nor to think.

Out of the vast literature devoted to the question of Fascism it is enough to refer to the speech of Thälmann, official leader of the German Communist Party, who, at the Plenum of the Executive of the Comintern in April, 1931, thus denounced the "pessimists," that is, those who saw what was coming: "We have not allowed the moods of panic to rout us. . . . We have soberly and firmly established the fact that September 14, 1930, was in a certain sense Hitler's best day, and that afterwards will come not better days but worse ones. Our assessment . . . is confirmed by the events. . . . Today, the fascists have no more grounds for laughing." Referring to the creation by the social democracy of defense groups, Thälmann demonstrated in the same speech that these groups differ in no respect from the shock troops of the National Socialists and that both of them are preparing in parallel formation to annihilate Communism.

Today, Thälmann is arrested. Faced by the triumphant reaction, the Bolshevik-Leninists are in the same ranks as Thälmann. But the policy of Thälmann is the policy of Stalin, that is, the official policy of the Comintern. It is precisely this policy which is the cause of the complete demoralization of the party at the moment of danger, when the leaders lose their heads, when the party members, disaccustomed from thinking, fall prostrate, and when the principal historic positions are surrendered without a fight. A false political theory bears within itself its own punishment. The strength and the obstinacy of the apparatus only augment the dimensions of the catastrophe.

## WHAT IS NATIONAL SOCIALISM?

Naive minds think that the office of kingship lodges in the king himself, in his ermine cloak and his crown, in his bones and veins. As a matter of fact,

from *Fourth International* by Leon Trotsky, February, 1943, pp. 59-62

the office of kingship is an interrelation between people. The king is king only because the interests and prejudices of millions of people are refracted through his person. When the flood of development sweeps away these interrelations, then the king appears to be only a washed-out male with a flabby underlip. He who was once called Alfonso XIII [King of Spain, 1886–1931] could discourse upon this from fresh impressions.

The leader by will of the people differs from the leader by will of God in that the former is compelled to clear the road for himself or, at any rate, to assist the conjuncture of events in discovering him. Nevertheless, the leader is always a relation between people, the individualistic supply to meet the collective demand. The controversy over Hitler's personality becomes the sharper the more the secret of his success is sought in himself. In the meantime, another political figure would be difficult to find that is in the same measure the focus of anonymous historic forces. Not every exasperated petty bourgeois could have become Hitler, but a particle of Hitler is lodged in every exasperated petty bourgeois.

The rapid growth of German capitalism prior to the First World War by no means signified a simple destruction of the intermediate classes. Although it ruined some layers of the petty bourgeoisie it created others anew: around the factories, artisans and shopkeepers; within the factories, technicians and executives. But while preserving themselves and even growing numerically—the old and the new petty bourgeoisie compose a little less than one-half of the German nation—the intermediate classes have lost the last shadow of independence. They live on the periphery of large-scale industry and the banking system, and they live off the crumbs from the table of monopolies and cartels, and off the ideological sops of their traditional theorists and politicians.

The defeat in 1918 raised a wall in the path of German imperialism. External dynamics changed to internal. The war passed over into revolution. Social democracy, which aided the Hohenzollerns in bringing the war to its tragic conclusion, did not permit the proletariat to bring the revolution to its conclusion. It spent fourteen years in finding interminable excuses in its own existence for the Weimar democracy. The Communist Party called the workers to a new revolution but proved incapable of leading it. The Ger-

man proletariat passed through the rise and collapse of war, revolution, parliamentarism, and pseudo-Bolshevism. At the time when the old ties of the bourgeoisie had drained themselves to the dregs, the dynamic power of the working class turned out to be impaired.

The postwar chaos hit the artisans, the peddlers, and the civil employees no less cruelly than the workers. The economic crisis in agriculture was ruining the peasantry. The decay of the middle strata did not mean that they were made into proletarians inasmuch as the proletariat itself was casting out a gigantic army of chronically unemployed. The pauperization of the petty bourgeoisie, barely covered by ties and socks of artificial silk, eroded all official creeds and, first of all, the doctrine of democratic parliamentarism.

The multiplicity of parties, the icy fever of elections, the interminable changes of ministries aggravated the social crisis by creating a kaleidoscope of barren political combinations. In the atmosphere brought to white heat by war, defeat, reparations, inflation, occupation of the Ruhr, crisis, need, and despair, the petty bourgeoisie rose up against all the old parties that had bamboozled it. The sharp grievances of small proprietors, never far from bankruptcy, of their university sons without posts and clients, of their daughters without dowries and suitors, demanded order and an iron hand.

The banner of National Socialism was raised by upstarts from the lower and middle commanding ranks of the old army. Decorated with medals for distinguished service, commissioned and noncommissioned officers could not believe that their heroism and sufferings had not only come to nothing for the Fatherland but also gave them no special claims to gratitude. Hence their hatred of the revolution and the proletariat. At the same time, they did not want to reconcile themselves to being sent by the bankers, industrialists, and ministers back to the modest posts of bookkeepers, engineers, postal clerks, and school teachers. Hence their "socialism." At the Iser and under Verdun they had learned to risk themselves and others, and to speak the language of command which powerfully overawed the petty bourgeois behind the lines. Thus these people became leaders.

At the start of his political career, Hitler stood out perhaps only because of his big temperament, a voice much louder than others, and a circumscribed mentality much more self-assured. He did not bring into the movement any

ready-made program, if one disregards the insulted soldier's thirst for vengeance. Hitler began with grievances and complaints about the Versailles terms, the high cost of living, the lack of respect for a meritorious noncommissioned officer, and the plots of bankers and journalists of the Mosaic persuasion. There were in the country plenty of ruined and drowning people with scars and fresh bruises. They all wanted to thump with their fists on the table. This Hitler could do better than others. True, he knew not how to cure the evil. But his harangues sounded now like commands and again like prayers addressed to inexorable fate. Doomed classes, like fatally ill people, never tire of making variations on their plaints or of listening to consolations. Hitler's speeches were all attuned to this pitch. Sentimental formlessness, absence of disciplined thought, ignorance along with gaudy erudition—all these minuses turned into pluses. They supplied him with the possibility of uniting all types of dissatisfaction around the beggar's sack of National Socialism, and of leading the mass in the direction in which it pushed him. In the mind of the agitator there was preserved his early personal improvisations whatever had met with approbation. His political thoughts were the fruits of oratorical acoustics. That is how the selection of slogans went on. That is how the program was consolidated. That is how the "leader" took shape out of the raw material.

Mussolini, from the very beginning, reacted more consciously to social materials than Hitler, to whom the police mysticism of a [Prince Klemens von] Metternich is much closer than the political algebra of Machiavelli. Mussolini is mentally bolder and more cynical. It may be said that the Roman atheist only utilizes religion as he does the police and the courts while his Berlin colleague really believes in the infallibility of the Church of Rome. During the time when the future Italian dictator considered Marx as "our common immortal teacher," he defended not unskillfully the theory which sees in the life of contemporary society first of all the reciprocal action of two classes, the bourgeoisie and the proletariat. True, wrote Mussolini in 1914, there lie between them very numerous intermediate layers which seemingly form "a joining web of the human collective"; but "during periods of crisis, the intermediate classes gravitate, depending upon their interests and ideas, to one or the other of the basic classes." A very important generalization

Just as scientific medicine equips one with the possibility not only of curing the sick but of sending the healthy to meet their forefathers by the shortest route, so the scientific analysis of class relations, designed by its author for the mobilization of the proletariat, enabled Mussolini, after he had jumped into the opposing camp, to mobilize the intermediate classes against the proletariat. Hitler accomplished the same feat, translating the methodology of fascism into the language of German mysticism.

The bonfires which burn the impious literature of Marxism light up brilliantly the class nature of National Socialism. While the Nazis acted as a party and not as a state power, they did not quite find an approach to the working class. On the other side, the big bourgeoisie, even those who supported Hitler with money, did not consider his party theirs. The national "regeneration" leaned wholly upon the intermediate classes, the most backward part of the nation, the heavy ballast of history. Political art consisted in fusing the petty bourgeoisie into oneness through its solid hostility to the proletariat. What must be done in order to improve things? First of all, throttle those who are underneath. Impotent before large capital, the petty bourgeoisie hopes in the future to regain its social dignity by overwhelming the workers.

The Nazis call their overturn by the usurped title of revolution. As a matter of fact, in Germany as well as in Italy, Fascism leaves the social system untouched. Taken by itself, Hitler's overturn has no right even to the name counter-revolution. But it cannot be viewed as an isolated event; it is the conclusion of a cycle of shocks which began in Germany in 1918. The November revolution, which gave the power to the workers' and peasants' soviets, was proletarian in its fundamental tendencies. But the party that stood at the head of the proletariat returned the power to the bourgeoisie. In this sense the social democracy opened the era of counterrevolution, before the revolution could bring its work to completion. However, during the time when the bourgeoisie depended upon the social democracy, and consequently upon the workers, the regime retained elements of compromise. Concurrently, the international and the internal situation of German capitalism left no more room for concessions. The social democracy saved the bourgeoisie from the proletarian revolution; then came the turn of Fas-



cism to liberate the bourgeoisie from the social democracy. Hitler's overturn is only the final link in the chain of counterrevolutionary shifts.

A petty bourgeois is hostile to the idea of development, for development goes immutably against him; progress has brought him nothing except irredeemable debts. National Socialism rejects not only Marxism but Darwinism. The Nazis curse materialism because the victories of technology over nature have signified the triumph of large capital over small. The leaders of the movement are liquidating "intellectualism" not so much because they themselves possess second- and third-rate intellects but primarily because their historic role does not permit them to draw a single thought to its conclusion. The petty bourgeois takes refuge in the last resort, in a mythology which stands above matter and above history, and which is safeguarded from competition, inflation, crisis, and the auction block. To evolution, economic thought, and rationalism—of the twentieth, nineteenth, and eighteenth centuries—is counterposed in his mind national idealism, as the source of the heroic beginning. Hitler's nation is the mythological shadow of the petty bourgeoisie itself, its pathetic delirium of a millennium on earth.

In order to raise it above history, the nation is given the support of the race. History is viewed as the emanation of the race. The qualities of the race are construed without relation to changing social conditions. Rejecting "economic thought" as base, National Socialism descends a stage lower—from economic materialism it appeals to zoologic materialism.

The theory of race, specially created, it seems, for a pretentious self-educated individual who seeks for a universal key to all the secrets of life, appears particularly melancholy in the light of the history of ideas. In order to create the religion of the genuine German blood, Hitler was obliged to borrow at second hand the ideas of racialism from a Frenchman, Count [Joseph A. de] Gobineau, a diplomat and a literary dilettante. Hitler found the political methodology ready-made in Italy. Mussolini utilized widely the Marxist theory of the class struggle. Marxism itself is the fruit of union between German philosophy, French history, and English economics. To investigate retrospectively the genealogy of ideas, even those most reactionary and muddle-headed, is to leave not a trace of racialism standing.

The immeasurable thinness of National Socialist philosophy did not, of course, hinder the academic sciences from entering Hitler's fairway, with all sails unfurled, once his victory was sufficiently established. For the majority of the professorial rabble the years of the Weimar régime were periods of riot and alarm. Historians, economists, jurists, and philosophers were lost in guesswork as to which of the contending criteria of truth was real, that is, which of the camps would turn out in the end the master of the situation. The Fascist dictatorship eliminates the doubts of the Faustus and the vacillations of the Hamlets of the university rostrums. Coming out of the twilight of parliamentary relativity, knowledge once again enters into the kingdom of absolutes. Einstein has been obliged to pitch his tent outside the boundaries of Germany.

On the plane of politics, racialism is a vapid and bombastic variety of chauvinism in alliance with phrenology. As the ruined nobility sought solace in the gentility of its blood, so the pauperized petty bourgeoisie befuddles itself with fairy tales concerning the special superiorities of its race. Worthy of attention is the fact that the leaders of National Socialism are not native Germans but interlopers from Austria, like Hitler himself, from the former Baltic provinces of the Tsar's empire, like [Alfred] Rosenberg, and from colonial countries, like [Rudolf] Hess\* who is Hitler's present alternate for the party leadership. A school of barbaric national pothering along the cultural frontiers was required in order to instill into the "leaders" those ideas which later found response in the hearts of the most barbarous classes in Germany.

Personality and class—liberalism and Marxism—are evil. The nation—is good. But at the threshold of private property this philosophy is turned inside out. Salvation lies only in personal private property. The idea of national property is the spawn of Bolshevism. Deifying the nation, the petty bourgeois does not want to give it anything. On the contrary,

\*Rosenberg was the chief Nazi racial theorist in charge of the "education" of party members until 1941 and editor of the *Veikischer Beobachter*, official Nazi paper. Executed at Nuremberg, 1946. Hess, a high Nazi official who was born in Egypt, assisted Hitler in writing *Mein Kampf*, named Deputy Führer in 1933. Flew to Scotland in May, 1941, bearing peace proposals, interned for rest of war, sentenced to life imprisonment at Nuremberg, October, 1946.

he expects the nation to endow him with property and to safeguard him from the worker and the bailiff. Unfortunately, the Third Reich will bestow nothing upon the petty bourgeois except new taxes.

In the sphere of modern economy, international in its ties and anonymous in its methods, the principle of race appears as an interloper from a medieval graveyard. The Nazis set out with concessions beforehand; the purity of race, which must be certified in the kingdom of the spirit by a passport, must be demonstrated in the sphere of economy chiefly by efficiency. Under contemporary conditions this means competitive capacity. Through the back door racialism returns to economic liberalism, freed from political liberties.

Nationalism in economy practically comes down to impotent though savage outbursts of anti-Semitism. The Nazis abstract the usurious or banking capital from the modern economic system because it is of the spirit of evil; and, as is well known, it is precisely in this sphere that the Jewish bourgeoisie occupies an important position. Bowing down before capitalism as a whole, the petty bourgeois declares war against the evil spirit of gain in the guise of the Polish Jew in a long-skirted caftan and usually without a cent in his pocket. The pogrom becomes the supreme evidence of racial superiority.

The program with which National Socialism came to power reminds one very much—alas—of a Jewish department store in an obscure province. What won't you find here—cheap in price and in quality still lower! Recollections of the "happy" days of free competition, and hazy traditions of the stability of class society; hopes for the regeneration of the colonial empire, and dreams of a shut-in economy; phrases about a reversion from Roman law to the Germanic, and pleas for an American moratorium; an envious hostility to inequality in the person of a proprietor in an automobile, and animal fear of equality in the person of a worker in a cap and without a collar; the frenzy of nationalism, and the fear of world creditors. All the refuse of international political thought has gone to fill up the spiritual treasury of the neo-Germanic Messianism.

Fascism has opened up the depths of society for politics. Today, not only in peasant homes but also in the city skyscrapers there lives alongside of the twentieth century the tenth or the thirteenth. A hundred million people use electri-

city and still believe in the magic power of signs and exorcisms. What inexhaustible reserves they possess of darkness, ignorance, and savagery! Despair has raised them to their feet, fascism has given them the banner. Everything that should have been eliminated from the national organism in the course of the unhindered development of society comes out today gushing from the throat; capitalist society is puking up the undigested barbarism. Such is the physiology of National Socialism.

German Fascism, like the Italian, raised itself to power on the backs of the petty bourgeoisie, which it turned into a battering ram against the working class and the institutions of democracy. But Fascism in power is least of all the rule of the petty bourgeoisie. On the contrary, it is a most ruthless dictatorship of monopolist capital. Mussolini is right: the intermediate classes are incapable of independent policies. During periods of great crisis they are called upon to reduce to absurdity the policies of one of the two basic classes. Fascism succeeded in placing them in the service of capital. Such slogans as state control of trusts and the elimination of illegitimate profits were thrown overboard immediately upon the assumption of power. On the contrary, the particularism of German "lands," which had been buttressed by the particularism of the petty bourgeoisie, gave place to capitalist-police centralism. Every success of the internal and foreign policies of National Socialism inevitably means that small property is crushed by big capital.

The program of petty-bourgeois illusions is not discarded; it is simply becoming divorced from reality, and dissolves into ritualistic acts. The unification of all classes reduces itself to the semi-symbolism of compulsory labor and to the confiscation of the labor holiday of May first for the "benefit of the people." The preservation of the Gothic script as against the Latin is a symbolic revenge for the yoke of the world market. Dependence upon international bankers including Jewish bankers, is not eased an iota, wherefore it is forbidden to slaughter animals according to the Talmudic ritual. If the road to hell is paved with good intentions, then the avenues of the Third Reich are paved with symbols.

Reducing the program of petty-bourgeois illusions to bureaucratic masquerades, National Socialism raises itself over the nation as the ugliest form of imperialism. Absolutely false are hopes to the effect that Hitler's government

will fall tomorrow, if not today, a victim of its internal incoherence. The Nazis required a program in order to assume power; but power serves Hitler not at all for the purpose of fulfilling the program. His tasks are assigned him by monopolist capital. The compulsory concentration of all national forces and resources in the interests of imperialism—the true historic mission of Fascist dictatorship—means the preparation for war; and this brooks no internal resistance and leads to further mechanical concentration of power. Fascism cannot be reformed or dismissed. It can only be overthrown. The political orbit of the régime leads to the alternative, *war or revolution*.

The first anniversary of the Nazi dictatorship is approaching. All the tendencies of the régime have had time to take on a clear and distinctive character. The "socialist" revolution imagined by the petty-bourgeois masses as a necessary supplement to the national revolution is officially condemned and liquidated. The brotherhood of all classes found its culmination in the fact that on a day especially appointed by the government the haves renounced their *hors d'oeuvre* and dessert in favor of the have-nots. The struggle against unemployment has resulted in the cutting of the semi-starvation doles by half. The rest is manipulated statistics. Planned autarchy is simply a new stage of economic disintegration.

The more the Nazi police régime is impotent in economics, the more it is forced to transfer its efforts to the field of foreign politics. This corresponds fully to the inner dynamics of German capitalism, aggressive through and through. The sudden turn of the Nazi leaders to peaceful declarations could deceive only utter simpletons. What other method remains at Hitler's disposal for throwing the responsibility for domestic disasters on external enemies and accumulating, under the press of the dictatorship, the explosive force of imperialism?

This part of the program, outlined openly even prior to the Nazis' assumption of power, is now being fulfilled with iron logic before the eyes of the whole world. The date of the new European catastrophe will be determined by the time necessary for the arming of Germany. It is not a question of months, but neither is it a question of decades. It will be but a few years before Europe is again plunged into war, unless Hitler is forestalled in time by the inner forces of Germany.

## ***France: At the Turning Point***

*In February, 1934, one year after Hitler took power, the French Third Republic was shaken by quasi-fascist riots and a semi-insurrection. Soon denied the refuge he had found in France, Trotsky again called upon the socialist and communist parties to unite in struggle, to arm the workers against the Fascists, and to open a broad political campaign directed toward the conquest of power. The reactionary attack on the Third Republic was temporarily checked; the Popular Front coalition won the elections in May, 1936; and stormy mass strikes followed. Léon Blum's government and the Communist Party, allied with the bourgeois Radicals, restrained the militancy of the workers and renounced revolutionary aims and actions. Then Édouard Daladier's Government, replacing Blum's, proceeded to whittle down the social reforms won by the workers in 1936 and even to break the General Strike of October, 1938. In an introduction to a new French edition of *Terrorism and Communism*, Trotsky wrote:*

After a lapse of eighteen years, the author of this book has had the occasion to spend two years in France (1933-35); to be sure, only as an observer in the provinces, who, moreover, found himself under constant police surveillance. During this time, in the Isère Department [in southeastern France], where the writer had to live, a minor and quite banal routine episode occurred, which, however, provides the key to French politics as a whole. In a hospital, owned by the Comité de Forges,\* a young worker about to undergo a serious operation took the liberty to read the revolutionary press (or, to be more precise, the press which he innocently accepted as revolutionary, namely: *l'Humanité*). The hospital delivered an ultimatum to the careless patient, and later, to four others who

from *Whither France?* by Leon Trotsky, pp. 120-125, 131-135

\*The cartel of steel manufacturers.

shared his sympathies: either they must renounce receiving the undesirable publications or they would be immediately thrown out into the street. Of course it availed the patients nothing to argue that clerical-reactionary propaganda was being carried on quite openly in the hospital. Inasmuch as only ordinary workers were concerned, who had neither mandates as deputies nor ministerial portfolios to risk, but only their health and lives, the ultimatum proved ineffectual. Five sick men, one of whom was scheduled for an operation, were ejected from the hospital. Grenoble [capital of the Department of Isère] at that time was a socialist municipality, headed by Doctor Martin, one of those conservative bourgeois, who generally set the tone in the Socialist Party and whose consummate representative is Léon Blum. The ejected workers sought a champion in the mayor. In vain. Despite all entreaties, letters, and intercessions they failed even to obtain an interview. They then turned to the local Left newspaper *Dépêche*, in which Radicals and Socialists compose an indivisible cartel. Upon learning that the matter involved the hospital of the Comité des Forges, the director of the newspaper refused point blank to intervene: anything your heart desires, except that! For a previous indiscretion in connection with this all-powerful organization, *Dépêche* had already been deprived of an advertisement, and suffered a loss of 20,000 francs. In contrast to the proletarian, the director of the "Left" newspaper, like the mayor, stood to lose something. They therefore refused to engage in an unequal struggle, leaving the workers with their diseased intestines and kidneys to their fate.

Once every week or every fortnight, the socialist mayor disturbs the dim recollections of his youth by delivering a speech on the superiorities of socialism over capitalism. During elections, *Dépêche* supports the mayor and his party. Everything is in order. The Comité des Forges maintains an attitude of liberal tolerance towards socialism of this sort, which does not do the least harm to the material interests of capitalism. By means of an advertisement of 20,000 francs per year (so cheaply are these gentlemen priced!), the feudalists of the heavy industry and banks keep a large cartel newspaper in actual subjection. And not the newspaper alone. The Comité des Forges apparently has arguments, both direct and indirect, weighty enough for Messrs. Mayors, Senators, Deputies, including the Socialists. Entire official France is under the dictatorship of finance

capital. In the Larousse dictionary [of the French language] this system is called a "democratic republic."

It seemed to the Messrs. Left deputies and journalists, not only in the Isère but in all the departments of France, that there would be no end to their peaceful cohabitation with capitalist reaction. They were mistaken. Long corroded by dry rot, democracy suddenly felt the barrel of a gun at its temple. Just as the rearmament of Hitler—a coarse material fact—brought a real upheaval in the relations between states, laying bare the vain and illusory nature of the so-called "international law," just so did the arming of the gangs of Colonel de la Rocque\* result in convulsing the internal relations of France, compelling all parties without exception to reform their ranks, to assume a different coloration and to effect regroupments.

Friedrich Engels once wrote that the State, including the democratic republic, consists of detachments of men armed for the defense of property; everything else serves only to embellish or camouflage this fact. Eloquent champions of "Law," like [Édouard] Herriot or Blum, always became incensed at such cynicism. But both Hitler and de la Rocque, each in his own domain, have once again demonstrated that Engels is right.

Early in 1934, Daladier was Prime Minister by will of universal, equal, direct, and secret suffrage. He walked around with national sovereignty in his pocket alongside of his handkerchief. But the moment that the detachments of de la Rocque, [Charles] Maurras,\*\* and Co. showed that they dared to shoot and to slash the tendons of the police horses, sovereign Daladier surrendered his post to a political invalid designated by the leaders of the armed detachments. This fact is of considerably greater importance than all the electoral statistics, and it cannot be erased from the pages of the most recent history of France, for it forecasts the future.

Assuredly, the course of the political life of a country cannot be altered by every group armed with revolvers, at any time. Only those armed detachments which are the organs of specific classes can play a decisive role under cer-

\*Colonel François de la Rocque was the leader of various fascist movements in the nineteen thirties.

\*\*Maurras, French poet, critic, and journalist, and main spokesman of *Action Française*, ultra-reactionary royalist group.



tain conditions. Colonel de la Rocque and his henchmen seek to insure "law and order" against social upheavals. And inasmuch as law and order in France signify the rule of finance capital over the middle and petty bourgeoisie, and the rule of the bourgeoisie as a whole over the proletariat and the social strata closest to it, the detachments of de la Rocque are simply the armed pickets of finance capital.

This idea is not new. One can often run across it even in the pages of *le Populaire* and *l'Humanité*;<sup>\*</sup> although, of course, these papers were not its original authors. However, they speak only half of the truth. The other and equally important half consists of the fact that Herriot and Daladier with their followers [who belonged to the Popular Front] are also an agency of finance capital; otherwise the radicals could not have been the ruling party in France for a period of decades. If we are not to play the game of hide and seek, we must say that de la Rocque and Daladier both serve one and the same master. This does not mean that either they themselves or their methods are identical. Quite the contrary. They fiercely fight each other, like two specialized agencies each of whom has its own special secret of salvation. Daladier promises to maintain order through the exercise of the selfsame tricolor democracy. De la Rocque holds the outlived parliamentarianism must be swept away and replaced by an open military police dictatorship. The political methods are antagonistic but the social aims they serve are the same. The historical basis of the antagonism between de la Rocque and Daladier—we use these names merely for the sake of simplicity in our presentation—is the decline of the capitalist system, its incurable crisis, its decay. Despite the constant triumphs of technology and the explosive successes achieved by individual branches of industry, capitalism as a whole acts as a brake upon the development of the productive forces, engendering an extreme instability in social and international relations. Parliamentary democracy is indissolubly bound up with the epoch of free competition and free international trade. The bourgeoisie was able to tolerate the freedom of strikes, of assembly, and of the press only so long as the productive forces were mounting upwards, so long as the sales markets were being extended, the welfare of the popular masses, even if only

<sup>\*</sup> *le Populaire* was the newspaper of the French socialist party (S.F.I.O.) led by Léon Blum; *l'Humanité* was (and still is) the daily of the French Communist Party.

partially, was rising, and the capitalist nations were able to live and let live. It is otherwise now. If we exclude the Soviet Union, the imperialist epoch is characterized by the stagnation or decline of the national income, a chronic agrarian crisis, and organic unemployment. These phenomena pertain internally to the present phase of capitalism just as gout and arteriosclerosis pertain to certain ages of man. To explain world economic chaos by the consequences of the last war is to lay bare a hopeless superficiality, in the spirit of [Joseph] Caillaux, Count [Carlo] Sforza,\* and the like. The war itself was nothing else than an attempt on the part of every capitalist country to unload the already impending crash upon the enemy's back. The attempt failed. The war only deepened the manifestations of collapse, which, in its subsequent development, prepares a new war.

Bad as French economic statistics are, and although they deliberately evade the problems of class contradictions, even these statistics are unable to cover up the manifestations of a direct social disintegration. Amid the general decline of the national income, amid the truly horrifying fall in the income of the peasants, amid the ruin of the little men in the cities and the growth of unemployment, the gigantic enterprises with a turnover above 100 to 200 millions a year are doing excellent business. Finance capital is indeed sucking the lifeblood from the veins of the French people. Such is the social basis for the ideology and politics of "national unity."

Mitigations and flickers of a better time are possible in the process of decline; they are even inevitable. They will remain, however, purely episodic in character. The general tendency of our epoch imperiously drives France, in the wake of a number of other countries, to the alternative: either the proletariat must overthrow the utterly decayed bourgeois order, or capitalism, in the interests of self-preservation, must replace democracy with Fascism. How long can Fascism last? The answer to this question will be provided by the fate of Mussolini and Hitler.

\*Caillaux was a French politician, premier 1911-12, convicted in 1921 of pro-German activities during World War I. Held post of Finance Minister in various cabinets from 1899 to 1935. Sforza was an Italian diplomat and historian who advocated abolition of the monarchy and a European federation. Minister of Foreign Affairs 1920-21. Sent to France as ambassador in 1921, he refused to return to Italy after Mussolini came to power and stayed abroad until the fall of fascism.

The French Fascists fired their guns on February 6, 1934, on the direct orders of the Bourse [stock exchange], the banks, and the trusts. From the selfsame ruling summits, Daladier received the instruction to hand over power to [Gaston] Doumergue. And if the Radical Premier capitulated—with the pusillanimity that is generally characteristic of the Radicals—it was precisely because he recognized his own master in the gangs of de la Rocque. In other words: sovereign Daladier surrendered power to Doumergue for the selfsame reason that the director of *Dépêche* and the mayor of Grenoble refused to expose the abominable cruelty of the agents of the Comité des Forges.

However, the transition from democracy to Fascism carries with it the danger of social upheavals. Thence arise the tactical vacillations and differences among the leaders of the bourgeoisie. All the magnates of capital are in favor of further strengthening the armed detachments, which can serve as safety reserves in the hour of danger. But what place should be allotted to these detachments today? Should they be permitted immediately to assume the offensive or should they still be held in reserve as a threat?—These questions remain unsolved as yet. . . .

From the standpoint of the bourgeois régime as a whole, the People's Front represents an episode in the competition between Radicalism and Fascism for the attention and good graces of big capital. By their theatrical fraternization with Socialists and Communists, the Radicals want to prove to the master that the situation of the régime is not as bad as the Rights assert; that the threat of the revolution is not at all so great; that even [Paul] Vaillant-Couturier\* has swapped his knife for a dog collar; that through the medium of the domesticated "revolutionists" it is possible to discipline the working masses and, consequently, to save the parliamentary system from shipwreck.

Not all the Radicals believe in this maneuver; the most solid and influential among them, headed by Herriot, prefer to take a watchful position. But in the last analysis they themselves have nothing else to propose. The crisis of parliamentarianism is first of all the crisis of the confidence of the voters in Radicalism. Until some method for rejuvenating capitalism is discovered there is not and cannot be any

\*A well-known leader of the French Communist Party.

recipe for the salvation of the Radical Party. The latter has only the choice between two variants of political doom. Even the relative success it may score during the coming elections can neither avert nor even long postpone its shipwreck.

The leaders of the Socialist Party, the most carefree politicians in France, do not burden themselves with the study of the sociology of the People's Front. No one can learn anything from the endless monologues of Léon Blum. As for the Communists, the latter, extremely proud of their initiative in the cause of collaboration with the bourgeoisie, picture the People's Front as *an alliance between the proletariat and the middle classes*. What a parody on Marxism! The Radical Party is not at all the party of the petty bourgeoisie. Nor is it a "bloc between the middle and the petty bourgeoisie," in accordance with the idiotic definition of the Moscow *Pravda*. The middle bourgeoisie exploits the petty bourgeoisie not only economically but also politically, and it itself is the agency of finance capital. To give the hierarchic political relations, based upon exploitation, the neutral name of a "bloc" is to mock reality. A horseman is not a bloc between a man and a horse. If the party of Herriot-Daladier extends its roots deeply into the petty bourgeoisie, and in part even in the working masses, it does so only in order to lull and dupe them in the interests of the capitalist order. The Radicals are the democratic party of French imperialism—any other definition is a lie.

The crisis of the capitalist system disarms the Radicals, depriving them of their traditional implements for lulling the petty bourgeoisie. "The middle classes" are beginning to sense, if not to understand, that it is impossible to save the situation through paltry reforms, that it is necessary to scrap audaciously the existing system. But Radicalism and audacity are as incompatible as fire and water. Fascism is fed above all by the growing lack of confidence of the petty bourgeoisie in Radicalism. One can say without fear of exaggeration that what shape the political fate of France in the period immediately ahead will take depends largely upon the manner in which Radicalism is going to be liquidated, and who will be heir to its legacy, i.e., to its influence upon the petty bourgeoisie: Fascism or the party of the proletariat.

It is an elementary axiom of Marxist strategy that the

alliance between the proletariat and the little men of town and country can be realized only in irreconcilable struggle against the traditional parliamentary representation of the petty bourgeoisie. In order to attract the peasant to the worker's side it is necessary to tear him away from the Radical politician, who has kept him in subjection to finance capital. In contradistinction to this, the People's Front, that conspiracy between the labor bureaucracy and the worst political exploiters of the middle classes, is capable only of killing the faith of the masses in the revolutionary road and of driving them into the arms of the Fascist counter-revolution.

Unbelievable as it may seem, some cynics attempt to justify the policy of the People's Front by quoting Lenin, who if you please, proved that there is no getting along without "compromises" and, in particular, without making agreements with other parties. It has become an established rule among the leaders of the present Comintern to make a mockery of Lenin: they trample underfoot all the teachings of the builder of the Bolshevik party, and then they take a trip to Moscow to kneel before his mausoleum.

Lenin began his activities in Tsarist Russia, where not only the proletariat, the peasantry, and the intelligentsia but also wide circles of the bourgeoisie stood in opposition to the old régime. If the policy of the People's Front had any justification at all, one should imagine that it could be justified first of all in a country that had yet to achieve its bourgeois revolution. The Messrs. Falsifiers, however, would not do badly at all if they were to point out at what stage and under what conditions the Bolshevik party ever built even a semblance of the People's Front in Russia? Let them strain their imagination and rummage among the historical documents!

The Bolsheviks did conclude practical agreements with revolutionary petty bourgeois organizations, for such purposes as, for instance, the joint illegal transport of revolutionary literature; or sometimes to repulse the Black Hundred gangs. During elections to the state Duma they did, under certain conditions, enter into electoral blocs with the Mensheviks or the Social Revolutionaries on the second ballot. That was all. No common "programs," no common and permanent institutions, no renunciation of the criticism of temporary allies. Such episodic agreements and compromises, confined strictly to practical aims—and Lenin never

spoke of any other kind—have absolutely nothing in common with the People's Front, which represents a conglomeration of heterogeneous organizations, a long-term alliance between different classes, that are bound for an entire period—and what a period!—by a common program and a common policy, the policy of parades, declamations, and of throwing up smokescreens. The People's Front will fall to pieces at the first serious test, and deep fissures will open up in all of its component sections. The policy of the People's Front is a policy of betrayal.

In such temporary alliances it was a Bolshevik principle *to march separately and strike jointly!* The rule of the leaders of the present Comintern is: *march together in order to be smashed separately.* Let these gentlemen hold on to Stalin and [Georgi Mihailov] Dimitrov,\* but leave Lenin in peace!

It is impossible to read without indignation the declarations of the bragging leaders who allege that the People's Front has "saved" France from Fascism. In point of fact, they mean only to say that mutual encouragements "saved" our scared heroes from their own exaggerated fears. For how long? Between Hitler's first uprising and his coming to power, a decade elapsed, which was marked by frequent ebbs and flows. At that time, the German Blums and Cachins\*\* also used to proclaim more than once their "victory" over national socialism. We refused to believe them, and we were not mistaken. This experience, however, has taught the French cousins of [Otto] Wels\*\*\* and Thälmann nothing. In Germany, to be sure, the communists did not participate in the People's Front, which united the social democracy with the bourgeois Left and the Catholic Center ("the alliance between the proletariat and the middle classes!"). During that period the Comintern rejected even

\*Dimitrov was a Bulgarian Communist, central figure in the Reichstag Fire Trial 1933. Replaced Manuilsky as secretary of the Communist International in 1935 and was chief exponent of Popular Front policy. Prime minister of Bulgaria after World War II.

\*\*Marcel Cachin, French Communist leader, editor of *l'Humanité* from 1918 until his death in 1958. A socialist delegate to Moscow in 1919, he helped launch the French communist party at Tours Socialist Congress in 1920. Member of the Chamber of Deputies (1914–32), elected Senator in 1935.

\*\*\*Right-wing German social democratic politician, member of the Reichstag 1912–18, of the Weimer Constituent Assembly 1919–20, and again of the Reichstag 1920–33.

fighting agreements between working-class organizations against Fascism. The results are quite well-known. The warmest sympathy to Thälmann as the captive of Nazi executioners cannot deter us from saying that his policy, i.e., the policy of Stalin, did more for Hitler's victory than the policy of Hitler himself. Having turned itself inside out, the Comintern now applies in France the quite familiar policy of the German Social Democracy. Is it really so difficult to foresee the results? . . .

### *Spain: The Civil War*

*The collapse of the Third Republic was indeed not far off; it came in the first year of the Second World War, in the summer of 1940. In the meantime, another Popular Front had been formed in neighboring Spain, where General Francisco Franco had launched an armed uprising against the Spanish Republic in July, 1936. The People's Front was headed there by the Left Republican parties of the liberal bourgeoisie, and backed by the Socialist, Communist, and later even by the Anarchist leaders. Shortly after the outbreak of the civil war in Spain, Trotsky wrote that to crush the Fascists the workers ought "seriously and courageously to advance the program of the socialist revolution. It is necessary to proclaim that, from now on, the land, the factories and shops will pass from the capitalists into the hands of the people." Both the bourgeois ministries and the subsequent government of the Socialist [Francisco] Largo Caballero followed a different course. They refused to give land to the peasants, freedom to the Moroccans, and power to the workers. Instead, they insisted that the defense of democracy, and not the realization of socialist objectives, was their sole purpose in the civil war. In *The Lessons of Spain*, written in December, 1937, Trotsky thus formulated the conditions for victory in Spain.*

- (1) The fighters of a revolutionary army should clearly be aware of the fact that they are fighting for their full  
from *The Lessons of Spain* by Leon Trotsky, pp. 26-32

social liberation and not for the reestablishment of the old ("democratic") forms of exploitation.

(2) The workers and peasants in the rear of the revolutionary army as well as in the rear of the enemy should know and understand the same thing.

(3) The propaganda on their own front as well as on the front of the adversary and behind the lines of both armies should be completely permeated with the spirit of social revolution. The slogan: "first victory, then reforms." [the slogan of the Popular Front] is the slogan of all oppressors and exploiters beginning with the Biblical kings and ending with Stalin.

(4) Those classes and strata who participate in the struggle determine policy. The revolutionary masses should have government machinery directly and immediately expressing their will. Only the soviets of workers, soldiers, and peasant deputies can act as such machinery.

(5) The revolutionary army should not only announce but immediately carry out the more pressing measures of social revolution in the provinces won by them: they must expropriate stocks of provisions, manufactured articles, and other goods and transfer them to the needy; redistribute lodgings in the interests of the toilers and especially of the families of the fighters; expropriate the land and landowners' inventories in the interests of the peasants; and establish workers' control and soviet power in place of the former bureaucracy.

(6) Enemies of the socialist revolution, i.e., exploiting elements and their agents, even when covering themselves with masks of "democrats," "republicans," "socialists," and "anarchists," should be mercilessly driven out from the army.

(7) At the head of each military unit there should stand a commissar possessing the irreproachable authority of a revolutionist and a warrior.

(8) In every military unit there should be a tempered nucleus of self-sacrificing fighters, recommended by workers' organizations. The members of this nucleus have but one privilege: to be the first under fire.

(9) The commanding corps of necessity includes at first many alien and unreliable elements. Verification and selection should be carried through on the basis of military experience, recommendations of commissars and testimonials



of the rank and file fighters. Simultaneously men drawn from the ranks of the revolutionary workers should be intensively trained for commanding posts.

(10) The strategy of civil war should unite the rules of military art with the tasks of the social revolution. Not only in propaganda but in military operations as well it is necessary to take into account the social composition of the enemy's military units (the bourgeois volunteers, the mobilized peasants, or, as with Franco, the colonial slaves) and in choosing an operative line to take into consideration the social structure of the corresponding regions of the land (the industrial regions; the peasant regions, revolutionary or reactionary; the regions of the oppressed nationalities, etc.). Briefly: revolutionary policy dominates strategy.

(11) The revolutionary government, as the executive committee of the workers and peasants, should be capable of winning full confidence of the army and of the toiling population.

(12) Foreign policy should have as its chief aim the awakening of the revolutionary consciousness of the workers, the exploited peasants, and the oppressed nationalities of the whole world.

The conditions for victory, as we see, are quite simple. In their aggregate they are called the socialist revolution. There did not exist in Spain even one of these conditions. The basic reason was that there was no revolutionary party. Stalin tried, it is true, to transplant to the soil of Spain the outer forms of Bolshevism; the Politburo commissars, "nuclei," the G.P.U.,\* etc. But he emptied these forms of their social content. He renounced the Bolshevik program and with it the soviets as the necessary form of the revolutionary initiative of the masses. He placed the techniques of Bolshevism at the service of bourgeois property. In his bureaucratic narrow-mindedness he imagined that the "commissars" by themselves could guarantee victory. But the commissars of private property proved capable only of guaranteeing defeat.

The Spanish proletariat displayed first-class military capacities. In its specific gravity in the economy of the country, in its political and cultural level, it stood on the first day of the revolution not lower but higher than the Russian

\*Soviet secret police organization.

proletariat at the beginning of 1917. On the road to its victory, its own organizations stood as the chief obstacles. The commanding clique of the Stalinists, in accordance with its counterrevolutionary function, consisted of hired agents, careerists, declassed elements, and, in general, every kind of social refuse. The representatives of other worker's organizations—flabby reformists, anarchist phrasemongers, helpless centrists of the POUM\*—grumbled, groaned, wavered, maneuvered, but in the end adapted themselves to the Stalinists. As a result of their aggregate work the camp of social revolution—workers and peasants—proved to be subordinated to the bourgeoisie, more correctly to its shadow, void of individuality, spirit, life. There was no lack of heroism on the part of the masses and courage on the part of individual revolutionists. But the masses were left to themselves and the revolutionists remained disunited, without program, without plan of action. The “republican” military commanders occupied themselves more with crushing the social revolution than with winning military victories. The soldiers lost confidence in their commanders, the masses—in the government; the peasants stepped aside, the workers got tired, defeat followed defeat, demoralization grew. All this was not difficult to foresee from the beginning of the civil war. Taking as its task the rescue of the capitalist régime, the People's Front doomed itself to military defeat. Having turned Bolshevism on its head, Stalin with full success played the role of the gravedigger of the revolution. . . .

\*Workers Party of Marxist Unification, an anti-Stalinist, left-wing socialist party, led by Andres Nin and Juan Andrade, two founders of the Spanish Communist party who became oppositionists. Nin was arrested and murdered at the behest of the Soviet secret police during the Spanish Civil War.

THE ENGLISH-SPEAKING  
WORLD: 1917-1940*England: The Fabian Theory of Socialism*

*There was hardly a country on the continent of Europe where Trotsky was not intellectually "at home" and about whose affairs he did not speak with authority and penetration. He was perhaps less "at home" in the English-speaking world. Yet the views he expressed on the economic and political trends in England and the USA, and his incidental analyses of their historic backgrounds, were no less remarkable. Trotsky wrote Whither England? in 1925. He devoted many pages to a characterization of Fabianism that still inspires the reformist policies of British labor. The book was written a year before Great Britain was shaken by the famous General Strike. At that time the Soviet and the British trade unions formed an Anglo-Russian Unity Committee under the auspices of Stalin and Bukharin. Later when the British trade-union leaders helped break the General Strike, Trotsky demanded that the Russians should demonstratively quit the Unity Committee. "The Prince of Pamphleteers," as Bernard Shaw once called him, shows his skill in the slashing irony of this portrait of Fabianism, taken from Chapter IV of Whither England?*

MacDonald\* is opposed to revolution, but he is in favor of organic evolution: he applies to society a few badly digested biological conceptions. Revolution for him, as a sum of cumulative partial changes, is similar to

from *Whither England?* by Leon Trotsky, pp. 80-91

\*The leader of the British Labour Party in the nineteen twenties, who later deserted it.

the evolution of living organisms, such as that which transforms the larva into a butterfly; and furthermore, in this latter process, he overlooks precisely the decisively critical moment when the new animal breaks through the old envelope by the method of revolution. It may be observed, by the way, that MacDonald is "in favor of a revolution like that which went on in the bowels of feudalism, when the industrial revolution was maturing." In his boundless ignorance MacDonald apparently imagines that the industrial revolution proceeded as a molecular process, without upheavals, without devastation. He simply does not know the history of England, not to speak of the history of other countries. And he above all does not understand that the industrial revolution, which had been maturing in the womb of feudalism in the form of the accumulation of commercial capital, led to the Reformation, brought the Stuarts into conflict with Parliament, gave birth to the Great Rebellion, laid England waste and bare—in order later to enrich the country.

It would be too boring to dwell here on an interpretation of the process of the transformation from the larva into the butterfly, with the object of obtaining the necessary social analogies. It is perhaps simpler and more speedy to recommend to MacDonald to ponder on the time-honored comparison of revolution with the process of birth. Should we not learn a "lesson" from birth, as from the Russian Revolution? In birth also, there is "nothing" but agony and travail (of course, the baby does not count!). Should we not recommend the populace of the future to multiply by painless Fabian methods, by resorting to the talents of Mrs. Snowden as a midwife?

Of course, we are aware that the matter is not altogether a simple one. Even the chicken which is growing in the egg must apply force in order to break its calcareous prison; if any Fabian chicken should refrain—for Christian or other considerations—from this application of force, it would be choked by its hard shell of lime. English pigeon-fanciers, by a method of artificial selection, have succeeded in producing a variety by a progressive shortening of the bill. They have even gone so far as to attain a form in which the bill of the new scion is so short that the poor creature is incapable of breaking through the shell of the egg in which it is born. The unhappy pigeon perishes, a victim of its compulsory abstention from the use of force, and

the further progress of the variety of short-billed pigeons is thus terminated. If our memory does not deceive us, MacDonald may read up on this matter in his Darwin. Having been induced to enter the path of analogy with the organic world, which is such a hobby with MacDonald, we may say that the political skill of the English bourgeoisie consists in shortening the revolutionary bill of the proletariat and thus preventing them from breaking through the shell of the capitalist state. The bill of the proletariat is its party. A single glance at MacDonald, [James Henry] Thomas, Mr. and Mrs. Snowden,\* is sufficient to convince us that the work of the bourgeoisie in the selection of short-billed and soft-billed specimens has been crowned with immense success, for these ladies and gentlemen are not only not fit for breaking through the shell of the capitalist system, but are good for nothing whatsoever.

But here the analogy ends, and reveals the disadvantage of basing one's argument on scattered facts obtained from textbooks of biology rather than on the scientific conditions and stages of historical development. Human society, although growing out of the conditions of the organic and inorganic world, is nevertheless so complicated and concentrated a combination of these conditions as to demand independent study. The social organism differs from the biological organism, for instance, in its much greater elasticity, adaptability of the elements for regrouping, for a (to a certain extent) conscious selection of their tools and methods, for a (within certain limits) conscious utilization of the experience of the past, etc. The little pigeon in its egg cannot change its short bill for a longer one, and therefore perishes. But the working class, when faced with the question "to be or not to be" will discard MacDonald and Mrs. Snowden and equip itself with the beak of a revolutionary party for the overthrow of the capitalist system.

\*Thomas was an English labor leader and politician, member of Parliament 1910-36. As general secretary of the National Union of Railwaymen 1925-31, he was one of the "Big Three" during the 1926 British General Strike. Expelled from the Labour Party 1931 for joining the MacDonald government. Philip Snowden was an English socialist. Became chairman of the Independent Labour Party in 1903 and served in Parliament (1906-18; 1922-33). Held post of Chancellor of the Exchequer in MacDonald's cabinets and resigned with him from the Labour Party in 1931. His wife was also active in Labour Party affairs.

It is particularly interesting to observe in MacDonald a combination of a crassly biological theory of society with an idealistic Christian hatred of materialism. "You speak of revolution, of catastrophic changes, but look at nature; how wise is the action of the caterpillar when it envelops itself in the cocoon; look at the worthy tortoise, and you will find in its movements the natural rhythm for the transformation of society. Learn from nature!" In the same spirit MacDonald brands materialism as a "vulgar, senseless claim, without any spiritual or mental delicacy." . . . MacDonald and delicacy! Is it not an astonishing "delicacy" which seeks inspiration in the caterpillar for the collective social activity of man and simultaneously demands for its own private use an immortal soul and all the comforts of life in the here-after?

"Socialists are accused of being poets. That is true," MacDonald explains, "we are poets. There is no fine policy without poetry. In fact, without poetry there is nothing fine." And so forth, all in the same style, until, at the conclusion: "Above all, the world needs a political and social Shakespeare." This prattle about poetry may be politically not quite so silly as the remarks on the inadmissibility of force. But the full lack of inspiration in MacDonald is here expressed even more strongly, if that were possible. The dull and timid miser in whom there is as much poetry as in a square end of felt, tries to impress the world with his Shakespearean antics. Here you will really find the "monkey pranks" which MacDonald would like to ascribe to the Bolsheviks.

MacDonald, the "poet" of Fabianism! The policy of Sidney Webb,\* an artistic creation! The Thomas Ministry, colonial poetry! And finally, Mr. Snowden's budget, a triumphant love song of the City [London's financial district]!

While babbling about his social Shakespeare, MacDonald overlooks Lenin. It is an excellent thing for MacDonald—though not for Shakespeare—that the great English poet produced his creations more than three centuries ago; MacDonald has had sufficient time to appreciate Shakespeare as Shakespeare. He would never have recognized him had Shakespeare been one of his contemporaries. So MacDon-

\*Sidney Webb and his wife Beatrice were English writers on sociology and economics, founders of the Fabian Society. Joint authors of numerous works on trade unions, municipal government, socialist theory, and Soviet Russia.

ald ignores—completely and definitely ignores—Lenin. The blindness of the Philistine finds its dual expression in pointless sighs for Shakespeare and in a failure to appreciate his most powerful contemporary.

“Socialism is interested in art and in the classics.” It is surprising how this “poet” can corrupt by his mere touch thoughts that have nothing inherently vile about them. To convince himself of this, the reader need only read the inference: “Even where there exists great poverty and great unemployment, as is unfortunately the case in our country, citizens [?] should not deny themselves the purchase of paintings or of anything, in general, that may call forth joy and improve the minds of young and old.” This excellent advice does not make it entirely clear, however, whether the purchase of paintings is recommended to the unemployed themselves, with the implication that the necessary supplementary appropriations will be made for this need, or whether MacDonald is advising wellborn gentlemen and ladies to purchase paintings “in spite of unemployment” and thus to “improve their minds.” We may assume that the second explanation is the correct one. But then, we are constrained to behold in MacDonald a priest of the parlor-Liberal Protestant school, who first speaks with powerful words of poverty and the “religion of conscience” and then advises his worldly flock not to surrender too much to despair and to continue their former mode of living. Let him who will—after this—believe that materialism is vulgarity and that MacDonald is a social poet, languishing with longing for a Shakespeare. As for us, we believe that, if there is in the physical world an absolute zero, corresponding to the greatest attainable cold, there is also in the mental world a degree of absolute vulgarity, corresponding to the mental temperature of MacDonald.

Sidney and Beatrice Webb represent a different variety of Fabianism. They are accustomed to patient and laborious literary labor, know the value of facts and figures, and this circumstance imposes certain limitations on their diffuse thought. They are not less boring than MacDonald, but they may be more instructive when they do not attempt to transcend the bounds of investigations of fact. In the domain of generalization they are hardly superior to MacDonald. At the 1923 congress of the Labour Party, Sidney Webb declared that the founder of British socialism was

not Karl Marx but Robert Owen, who did not preach the class struggle but the time-honored doctrine of the brotherhood of all mankind. Sidney Webb still considers John Mill\* a classic of political economy and accordingly teaches that the struggle should be carried on not between capital and labor but between the overwhelming majority of the nation and the expropriators of rents. This should be sufficient to indicate the theoretical level of the principal economist of the Labour Party! The historical process, as we all know, does not proceed according to Webb's desires, even in England. The trade unions are organizations of wage labor against capital. On the basis of the trade unions we have the growth of the Labour Party, which even made Sidney Webb a cabinet minister. Webb carried out his platform only in the sense that he waged no war against the expropriators of surplus value. But he waged no war either against the expropriators of rents.

In 1923, the Webbs issued a book, *The Decay of Capitalist Civilization*, which has as its basis a partly outgrown, partly refurbished paraphrase of Kautsky's old commentaries on the Erfurt Program.\*\* But the political tendency of Fabianism is again revealed in *The Decay of Capitalist Civilization* in all its hopelessness, this time half-knowingly. There is no doubt [for whom?] say the Webbs, that the capitalist system will change. The whole question simply is how it is to be transformed. "It may by considerate adaptation be made to pass gradually and peacefully into a new form." But this requires a certain element: good will on both sides. "Unfortunately," the respected authors relate, "many who assent to this proposition of inevitable change, fail to realize what the social institutions are to which this law of change applies. To them the basis of all possible civilization is private property in a sense in which it is so bound up with human nature, that whilst men remain men, it is no more capable of decay or supersession

\*Owen was a noted British manufacturer and educator of the early nineteenth century. Critic of marriage, private property, and religion; proponent of an idealistic socialism based upon small cooperative communities. John Stuart Mill, nineteenth-century English empirical philosopher, logician, and economist. His *Political Economy*, published in 1848, was a liberalistic analysis of capitalist relations.

\*\*The Erfurt Program was adopted at Erfurt in 1891 by the Congress of the German Social Democracy, superseding the original Gotha Program adopted in 1875.



than the rotation of the earth on its axis. But they misunderstand the position." How unhappily have circumstances conspired to frustrate us! The whole business could be arranged to the general satisfaction by applying a method of "placid adaptation," if the workers and capitalists could only agree on the method of this consummation. But since no such agreement has "hitherto" been attained, the capitalists vote for the Conservatives. What should be our conclusion? Here our poor Fabians fail us completely, and here *The Decay of Capitalist Civilization* assumes the form of a lamentable decay of Fabianism. "Before the Great War there seemed to be a substantial measure of consent," the book relates, "that the social order had to be gradually changed, in the direction of a greater equality, etc." By whom was this recognized? These people think their little Fabian molehill is the universe. "We thought, perhaps wrongly [!], that this characteristic British [?] acquiescence on the part of a limited governing class in the rising claims of those who had found themselves excluded from both enjoyment and control, would continue and be extended, willingly or reluctantly, still further from the political into the industrial sphere; and that while progress might be slow, there would at least be no reaction. But after the War, everything fell into desuetude: the conditions of the lives of the workers became worse, we are threatened with the reestablishment of the *veto* power of the House of Lords, with the particular object of resisting further 'concessions to the worker,'" etc. What is the conclusion to be drawn from all this? It was in their hopeless search for such a conclusion that the Webbs wrote their little book. Its final sentence reads as follows: "In an attempt, *possibly vain*, to make the parties understand their problems and each other better—in the hope that it is not always inevitable that Nature should harden the hearts of those whom she intends to destroy—we offer this little book." Is not this nice: a "little book" is offered as a means of conciliating the proletariat with the bourgeoisie. Let us recapitulate: before the war, "it seemed" to be generally recognized that the present system must be altered for the better; however, there was no general agreement as to the character of this change: the capitalists stood for private property, the workers against private property; after the war, the objective situation became worse, and the political divergence became further aggravated; *therefore*, the Webbs write a little book in order to make both sides

more inclined toward conciliation; but this hope is admitted to be "possibly vain." Yes, possibly, quite possibly. The worthy Webbs, who are so strongly imbued with a faith in the powers of intellectual conviction, ought—it appears to us—in the interest of "gradual changes," to apply themselves, at least at the beginning to a simpler task, namely, that of persuading a few high-placed Christian scoundrels to renounce their monopoly in the opium trade and their poisoning of millions of people in the Orient.

Oh, how poor, base, weak-minded, how vile in its intellectual cowardice is this Fabianism!

It is entirely impossible to attempt to enumerate all the philosophical varieties of Fabianism, for among this class "liberty of opinion" prevails in the sense that each of its leaders has his own personal philosophy, which consists, in the last analysis, of the same reactionary elements of Conservatism, Liberalism, and Protestantism as in any other such combination. Not long ago, we were very much surprised to learn that so ingenious—we had thought—and so critical a writer as George Bernard Shaw had advised us that Marx had been far surpassed by [H. G.] Wells's great work on history.\* These revelations, an entire surprise to all of mankind, may be explained by the fact that the Fabians constitute from the standpoint of theory, an absolutely closed microcosm of profoundly provincial nature, in spite of the fact that they live in London. Their philosophical excogitations are apparently of no use either to Conservatives or to Liberals. They are of still less use to the working class, to whom they neither give nor explain anything. Their productions serve in the last analysis only to make clear to the Fabians themselves what is the use of the existence of Fabianism. Together with theological literature,

\*I regret to say that before I read Shaw's letter, I had not even known of the existence of Wells's *Outline of History*. I later became acquainted with it; conscience prevents me from saying that I read it through, for an acquaintance with two or three chapters was quite sufficient to induce me to desist from a further waste of time. Imagine an absolute absence of method, of historical perspective, of understanding of the mutual dependence of the various phases of social life; in general, of any kind of scientific discipline; and then imagine the "historian" burdened with these accomplishments, with the carefree mind of a Sunday pedestrian, strolling aimlessly and awkwardly through a few thousand years of history, and then you have Wells's book, which is to replace the Marxian school. [L. T.]

these works seem to be the most useless, at any rate, the most boring, form of intellectual creation.

At present it is customary in England in certain fields of activity to speak with a certain contempt of the men of the "Victorian era," i.e., the outstanding figures of the time of Queen Victoria. Everything has changed since then in England, but the Fabian type has perhaps been preserved even more intact. The insipid, optimistic Victorian epoch, in which it was believed that tomorrow will be somewhat better than today and the day after tomorrow still better than tomorrow, has found its most perfect expression in the Webbs, Snowden, MacDonald, and other Fabians. They may therefore be considered as an awkward and useless survival of an epoch that has already been definitely and irrevocably destroyed. We may say without exaggeration, that the Fabian Society, founded in 1884, with the object of "awakening the social consciousness," is now the most reactionary group to be found in Great Britain. Neither the Conservative clubs nor Oxford University, nor the higher Anglican clergy nor other priestly institutions, can begin to be compared with the Fabians. For all these are institutions of our enemies, and the revolutionary movement of the proletariat will inevitably break down their walls. But the proletariat is being restrained precisely by its own leading ranks, i.e., by the Fabian politicians and their mental offspring. These inflated authorities, pedants, conceited and highfalutin cowards are systematically poisoning the labor movement, obscuring the consciousness of the proletariat, paralyzing its will. Thanks only to them, Toryism, Liberalism, the Church, the monarchy, the aristocracy, the bourgeoisie, continue to maintain themselves and even to feel secure in the saddle. The Fabians, the Independents, the conservative bureaucracy of the trade unions, are now the most counterrevolutionary power in Great Britain and perhaps in the entire present stage of the world situation. The driving out of the Fabians will be equivalent to a liberation of the revolutionary energy of the proletariat of Great Britain, to Socialism's conquest of the British fortress of reaction, to the freeing of India and Egypt, and to a mighty stimulus to the movement and growth of the peoples of the Orient. Renouncing force, the Fabians believe only in the power of "ideas." The kernel of truth imprisoned by this vile, hypocritical philosophy is merely the fact that no system can be maintained by force alone. And this holds good

also of the British imperialist system. In a country in which the overwhelming majority of the population consists of proletarians, the ruling Conservative-Liberal imperialist clique could not have maintained itself for a single day if the instruments of force which this clique holds in its hands were not reinforced, supplemented, and coated with pseudo-Socialist ideals, confusing and disintegrating the proletariat.

The French "enlighteners" of the eighteenth century considered Catholicism, clericalism, the priesthood, to be their great enemy, and felt it was necessary to *écraser l'infâme* [crush the infamous], before further progress was possible. They were right in the sense that it was the priesthood, the organized system of superstition, of the Catholic mental police system, which stood in the way of bourgeois society, obstructing the growth of science, art, political ideas, economics. Fabianism, MacDonaldism, pacifism, now play precisely the same role in relation to the historical movement of the proletariat. Fabianism is the chief support of British and European imperialism, if not of the entire world bourgeoisie; we must point out to the workers the true countenance of these self-complacent pedants, prattling eclectics, sentimental careerists, liveried footmen of the bourgeoisie. In showing them up for what they are, we are discrediting them forever. In discrediting them, we are performing an immense service to historical progress. On the day when the English proletariat frees itself from the mental baseness of Fabianism, humanity, particularly in Europe, will increase in stature by at least a head.

### *The United States of America*

*Trotsky had closer contacts with the socialist movement in the United States than did any other prominent Soviet leader. These began during the First World War after he was deported from France and Spain for his antiwar opinions. He landed in New York with his family on January 13, 1917. Working as a socialist journalist, he helped organize the left wing in the Socialist Party, which later became the nucleus of the Communist movement. He stayed in New York for only two months, departing for Russia*

after the February revolution "in a deluge of flowers and speeches." Although he never revisited the United States, Trotsky maintained an interest in its affairs. He followed the activities of the US Communist Party throughout the nineteen twenties and the progress of the American Trotskyists during the next decade. His collaboration with the latter (the Socialist Workers Party) became especially intimate after his arrival in Mexico in January, 1937.

Trotsky expected the United States to be "the foundry in which the fate of man is to be forged." The following selections represent different aspects of his thought on the subject of America. The first is a portrait of the Socialist Party leaders as he observed them in 1917. The second, characterizing the international role of American power and wealth, is taken from a speech delivered to Russian workers in 1924, and included in a later pamphlet entitled *Europe and America*. In 1935, during the Great Depression, editors of *Liberty* magazine asked Trotsky what he thought the United States would be like in the event of a successful socialist revolution. His reply, reprinted here, provoked much controversy. The fourth extract is from an introduction to the *Living Thoughts of Karl Marx*, written in 1939. Here he endeavored to demonstrate that the United States, as the consummate expression of twentieth-century capitalism, had evolved according to the laws of political economy set forth by Marx.

The fifth selection is from the final section of a lengthy interview with Trotsky in 1940, at the beginning of the Second World War, which was published in three consecutive issues (March 10, 17, 24) of the *Sunday St. Louis Post-Dispatch*.

#### AMERICAN SOCIALIST LEADERS

In ideas the Socialist party of the United States lagged far behind even European patriotic socialism. But the superior airs of the American press—still neutral at the time [1917]—toward an "insensate" Europe, were reflected also in the opinions of American

from *My Life* by Leon Trotsky, pp. 274-275

Socialists. Men like Morris Hillquit\* welcomed the chance to play the Socialist American "uncle" who would appear in Europe at the crucial moment and make peace between the warring factions of the Second International. To this day, I smile as I recall the leaders of American Socialism. Immigrants who had played some role in Europe in their youth, they very quickly lost the theoretical premise they had brought with them in the confusion of their struggle for success. In the United States there is a large class of successful and semi-successful doctors, lawyers, dentists, engineers, and the like who divide their precious hours of rest between concerts by European celebrities and the American Socialist party. Their attitude toward life is composed of shreds and fragments of the wisdom they absorbed in their student days. Since they all have automobiles, they are invariably elected to the important committees, commissions, and delegations of the party. It is this vain public that impresses the stamp of its mentality on American Socialism. They think that [Woodrow] Wilson was infinitely more authoritative than Marx. And, properly speaking, they are simply variants of "Babbitt," who supplements his commercial activities with dull Sunday meditations on the future of humanity. These people live in small national clans, in which the solidarity of ideas usually serves as a screen for business connections. Each clan has its own leader, usually the most prosperous of the Babbitts. They tolerate all ideas, provided they do not undermine their traditional authority and do not threaten—God forbid!—their personal comfort. A Babbitt of Babbitts is Hillquit, the ideal Socialist leader for successful dentists.

My first contact with these men was enough to call forth their candid hatred of me. My feelings toward them, though probably less intense, were likewise not especially sympathetic. We belonged to different worlds. To me they seemed the rottenest part of that world with which I was and still am at war.

Old Eugene Debs\*\* stood out prominently among the

\*Hillquit was an American lawyer and leader of the Socialist party. A member of its national executive from 1907 to 1933, he occupied a right-center position in the leadership.

\*\*Debs was a railway union organizer and popular militant socialist leader. Five times presidential candidate of the Socialist Party. Jailed for antiwar speeches during World War I, he ran for the presidency in 1920 while in Atlanta Federal prison.

generation because of the quenchless inner flame of his socialist idealism. Although he was a romantic and a preacher, and not at all a politician or a leader, he was a sincere revolutionary; yet he succumbed to the influence of people who were in every respect his inferiors. Hillquit's art lay in keeping [Eugene] Debs on his left flank while he maintained a business friendship with [Samuel] Gompers\* Debs had a captivating personality. Whenever we met, he embraced and kissed me; the old man did not belong to the "drys." When the Babbitts proclaimed a blockade against me, Debs took no part in it; he simply drew aside, sorrowfully. . . .

#### THE "PACIFIST" IMPERIALISM OF THE USA

America's full and complete entry into active world imperialist policy does not date back to yesterday. If we try to fix the date, we might say that the decisive breaking point in the policy of the U.S. coincides approximately with the turn of the century. The Spanish American war occurred in 1898 when America seized Cuba, thereby assuring herself the key to Panama, and consequently the entry to the Pacific Ocean, China and the continent of Asia. In 1900, the last year of the nineteenth century, the export of American manufactured goods for the first time in U.S. history exceeded the import of manufactured articles. This already made America, so to speak bookkeepingly, a country with an active world policy. In 1901 or 1902 America secured for herself the province of Panama in the Republic of Columbia. In these matters America had a policy of her own which was applied in the Hawaiian Islands and, I think, in Samoa, but in any case, is was applied in Panama and is now being applied in Mexico. Whenever the transatlantic republic finds it necessary to seize foreign territory, to subjugate it, or to conclude some slave treaty, it stages a small native revolution and then appears on the scene in order to pacify and quell it—

from *Europe and America* by Leon Trotsky, pp. 13-16

\*Gompers was first president of the American Federation of Labor, a post he held from 1886 to 1924 (except for one year 1895).

precisely in the manner in which General Dawes\* has now appeared to tranquillize and pacify Europe, which has been ruined by a war waged with the assistance of this very same America. In this manner the U.S. seized Panama in 1902 and proceeded [in 1904] to dig the canal. By 1914 they had it dug in the rough; while in 1920 the already fully completed Panama Canal opened up what is truly the greatest chapter in the history of America and the whole terrestrial globe. The United States has introduced a drastic correction into geography in the interests and aims of American imperialism. . . . As you know the industry of the U.S. is concentrated in the eastern part, on the Atlantic side. The country's west is predominantly agricultural. The entire pull of the U.S., more correctly its main pull, is in the direction of China with the latter's population of 400,000,000 and the country's countless, uncharted, and limitless resources. Through the Panama Canal, American industry has opened up a waterway for itself from the east to the west, shortening the distances by several thousand miles. These dates—1898, 1900, 1914, and 1920—are the dates marking the open entry of the U.S. into the highroad of world brigandage, i.e., the road of imperialism. The decisive signpost along this road was the [First World] War. As you will recall, the U.S. intervened in the war toward the very end. For three years the U.S. did no fighting. More than that, two months before intervening in the war, [President] Wilson announced that there could be no talk of American participation in the bloody dogfight among the madmen of Europe. Up to a certain moment the U.S. remained content with rationally coining into dollars the blood of European "madmen." But in that hour when fear arose lest the war conclude with victory for Germany, the most dangerous future rival, the United States intervened actively. This decided the outcome of the struggle.

And the noteworthy thing is this, that while America avariciously fed the war with her industry and avariciously intervened in order to help crush a likely and dangerous

\*The Dawes Plan was an international scheme announced April 9, 1924, designed to revise German reparations payments, stabilize the Reich's economy and end French occupation of the Ruhr. The plan was named after General Charles G. Dawes who headed the commission of experts from the United States, Great Britain, France, Italy, and Belgium that drafted the arrangements. Accepted by the German Government on April 16, it went into effect the following month.



competitor, she has nevertheless retained a reputation for pacifism. This is one of the most interesting paradoxes, one of the most curious jokes of history—jokes from which we did not and do not derive much merriment. American imperialism is in essence ruthlessly rude, predatory, in the full sense of the word, and criminal. But owing to the special conditions of American development, it has the possibility of draping itself in the toga of pacifism. This is not at all done in the manner of the imperialist parvenues of the old world where everything remains transparent. In the case of the U.S., however, its bourgeoisie and government, thanks to the special conditions of America's development, this same pacifist mask seems to have become so glued on the imperialist visage that it cannot be torn off. This was not accidental. Geography helped. History helped. The U.S. managed without a land army. Why? Because the U.S. is so hard to reach. On the right there is the Atlantic Ocean and on the left, the Pacific (even the ocean is pacifist!)—how can it be reached? England is an island and that is one of the basic reasons for its peculiarities and at the same time it is one of England's basic advantages. The United States likewise represents a gigantic island in relation to the Old World grouping on the planet. England barricades herself with her fleet. But should the line of the English fleet be broken, the British Isles lie defenseless, they can be cut in two by a cavalry sabre, so narrow is this strip of land. But try to cut across America, across the United States! This island possesses the advantages of Russia—her vast spaces. Thanks to its colossal distances, the United States, even without a fleet, would be almost invulnerable to Europe or Japan. Here is the basic geographic reason for the pacifist mask which has become a second face. Actually America, unlike Europe, unlike all the others, does not create an army. . . . And if America does undertake to create an army, it is only because it is under the compulsion to do so. Who compelled it? Barbarians did, the Kaiser, the German imperialists, people who were not educated in Presbyterian or Quaker virtues. Another reason for pacifist virtue must be sought, as I said, in history. The U.S. entered the world arena late, after the whole world had already been seized and divided by the old imperialist powers. The imperialist progress of the U.S. therefore proceeds under the banner of "the freedom of the seas," "open doors," and so on. Thus when America is compelled to engage in acts of open

military criminality, the responsibility—in the eyes of the U.S. population and to a certain degree in the eyes of mankind as a whole—falls upon all the other citizens on the planet but not on the U.S. itself.

Wilson helped finish off Germany and then appeared, as you will recall, in Europe accoutred from head to toe in his Fourteen Points, which promised universal well-being and the reign of peace, the right of nations to self-determination, punishment for such criminals as the Kaiser, and rewards to all virtuous people, etc. The gospel according to Wilson! We all still remember it. And the whole of middle-class Europe, and workers, too, by and large—the whole of worker-middle-class Europe, i.e., worker-Menshevik Europe subsisted for many long months on the gospel according to Wilson. This provincial professor, summoned to represent American capitalism and dripping from blood up to his knees and elbows—for after all he incited the European slaughter—appeared in Europe as the apostle of pacifism and pacification. And everybody said: Wilson will bring peace; Wilson will restore Europe. However, Wilson did not succeed in accomplishing what Dawes, accompanied by a suite of bankers, now arrives to accomplish; and Wilson petulantly turned his back on Europe and returned to America. And great were the democratic-pacifist and social-democratic wailings and complaints about the insanity of the European bourgeoisie who refused to come to an agreement with Wilson and prevented him from attaining peace in European affairs.

Wilson was replaced [by Warren G. Harding]. The Republican Party came to power. There ensued in America a commercial-industrial boom based almost exclusively on the internal market, i.e., on a temporary equilibrium between industry and agriculture, between the East and the West. This boom did not last long, approximately two years. Last year the boom tapered off and an unstable condition resulted, but in the spring of this year many obvious signs became manifest of a commercial-industrial crisis, which hit the agricultural sections of the U.S. savagely. And, as always, the crisis gave a new quickening impulse to imperialism. As a result, U.S. finance capital sent its representatives to Europe to finish the business which began so solidly with the imperialist war and was continued by the Versailles Peace, i.e., the business of degrading and enslaving Europe economically.

What does American capitalism want? What is it seeking? It is seeking, we are told, stability; it wants to restore the European market; it wants to make Europe solvent. How? By what measures? And to what extent? After all, American capitalism is compelled not to render Europe capable of competition; it cannot allow England, and even more so Germany and France, particularly Germany, to regain the world markets inasmuch as American capitalism finds itself hemmed in, because it is now an exporting capitalism—exporting both commodities and capital. American capitalism is seeking world domination; it wants to establish an American imperialist autocracy over our planet. This is what it wants. What will it do with Europe? It must, they say, pacify Europe. How? Under its leadership. And what does this mean? This means that Europe will be permitted to rise again, but within limits set in advance, with certain restricted sections of the world market allotted to it. American capitalism is now issuing commands, giving instructions to its diplomats. In exactly the same way it is preparing and is ready to issue instructions to European banks and trusts, to the European bourgeoisie as a whole. . . . This is its aim. It will slice up the markets; it will regulate the activity of the European financiers and industrialists. If we wish to give a clear and precise answer to the question of what American imperialism wants, we must say: It wants to put capitalist Europe on rations. . . .

#### IF AMERICA SHOULD GO COMMUNIST

Should America go Communist as a result of the difficulties and problems which your capitalist social order is unable to solve, it will discover that Communism, far from being an intolerable bureaucratic tyranny and individual regimentation, will be the means of greater individual liberty and shared abundance.

At present most Americans regard Communism solely in the light of the experience of the Soviet Union. They fear lest Sovietism in America would produce the same material results as it has brought for the culturally backward peoples of the Soviet Union.

from *Fourth International* by Leon Trotsky, March–April, 1951, pp. 54–57.

They fear lest Communism should try to fit them to a bed of Procrustes, and point to the bulwark of Anglo-Saxon conservatism as an insuperable obstacle even to possibly desirable reforms. They argue that Great Britain and Japan would undertake military intervention against the American Soviets. They shudder lest Americans be regimented in their habits of dress and diet; be compelled to subsist on famine rations; read stereotyped official propaganda in the newspapers; serve as rubber stamps for decisions arrived at without their active participation; keep their thoughts to themselves and loudly praise their Soviet leaders in public, through fear of imprisonment and exile.

They fear monetary inflation, bureaucratic tyranny, and intolerable red tape in obtaining the necessities of life. They fear soulless standardization in the arts and sciences, as well as in the daily necessities of life. They fear that all political spontaneity and the presumed freedom of the press will be destroyed by the dictatorship of a monstrous bureaucracy. And they shudder at the thought of being forced into an uncomprehended glibness in Marxian dialectic and disciplined social philosophies. They fear, in a word, that Soviet America will become the counterpart of what they have been told Soviet Russia looks like.

Actually American Soviets will be as different from the Russian Soviets as the United States of President Roosevelt differs from the Russian Empire of Tsar Nicholas II. Yet Communism can come in America only through revolution, just as independence and democracy came in America. The American temperament is energetic and violent, and it will insist on breaking a good many dishes and upsetting a good many apple carts before Communism is firmly established. Americans are enthusiasts and sportsmen before they are specialists and statesmen, and it would be contrary to the American tradition to make a major change without choosing sides and cracking heads.

However, the American Communist Revolution will be insignificant compared to the Bolshevik Revolution in Russia, in terms of national wealth and population, no matter how great its comparative cost. That is because civil war of a revolutionary nature isn't fought by the handful of men at the top—the 5 or 10 percent who own nine-tenths of American wealth; this handful could recruit its counter-revolutionary armies only from among the lower middle classes. Even so, the revolution could easily attract them to

its banner by showing that support of the Soviets alone offers them the prospect of salvation.

Everybody below this group is already economically prepared for Communism. The depression has ravaged your working class and has dealt a crushing blow to the farmers, who had already been injured by the long agricultural decline of the postwar decade. There is no reason why these groups should oppose determined resistance to the revolution; they have nothing to lose, providing, of course, that the revolutionary leaders adopt a farsighted and moderate policy toward them.

Who else will fight against Communism? Your corporal's guard of billionaires and multimillionaires? Your Mellons, Morgans, Fords, and Rockefellers? They will cease struggling as soon as they fail to find other people to fight for them.

The American Soviet Government will take firm possession of the commanding heights of your business system: the banks, the key industries, and the transportation and communication systems. It will then give the farmers, the small tradespeople and business men a good long time to think things over and see how well the nationalized section of industry is working.

Here is where the American soviets can produce real miracles. "Technocracy" can come true only under Communism, when the dead hands of private property rights and private profits are lifted from your industrial system. The most daring proposals of the Hoover Commission on standardization and rationalization will seem childish compared to the new possibilities let loose by American Communism.

National industry will be organized along the line of the conveyor belt in your modern continuous-production automotive factories. Scientific planning can be lifted out of the individual factory and applied to your entire economic system. The results will be stupendous.

Costs of production will be cut to 20 percent, or less, of their present figure. This in turn would rapidly increase your farmers' purchasing power. To be sure, the American soviets would establish their own gigantic farm enterprises, as schools of voluntary collectivization. Your farmers could easily calculate whether it was to their individual advantage to remain as isolated links or to join the public chain.

The same method would be used to draw small businesses

and industries into the national organization of industry. By soviet control of raw materials, credits, and quotas of orders, these secondary industries could be kept solvent until they were gradually and without compulsion sucked into the socialized business system.

Without compulsion! The American soviets would not need to resort to the drastic measures which circumstances have often imposed upon the Russians. In the United States, through the science of publicity and advertising, you have means for winning the support of your middle class, which were beyond the reach of the soviets of backward Russia with its vast majority of pauperized and illiterate peasants. This, in addition to your technical equipment and your wealth, is the greatest asset of your coming Communist Revolution. Your revolution will be smoother in character than ours; you will not waste your energies and resources in costly social conflicts after the main issues have been decided; and you will move ahead so much the more rapidly in consequence.

Even the intensity and devotion of religious sentiment in America will not prove an obstacle to the revolution. If one assumes the perspective of soviets in America, none of the psychological brakes will prove firm enough to retard the pressure of the social crisis. This has been demonstrated more than once in history. Besides, it should not be forgotten that the Gospels themselves contain some pretty explosive aphorisms.

As to the comparatively few opponents of the Soviet Revolution, one can trust to American inventive genius. It may well be that you will take your unconvinced millionaires and send them to some picturesque island, rent-free for life, where they can do as they please.

You can do this safely, for you will not need to fear foreign interventions. Japan, Great Britain, and the other capitalistic countries which intervened in Russia couldn't do anything but take American Communism lying down. As a matter of fact that victory of Communism in America—the stronghold of capitalism—will cause Communism to spread to other countries. Japan will probably have joined the Communistic ranks even before the establishment of the American soviets. The same is true of Great Britain.

In any case, it would be a crazy idea to send His Britannic Majesty's fleet against Soviet America, even as a raid against the southern and more conservative half of your continent.

It would be hopeless and would never get any farther than a second-rate military escapade.

Within a few weeks or months of the establishment of the American soviets, Pan-Americanism would be a political reality.

The governments of Central and South America would be pulled into your federation like iron filings to a magnet. So would Canada. The popular movements in these countries would be so strong that they would force this great unifying process within a short period and at insignificant costs. I am ready to bet that the first anniversary of the American soviets would find the Western Hemisphere transformed into the Soviet United States of North, Central, and South America, with its capital at Panama. Thus for the first time the Monroe Doctrine would have a complete and positive meaning in world affairs, although not the one foreseen by its author.

In spite of the complaints of some of your archconservatives, [Franklin D.] Roosevelt is not preparing for a soviet transformation of the United States.

The NRA [National Recovery Administration] aims not to destroy but to strengthen the foundations of American capitalism, by overcoming your business difficulties. Not the Blue Eagle [the symbol of the NRA] but the difficulties which the Blue Eagle is powerless to overcome will bring about Communism in America. The "radical" professors of your Brain Trust are not revolutionists; they are only frightened conservatives. Your President abhors "systems" and "generalities." But a soviet government is the greatest of all possible systems, a gigantic generality in action.

The average man doesn't like systems or generalities, either. It is the task of your Communist statesmen to make the system deliver the concrete goods which the average man desires: his food, cigars, amusements, his freedom to choose his own neckties, his own house, and his own automobile. It will be easy to give him these comforts in Soviet America.

Most Americans have been misled by the fact that in USSR we had to build whole new basic industries from the ground up. Such a thing could not happen in America, where you are already compelled to cut down on your farm area and to reduce your industrial production. As a matter of fact your tremendous technological equipment has been paralyzed by the crisis and already clamors to be put to use.

You will be able to make a rapid step-up of consumption by your people the starting point of your economic revival.

You are prepared to do this as is no other country. Nowhere else has the study of the internal market reached such intensity as in the United States. It has been done by your banks, trusts, individual business men, merchants, traveling salesmen, and farmers as part of their stock in trade. Your Soviet Government will simply abolish all trade secrets, will combine all the findings of these researches for individual profit, and will transform them into a scientific system of economic planning. In this your government will be helped by the existence of a large class of cultured and critical consumers. By combining the nationalized key industries, your private businesses and democratic consumer cooperation, you will quickly develop a highly flexible system for serving the needs of your population.

This system will be made to work, not by bureaucracy and not by policemen, but by hard cold cash. Your almighty dollar will play a principal part in making your new soviet system work. It is a great mistake to try to mix a "planned economy" with a "managed currency." Your money must act as regulator with which to measure the success or failure of your planning. Your "radical" professors are dead wrong in their devotion to "managed money." It is an academic idea which could easily wreck your entire system of distribution and production. That is the great lesson to be derived from the Soviet Union, where bitter necessity has been converted into official virtue in the monetary realm.

There the lack of a stable gold ruble is one of the main causes of our many economic troubles and catastrophes. It is impossible to regulate wages, prices, and quality of goods without a firm monetary system. An unstable ruble in a soviet system is like having variable molds in a conveyor-belt factory. It won't work.

Only when Socialism succeeds in substituting administrative control for money will it be possible to abandon a stable gold currency. Then money will become ordinary paper slips, like trolley or theater tickets. As Socialism advances these slips will also disappear, and control over individual consumption—whether by money or administration—will no longer be necessary when there is more than enough of everything for everybody!

Such a time has not yet come, though America will certainly reach it before any other country. Until then, the



only way to reach such a state of development is to retain an effective regulator and measure for the working of your system. As a matter of fact, during the first few years a planned economy needs sound money even more than did old-fashioned capitalism. The professor who regulates the monetary unit with the aim of regulating the whole business system is like the man who tried to lift both his feet off the ground at the same time.

Soviet America will possess supplies of gold big enough to stabilize the dollar—a priceless asset. In Russia we have been expanding our industrial plant by 20 and 30 percent a year; but—owing to a weak ruble—we have not been able to distribute this increase effectively. This is partly because we have allowed our bureaucracy to subject our monetary system to administrative one-sidedness. You will be spared this evil. As a result you will greatly surpass us both in increased production and distribution, leading to a rapid advance in the comfort and welfare of your population.

In all this you will not need to imitate our standardized production for our pitiable mass consumers. We have taken over from Tsarist Russia a pauper's heritage, a culturally undeveloped peasantry with a low standard of living. We had to build our factories and dams at the expense of our consumers. We have had continual monetary inflation and a monstrous bureaucracy.

Soviet America will not have to imitate our bureaucratic methods. Among us the lack of the bare necessities has caused an intense scramble for an extra loaf of bread, an extra yard of cloth by everyone. In this struggle our bureaucracy steps forward as a conciliator, as an all-powerful court of arbitration. You, on the other hand, are much wealthier and would have little difficulty in supplying all of your people with all of the necessities of life. Moreover, your needs, tastes, and habits would never permit your bureaucracy to divide the national income. Instead, when you organize your society to produce for human needs rather than private profits, your entire population will group itself around new trends and groups, which will struggle with one another and prevent an overweening bureaucracy from imposing itself upon them.

You can thus avoid growth of bureaucratism by the practice of soviets—that is to say, democracy: the most flexible form of government yet developed. Soviet organization cannot achieve miracles but must simply reflect the will of the

people. With us the soviets have been bureaucratized as a result of the political monopoly of a single party, which has itself become a bureaucracy. This situation resulted from the exceptional difficulties of Socialist pioneering in a poor and backward country.

The American soviets will be full-blooded and vigorous, without need or opportunity for such measures as circumstances imposed upon Russia. Your unregenerate capitalists will, of course, find no place for themselves in the new setup. It is hard to imagine Henry Ford as the head of the Detroit Soviet.

Yet a wide struggle between interests, groups, and ideas is not only conceivable—it is inevitable. One-year, five-year, ten-year plans of business development; schemes for national education; construction of new basic lines of transportation; the transformation of the farms; the program for improving the technological and cultural equipment of Latin America; a program for stratosphere communication; eugenics—all of these will arouse controversy, vigorous electoral struggle, and passionate debate in the newspapers and at public meetings.

For Soviet America will not imitate the monopoly of the press by the heads of Soviet Russia's bureaucracy! While Soviet America would nationalize all printing plants, paper mills, and means of distribution, this would be a purely negative measure. It would simply mean that private capital will no longer be allowed to decide what publications should be established, whether they should be progressive or reactionary, "wet" or "dry," puritanical or pornographic. Soviet America will have to find a new solution for the question of how the power of the press is to function in a Socialist régime. It might be done on the basis of proportional representation for the votes in each soviet election. Thus the right of each group of citizens to use the power of the press would depend on their numerical strength—the same principle being applied to the use of meeting halls, allotment of time on the air, and so forth. Thus the management and policy of publications would be decided not by individual checkbooks but by group ideas. This may take little account of numerically small but important groups, but it simply means that each new idea will be compelled, as throughout history, to prove its right to existence.

Rich Soviet America can set aside vast funds for research and invention, discoveries and experiments in every field.

You won't neglect your bold architects and sculptors, your unconventional poets and audacious philosophers.

In fact, the Soviet Yankees of the future will give a lead to Europe in those very fields where Europe has hitherto been your master. Europeans have little conception of the power of technology to influence human destiny and have adopted an attitude of sneering superiority toward "Americanism," particularly since the crisis. Yet Americanism marks the true dividing line between the Middle Ages and the modern world.

Hitherto America's conquest of nature has been so violent and passionate that you have had no time to modernize your philosophies or to develop your own artistic forms. Hence you have been hostile to the doctrines of Hegel, Marx, and Darwin. The burning of Darwin's works by the Baptists of Tennessee is only a clumsy reflection of the American dislike for the doctrines of evolution. This attitude is not confined to your pulpits. It is still part of your general mental makeup.

Your atheists as well as your Quakers are determined rationalists. And your rationalism itself is weakened by empiricism and moralism. It has none of the merciless vitality of the great European rationalists. So your philosophic method is even more antiquated than your economic system and your political institutions.

Today, quite unprepared, you are being forced to face those social contradictions which grow up unsuspected in every society. You have conquered nature by means of the tools which your inventive genius has created, only to find that your tools have all but destroyed you. Contrary to all your hopes and desires, your unheard-of wealth has produced unheard-of misfortunes. You have discovered that social development does not follow a simple formula. Hence you have been thrust into the school of the dialectic—to stay.

There is no turning back from it to the mode of thinking and acting prevalent in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. While the romantic numskulls of Nazi Germany are dreaming of restoring the old race of Europe's Dark Forest to its original purity, or rather its original filth, you Americans, after taking a firm grip on your economic machinery and your culture, will apply genuine scientific methods to the problem of eugenics. Within a century, out

of your melting pot of races there will come a new breed of men—the first worthy of the name of Man.

One final prophecy: In the third year of soviet rule in America you will no longer chew gum!

#### FASCISM AND THE NEW DEAL

Two methods for saving historically doomed capitalism are today vying with each other in the world arena—Fascism and the New Deal, in all their manifestations. Fascism bases its program on the demolition of labor organizations, on the destruction of social reforms, and on the complete annihilation of democratic rights, in order to forestall a resurrection of the proletariat's class struggle. The fascist state officially legalizes the degradation of workers and the pauperization of the middle classes, in the name of saving the "nation" and the "race"—presumptuous names under which decaying capitalism figures.

The policy of the New Deal, which tries to save imperialist democracy by way of sops to the labor and farmer aristocracy, is in its broad compass accessible only to the very wealthy nations, and so in that sense it is American policy *par excellence*. The government has attempted to shift a part of the costs of that policy to the shoulders of the monopolists, exhorting them to raise wages and shorten the labor day and thus increase the purchasing power of the population and extend production. Léon Blum attempted to translate this sermon into elementary school French. In vain! The French capitalist, like the American, does not produce for the sake of production but for profit. He is always ready to limit production, even to destroy manufactured products, if thereby his own share of the national income will be increased.

The New Deal program is all the more inconsistent in that, while preaching sermons to the magnates of capital about the advantages of abundance over scarcity, the government dispenses premiums for cutting down on production. Is greater confusion possible? The government confutes its critics with the challenge: can you do better? What

from *Leon Trotsky on the Living Thoughts of Karl Marx*, pp. 26-27, 32-35

all this means is that on the basis of capitalism the situation is hopeless.

Beginning with 1933, i.e., in the course of the last six years, the federal government, the states, and the municipalities have handed out to the unemployed nearly fifteen billion dollars in relief, a sum quite insufficient in itself and representing merely the smaller part of lost wages, but at the same time, considering the declining national income, a colossal sum. During 1938, which was a year of comparative economic revival, the national debt of the United States increased by two billion dollars, past the thirty-eight billion-dollar mark, or twelve billion dollars more than the highest point at the end of the World War. Early in 1939 it passed the forty billion dollar-mark. And then what? The mounting national debt is of course a burden on posterity. But the New Deal itself was possible only because of the tremendous wealth accumulated by past generations. Only a very rich nation could indulge itself in so extravagant a policy. But even such a nation cannot indefinitely go on living at the expense of past generations. The New Deal policy with its fictitious achievements and its very real increase in the national debt, leads unavoidably to ferocious capitalist reaction and a devastating explosion of imperialism. In other words, it is directed into the same channels as the policy of Fascism. . . .

In his message to Congress at the beginning of 1937, President Roosevelt expressed his desire to raise the national income to ninety or one hundred billion dollars, without, however, indicating just how. In itself this program is exceedingly modest. In 1929, when there were approximately two million unemployed, the national income reached eighty-one billion dollars. Setting in motion the present productive forces would not only suffice to realize Roosevelt's program but even to surpass it considerably. Machines, raw materials, workers, everything is available, not to mention the population's need for the products. If, notwithstanding that, the plan is unrealizable—and unrealizable it is—the only reason is the irreconcilable antagonism that has developed between capitalist ownership and society's need for expanding production.\* The famous government-

\*Trotsky had of course, in mind the conditions prevailing at the time—he did not reckon with the possibility of a boom like the one that the Second World War was to give rise.

sponsored National Survey of Potential Productive Capacity came to the conclusion that the cost of production and services used in 1929 amounted to nearly ninety-four billion dollars, calculated on the basis of retail prices. Yet if all the actual productive possibilities were utilized, that figure would have risen to 135 billion dollars, which would have averaged \$4,370.00 a year per family, sufficient to secure a decent and comfortable living. It must be added that the calculations of the National Survey are based on the present productive organization of the United States, as it came about in consequence of capitalism's anarchic history. If the equipment itself were re-equipped on the basis of a unified socialist plan, the productive calculations could be considerably surpassed and a high comfortable standard of living, on the basis of an extremely short labor day, assured to all the people.

Therefore, to save society, it is not necessary either to check the development of technique, to shut down factories, to award premiums to farmers for sabotaging agriculture, to turn a third of the workers into paupers, or to call upon maniacs to be dictators. Not one of these measures, which are a shocking mockery of the interests of society, are necessary. What is indispensable and urgent is to separate the means of production from their present parasitic owners and to organize society in accordance with a rational plan. Then it would at once be possible really to cure society of its ills. All those able to work would find a job. The workday would gradually decrease. The wants of all members of society would secure increasing satisfaction. The words "property," "crisis," "exploitation," would drop out of circulation. Mankind would at last cross the threshold into true humanity.

"Along with the constantly diminishing number of the magnates of capital . . ." says Marx, "grows the mass of misery, oppression, slavery, degradation, exploitation; but with this too grows the revolt of the working class, a class always increasing in numbers, and disciplined, united, organized by the very mechanism of the process of capitalist production itself. Centralization of the means of production and socialization of labor at last reach a point where they become incompatible with their capitalist integument. This integument is burst asunder. The knell of capitalist private property sounds. The expropriators are expropriated." That is the Socialist revolution. To Marx, the problem of re-

constituting society did not arise from some prescription motivated by his personal predilections; it followed, as an ironclad historical necessity—on the one hand, from the productive forces grown to powerful maturity; on the other, from the impossibility further to foster these forces at the mercy of the law of value.

The lucubrations of certain intellectuals on the theme that, regardless of Marx's teaching, Socialism is not *inevitable* but merely *possible*, are devoid of any content whatsoever. Obviously, Marx did not imply that Socialism would come about without man's volition and action: any such idea is simply an absurdity. Marx foretold that out of the economic collapse in which the development of capitalism must inevitably culminate—and this collapse is before our very eyes—there can be no other way out except socialization of the means of production. The productive forces need a new organizer and a new master, and, since existence determines consciousness, Marx had no doubt that the working class, at the cost of errors and defeats, will come to understand the actual situation and, sooner or later, will draw the imperative practical conclusions.

That socialization of the capitalist-created means of production is of tremendous economic benefit is today demonstrable not only in theory but also by the experiment of the USSR, notwithstanding the limitations of that experiment. True, capitalistic reactionaries, not without artifice, use Stalin's régime as a scarecrow against the ideas of socialism. As a matter of fact, Marx never said that socialism could be achieved in a single country, and moreover, a backward country. The continuing privations of the masses in the USSR, the omnipotence of the privileged caste, which has lifted itself above the nation and its misery, finally, the rampant club-law of the bureaucrats are not consequences of the socialist method of economy but of the isolation and backwardness of the USSR caught in the ring of capitalist encirclement. The wonder is that under such exceptionally unfavorable conditions planned economy has managed to demonstrate its insuperable benefits.

All the saviours of capitalism, the democratic as well as the fascist kind, attempt to limit or at least to camouflage, the power of the magnates of capital, in order to forestall "the expropriation of the expropriators." They all recognize, and many of them openly admit, that the failure of their reformist attempts must inevitably lead to socialist revolu-

tion. They have all managed to demonstrate that their methods of saving capitalism are but reactionary and help-  
less quackery. Marx's prognosis about the inevitability of  
socialism is thus fully confirmed by proof of the negative.

The program of "Technocracy," which flourished in the  
period of the great crisis of 1929-32, was founded on the  
correct premise that economy can be rationalized only  
through the union of technique at the height of science and  
government at the service of society. Such a union is pos-  
sible, provided technique and government are liberated from  
the slavery of private ownership. That is where the revolu-  
tionary task begins. In order to liberate technique from the  
cabal of private interests and place the government at the  
service of society, it is necessary to "expropriate the expro-  
priators." Only a powerful class, interested in its own liber-  
ation and opposed to the monopolistic expropriators, is  
capable of consummating this task. Only in unison with a  
proletarian government can the qualified stratum of techni-  
cians build a truly scientific and a truly national, i.e., a  
socialist economy.

It would be best, of course, to achieve this purpose in a  
peaceful, gradual, democratic way. But the social order that  
has outlived itself never yields its place to its successor with-  
out resistance. If in its day the young forceful democracy  
proved incapable of forestalling the seizure of wealth and  
power by the plutocracy, is it possible to expect that a  
senile and devastated democracy will prove capable of trans-  
forming a social order based on the untrammelled rule of  
Sixty Families? Theory and history teach that a succession  
of social régimes presupposes the highest form of the class  
struggle, i.e., revolution. Even slavery could not be abolished  
in the United States without a civil war. "Force is the mid-  
wife of every old society pregnant with a new one." No one  
has yet been able to refute Marx on this basic tenet in the  
sociology of class society. Only a socialist revolution can  
clear the road to socialism.

## THE FUTURE OF THE UNITED STATES

*Question:* Does dictatorship of the pro-  
letariat necessarily mean the surrender of the civil rights as

from *Fourth International* by Leon Trotsky, September, 1942,  
p. 285



embodied in the Bill of Rights of the United States, and of course, including freedom of speech, press, assembly, and religion? Do you believe that there is a middle ground between capitalism, as we know it in the United States, and Communism, as you would envision it in the United States?

*Question:* You have said that the Kremlin fears war because that war is likely to be followed by another revolution of the masses. Would you elaborate on this?

*Answer:* Permit me to answer these two questions together. Will the United States enter the revolutionary road? When and how? In order to approach the theme correctly I will begin with a preliminary question: Will the United States intervene in the war?

In his recent prophetic speech combining the language of Wall Street with the language of the Apocalypse, Mr. Hoover predicted that on the fields of gory Europe two horsemen will triumph in the end; hunger and pestilence. The former president recommended that the United States remain aloof from the European insanity in order at the last moment to tip the scale with their economic might. This recommendation is not original. All great powers not yet involved in the war would like to use their unexhausted resources when accounts are settled. Such is the policy of Italy. Such is the policy of the Soviet Union in spite of the war with Finland. Such is the policy of Japan in spite of the undeclared war against China. Such is, in fact, the present policy of the United States. But will it be possible to maintain this policy for long?

If the war develops to the end; if the German army has successes—and it will have really great successes if the specter of German rule over Europe will arise as a real danger, the government of the United States will then have to decide: to remain aloof, permitting Hitler to assimilate new conquests, multiply the German technique on the raw materials from the conquered colonies, and prepare German domination over the entire planet; or to intervene in the course of the war to help clip the wings of German imperialism. I, least of all, am fit to give advice to the present governments; I am simply trying to analyze the objective situation and to draw conclusions from this analysis. I think that before the indicated alternative even the former head of the American Relief Administration will reject his own program of neutrality: it is impossible to possess with im-

punity the most powerful industry, more than two-thirds of the world's gold reserve, and ten millions of unemployed.

Once the United States, as I think, intervenes in the war, possibly even this year, they will have to bear all its consequences. The more serious of them is the explosive character of the further political development.

Q. What do you understand by this?

A. On February 10, President Roosevelt warned the American Youth Congress against radicalism, advising it to improve the existing institutions, little by little, year by year. Such a procedure undoubtedly would be the best, most advantageous, most economical, if . . . it were realizable. Unfortunately "the existing institutions" in the entire world are not improving year by year but deteriorating. The democratic institutions become not perfected but decomposed and cede their place to fascism. And this is not due to an accident or to the light-mindedness of the young. Capitalist monopolies, having corroded the middle classes, are devouring the democracies. Monopolies themselves were a result of private ownership of the means of production. Private ownership, having once been the source of progress, came into contradiction with modern technique and is now the cause of crises, wars, national persecutions, and reactionary dictatorships. The liquidation of the private ownership of the means of production is the central historical task of our epoch and will guarantee the birth of a new, more harmonious society. The act of birth, daily observation teaches us, is never a "gradual" process but a biological revolution.

You ask whether an intermediate organization between capitalism and communism is possible. German and Italian fascism were attempts at such an organization. But in reality fascism only brought the most repulsive characteristics of capitalism to a most beastly expression. Another sample of the intermediate system was the New Deal. Did this experiment succeed? I think not; first the number of unemployed has seven zeros; the Sixty Families are more powerful than ever before. And most important there is not the slightest hope that an *organic* improvement is possible on this road. The market, banks, stock exchange, trusts decide, and the government only adjusts itself to them by means of belated palliatives. History teaches us that revolution is prepared on this road.

It would be a great mistake to think the Socialist revolution in Europe or America will be accomplished after the

pattern of backward Russia. The fundamental tendencies will of course, be similar. But the forms, methods, the "temperature" of the struggle, all this has, in each case, a national character. By anticipation it is possible to establish the following law: The greater the number of countries in which the capitalist system is broken, the weaker will be the resistance offered by the ruling classes in other countries, the less sharp a character will the socialist revolution assume, the less violent forms will the proletarian dictatorship have, the shorter will it be, the sooner will society be reborn on the basis of a new, more full, more perfect and humane democracy. In any case, no revolution can infringe on the Bill of Rights as much as imperialist war and the fascism which war will engender.

Socialism would have no value if it should not bring with it not only the juridical inviolability but also the full safeguarding of all the interests of the human personality. Mankind would not tolerate a totalitarian abomination of the Kremlin pattern. The political régime of the USSR is not a new society, but the worst caricature of the old. With the might of the techniques and organizational methods of the United States; with the high well-being which planned economy could assure there to all citizens, the socialist régime in your country would signify from the beginning the rise of the independence, initiative, and creative power of the human personality.

## THE COLONIAL WORLD: 1923-1940

*Prospects and Tasks in the Far East*

*What had Trotsky to say on the problems of the "backward" countries and of the colonial world? The revolutionary struggles in Asia have acquired far greater importance since the Second World War than they had in his lifetime. Yet the Bolsheviks, situated between Europe and Asia, had always placed much hope in the revolutionary possibilities of the East. As early as 1921 they established a Communist University of the Toilers of the East at Moscow. There Asian students and workers were educated in Marxism and trained in the techniques of revolutionary organization. Trotsky delivered this speech on the occasion of the third anniversary of that University. It is remarkable among other things for his forecast that if revolution were to fail in Europe, Asia would become its chief center.*

## Comrades!

Although it is not customary at anniversary celebrations to take up time with theoretical discussions, permit me nevertheless to make a few observations of a general character to bear out my statement that your university is not an ordinary revolutionary educational institution, but a lever of world historic significance.

The political and cultural movement of today rests on capitalism. It is an outcome of capitalism; it has grown out of it and has finally outgrown it. But, roughly speaking, there are two types of capitalism—the capitalism of the imperialist countries and colonial capitalism. The most striking example of the first kind of capitalism is—Great Britain.

from *Fourth International* by Leon Trotsky, December, 1942, pp. 374-377

At present it has at its head the so-called "Labour" government of Ramsay MacDonald.

Great Britain is the seat of classical capitalism. Marx wrote his work *Capital* in London where he had the opportunity of being in direct touch with and to observe the development of the foremost country in the world. In the colonies capitalism is not a product of local conditions and development but is fostered by the penetration of foreign capital. This is the reason for the existence of two types of capitalism. The question arises, to speak not exactly in scientific but nevertheless in correct terms: why is MacDonald so conservative, so narrow in his outlook, and so dull? The answer is—because Great Britain is the classical land of capitalism, because there the development of capitalism was organic, from handicraft through manufacture to present-day industrialism, and because it was gradual and "evolutionary." That is why, if you were to open MacDonald's skull, you would find an accumulation not only of the prejudices of yesterday and the day before yesterday, but an accumulation of the intellectual dust and prejudices of the last few centuries.

At first sight there seems to be a historic contradiction in the fact that Marx was a child of backward Germany, the most backward of the great European countries in the first half of the nineteenth century (excepting Russia, of course). Why, during the nineteenth and the opening years of the twentieth centuries, did Germany produce Marx and Russia, Lenin? This seems to be an obvious anomaly! But it is an anomaly which is explained in the so-called dialectics of historical development. In British machinery and British textiles, history provided the most revolutionary factor of development. But this machinery and textiles went through a slow process of development in Great Britain, and on the whole the human mind and consciousness are extremely conservative. When economic development is slow and systematic, enlightenment is slow in penetrating into the thick skulls of ordinary human beings.

Subjectivists and idealists generally say that human consciousness and critical thought, etc., etc., take history in tow, just like tugs take barges in tow. This is not so. We, here, are Marxists and therefore know that the driving power in history is the productive forces which have hitherto developed, so to speak, behind the backs of the people, and which find it very difficult to penetrate into the

conservative thick skulls of ordinary human beings and to kindle in them a spark of new political ideas. I repeat that this is very difficult when the development is slow, organic, and evolutionary. But when the productive forces of the metropolis, of a country of classical capitalism, such as Great Britain, find ingress into more backward countries, like Germany in the first half of the nineteenth century, and Russia at the merging of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, and in the present day in Asia; when the economic factors burst in a revolutionary manner, breaking up the old order; when development is no longer gradual and "organic," but assumes the form of terrible convulsions and drastic changes of former social conceptions, then it becomes easier for critical thought to find revolutionary expression, provided that the necessary theoretical prerequisites exist in the given country.

That is why Marx made his appearance in Germany in the first half of the nineteenth century, that is why Lenin made his appearance here in Russia and why we observe what looks at first sight like a paradox, that the country of the oldest, most developed, and most successful European capitalism—I mean Great Britain—is the home of the most conservative "Labour" Party. On the other hand, in our Soviet Union, in a country with a very backward economic and cultural development, we have (we can say it frankly, for it is a fact) the best Communist Party in the world.

It must be said that, according to its economic development, Russia is midway between a classical metropolis, such as Great Britain, and a colonial country, like India or China. Moreover, that which constitutes the difference between our Soviet Union and Great Britain, as far as methods and forms of development are concerned, is still more noticeable in the development of the countries of the East. Into the latter, capitalism penetrates in the form of foreign finance capital. It introduces machinery into these countries, it destroys their old economic basis and erects on its ruins strongholds of capitalist economic development. The progress of capitalism in the countries of the East is not gradual and slow and is by no means "evolutionary," but drastic and catastrophic, frequently much more catastrophic than here in former Tsarist Russia.

Comrades, it is from this fundamental viewpoint that we must study events in the East during the next few years,

or rather decades. If you will take the trouble to study such prosaic books as the reports of British and American banks for 1921-22-23, you will find in the figures of the balance sheets of the banks of London and New York a forecast of imminent revolutionary events in the East.

Great Britain has once more assumed the role of world usurer. The USA has accumulated enormous quantities of gold: the cellars of the banks contain three billion dollars. This is a drag on the economic system of the USA. You will ask: To whom do the USA and England lend their money? You of course know that they do not give any to us, to Soviet Russia. Nor has Germany received anything, and France managed to get but a few crumbs to save the franc. To whom, then, do they give loans? They give them chiefly to the colonial countries, for they finance the industrial development of Asia, South America, and South Africa. I will not take up your time by quoting the figures which I have before me. Suffice it to say that, previous to the recent imperialist war, colonial and semi-colonial countries received from the USA and Great Britain probably only about half as much as capitalistically developed countries, whereas now the financial investments in colonial countries exceed to a considerable extent the investments in old capitalist countries. Why? There are many reasons for this, but the two main reasons are: lack of confidence in bankrupt and emasculated old Europe, with rabid French militarism in the very heart of it, a militarism which fore-shadows more convulsions; and on the other hand—the need of colonial countries as providers of raw material and consumers of machinery and other British and American manufactured goods.

During the war and at the present day we witness a feverish industrialization of colonial, semi-colonial, and, generally speaking, of all backward countries: Japan, India, South America, and South Africa. There is no doubt whatever that if the Kuomintang Party\* in China succeeds in

\*Kuomintang, Chinese political party founded (1912) by Sun Yat-sen and reorganized under Soviet influence (1924). After Sun's death in 1925 and the crushing of the communists in 1927, a struggle for supremacy in the party ensued between the Left Wing headed by Wang-Ching-wei and the Right Wing led by Chiang Kai-shek that ended in victory for Chiang. He headed the Government constituted by his party until it was expelled by the communist triumph in 1948-49 from the mainland to its present seat in Taiwan.

uniting China under a national-democratic régime, the capitalist development of China will make enormous strides forward. And all this leads to the mobilization of countless proletarian masses which will immediately emerge from a prehistoric, semi-barbarian state and will be thrust into the whirlpool of industrialism. Therefore, in these countries there will be no time for the refuse of past centuries to accumulate in the minds of the workers. A guillotine, as it were, will be set to work in their minds which will sever the past from the future at one stroke, and compel them to look for new ideas, new forms, and new ways of life and struggle. And this will be the time for Marxist-Leninist parties to make their first appearance in some countries, and to pursue a bold course of development in others. I mean, of course, the Japanese, Chinese, Turkish, and Indian Communist Parties.

Comrades and workers of the East, in 1883 there came into being in Switzerland the Russian group of "Emancipation of Labor."\* Is that so long ago? From 1883 to 1900—17 years, and from 1900 to 1917—also 17 years, together 34 years—a third of a century—a generation: Only a third of a century has intervened between the organization of the first theoretic-propagandist group of Marxist ideas in the reign of Alexander III and the conquest of Tsarist Russia by the proletariat. Those who lived through it know it to have been a long and difficult period. But from the viewpoint of historical development, the speed with which events developed was most rapid. And in the countries of the East, the pace of development will be (as we have every reason to believe) still more rapid. Looking at things in this aspect, what is the role of the Communist University of the Toilers of the East? It is the seed-bed of "Emancipation of Labor" groups for the countries of the East.

It is true, of course, that the dangers confronting the young Marxists of the East are great, and we must not shut our eyes to this fact. We know, and you know it as well as we do, that the Bolshevik Party was formed under circumstances of hard internal as well as external struggle. You

\*The Emancipation of Labor Group, formed 1883 in Switzerland by the exiled revolutionists George Plekhanov, Vera Zasulich, Paul Axelrod, Leo Deutsch, and V. Ignatov, was the first Russian Marxist organization. It published the *Library of Contemporary Socialism* for illegal distribution in Russia.



know that in the nineties of the nineteenth century a kind of emasculated and falsified Marxism formed a prominent part of the political education of the bourgeois intellectuals—the followers of Struve, who subsequently became a political lackey of the bourgeoisie, joined the Cadets (Constitutional Democrats), later went over to the Octobrists,\* and veered ever more to the right.

Russia was backward, not only economically, but also politically. Marxism preached the inevitability of capitalism, and those bourgeois-progressive elements which wanted capitalism for its own sake and not for the sake of Socialism, accepted Marxism, having previously deprived it of its revolutionary sting. Such temporary exploitations of Marxism in the interests of a bourgeois-progressive policy were typical of the southeastern Balkan countries as well as of our own country. Let us consider now if Marxism is running the same risks in the East. To a certain extent, it does. And why? Because the national movement in the East is a progressive factor in world history. The struggle for independence in India is a highly progressive movement, but we all know that it is at the same time a struggle for strictly limited national-bourgeois aims. The struggle for the liberation of China—the ideology of Sun Yat-sen—is a democratic struggle with a progressive ideology, but bourgeois nevertheless. We approve of Communist support to the Kuomintang Party in China, which we are endeavoring to revolutionize. This is inevitable, but here too there is a risk of a national-democratic revival. Such is the case in all the countries of the East in which the national struggle for liberation from colonial slavery is going on. The young proletariat of the East must rely on this progressive movement for support. But it is as clear as daylight that the young Marxists of the East run the risk of being torn out of the "Emancipation of Labor" group and of becoming permeated with nationalist ideology.

\*Peter Struve, Russian economist and journalist who underwent an evolution from Marxism to monarchism; Cadets was a popular term for Constitutional Democrats, a bourgeois party of moderate liberalism headed by Prof. Paul Miliukov; the Octobrists was a monarchist and imperialist party named for its support of the imperial manifesto of October, 1905, establishing a Duma. It represented the big commercial, industrial, and land-owning bourgeoisie and was headed by Guchkov, a Moscow capitalist.

But you have the advantage over the older generations of Russian, Rumanian, and other Marxists in that you live and work not only in the post-Marxian, but even in the post-Lenin epoch. Your advantage consists in having sprung directly from the epoch which will be known in history as the Lenin epoch. Both Marx and Lenin were revolutionary politicians with whom theory and practice went hand in hand. As a general proposition, this is of course correct and incontrovertible. But there is nevertheless a distinction, and a signal distinction, between these two historic figures, which originated not only in the difference in the individuality of the two men, but also in the difference between epochs.

Marxism, of course, is not an academic science but a lever of revolutionary action. This is borne out by Marx's saying: "The world has been sufficiently explained by philosophers; it is time to remodel it." But was it possible to make a full use of Marxism through the working-class movement during Marx's life, in the epoch of the First and subsequently of the Second Internationals? Was Marxism put into practice at that time? Of course not. Did Marx have the opportunity and the supreme happiness to apply his revolutionary theory to decisive historic action: the conquest of power by the proletariat? The answer is in the negative. Marxist teaching has of course nothing academic about it, for Marx himself is entirely a product of revolution and of a correct and critical appreciation of the downfall of bourgeois democracy. He published his *Manifesto* in 1847. He went through the revolution of 1848 as a left-winger of bourgeois democracy, estimating all the events of this revolution in a Marxist way or Marxist spirit. He wrote his work *Capital* in London and was at the same time the founder of the First International of the working class of all countries. But he was not at the head of a party which decided the destiny of the world or even the destiny of one country. Whenever we want to give a concise answer to the question: Who is Marx? we say: "*Marx . . . is the author of 'Capital.'*" And when we ask ourselves: who is Lenin? we say: "Lenin is the author of the October Revolution." Lenin, more than anyone else, was emphatic in saying that he did not intend to revise, remodel, or alter the teachings of Marx. Lenin came, to use the words of the Bible, not to change the law of Marx but to fulfill it.

I repeat, no one was more emphatic than Lenin in as-

serting this. But at the same time he had to free Marx from the misinterpretations of his teachings introduced by the generations which separated Lenin from Marx—from the Kautskyanism, MacDonaldisim, and the conservatism of the upper strata of the working class, of the reformist and nationalist bureaucracy. He had to apply to the full the weapon of true Marxism (cleansed from misinterpretation and falsification) to the greatest event in world history. Although Marx himself was able to embody in his theory the trend of events of decades and centuries, yet his teaching was subsequently subdivided into separate elements and in the everyday struggle was frequently assimilated in a mutilated and incorrect form. But Lenin came upon the scene. Under totally new conditions, he collected all the teachings of Marx and demonstrated them in a historic action on a world scale. You have seen this action and you are associated with it. This places you under an obligation, and on this obligation the Communist University of the Toilers of the East is founded.

There is every reason to believe that the Communist University of the Toilers of the East will furnish a nucleus of workers which will act as a class-conscious, Marxian, and Leninist leaven in the movement of the proletariat of the East.

Comrades, you will be in great demand, and as I said before this will not happen gradually, but all at once, and, so to speak, "catastrophically." I advise you to read once more one of Lenin's most recent articles: "A Little Less But a Little Better." The main theme of this article is the question of organization, but it deals also with the prospective development in the countries of the East in connection with European development. The main and fundamental idea of this article is that a setback in the development of the Western revolution is possible. This setback can be caused by MacDonaldisim, which is the most conservative force in Europe. We have before us the spectacle of Turkey abolishing the Caliphate, and MacDonaldisim reestablishing it. Is not this a striking example of the counterrevolutionary Menshevism of the West and of the progressive national-bourgeois democratism of the East? Afghanistan is at present the scene of truly dramatic events: the Great Britain of Ramsay MacDonaldisim is fighting there against the left national-bourgeois wing, which aims at the Europeanization of an independent Afghanistan. It endeavors to place in power in

that country the most unenlightened and reactionary elements, imbued with the worst prejudices of pan-Islamism, of the Caliphate, etc. A correct appreciation of these two colliding forces will enable you to understand why the East will be drawn more and more to us—the Soviet Union and the Third International.

We witness in Europe, the past development of which caused the monstrous conservatism of the upper strata of the working class, an ever-growing economic deterioration and disintegration. There is no way out for the old continent. This is shown partly by the reluctance of the USA to lend money to Europe, based on the well-founded assumption that economically Europe is played out. At the same time we see that the USA and Great Britain are compelled to finance the economic development of the colonial countries, driving them with whirlwind rapidity on to the path of revolution. And if Europe is going to be kept in the present state of decomposition by this narrow-minded, aristocratic MacDonaldism of the upper strata of the working class, the center of gravity of the revolutionary movement will be transferred to the East. And then it will become evident that if it required several decades of capitalist development in Great Britain, with the assistance of this revolutionary factor, to rouse our old Russia and the old East out of their slumber, it will require a revolution in the East, which, sweeping back to Great Britain, will break (if necessary) a number of thick skulls and thus give an impetus to the revolution of the European proletariat. This is *one* of the historic possibilities which we must never lose sight of.

I read, in the material you sent me, about the overwhelming impression produced, in Kazan [in east central Russia] by one of the women students of your university—a Turkish woman, when she addressed the women of that city, including the illiterate and the old. This might seem an insignificant episode, but it is nevertheless of considerable historical importance. The strength and meaning of Bolshevism consist in the fact that it appeals to the oppressed and exploited masses and not to the upper strata of the working class. That is why Bolshevism is being assimilated by the countries of the East, not because of its theories, which are far away from being fully understood, but because of its spirit of freedom and liberty. Your own paper tells us over and over again that the name of Lenin is known not only in

the villages of the Caucasus, but even in the remotest parts of India. We know that the workers of China, who probably never read anything written by Lenin, are irresistibly drawn toward Bolshevism. Such is the powerful influence of this great historic movement! They feel in their innermost hearts that it is a teaching for the oppressed and exploited, for hundreds of millions to whom it is the only possible salvation. That is why Leninism meets with a passionate response among working women, who are the most oppressed section of society. When I read about the success of one of your female fellow students in Kazan among the illiterate Tartar women, I was reminded of my recent short visit to Baku [on the Caspian Sea] where I heard for the first time a Turkoman Communist woman, and had an opportunity to observe in the hall the enthusiasm of hundreds of such women who, having heard our message of liberation, had awakened to a new life. I realized then for the first time that women will play a more important role in the liberation movement of the East than in Europe and here in Russia. This will be the case for the simple reason that Eastern women are even more oppressed and entangled in age-long prejudices than men.

It is for this reason that the new spirit, which is now animating the popular movements, has a stronger effect on women than on men. Although the East is still under the influence of Islam and of old creeds, prejudices, and customs, there are signs that this influence is waning rapidly. We can liken the present state of the East to a piece of cloth which has perished. When you look at it at a distance, its texture and design seems to be perfect and its folds are as graceful as before. But a slight touch, a zephyr breeze is enough to make this beautiful material fall to pieces. Thus we have in the East old creeds which seem to be deeply rooted, but which are in reality only a shadow of the past. For instance, the Caliphate was abolished in Turkey and nothing happened to those who made this bold attempt on an age-long institution. This shows that old Eastern creeds have lost their power, and that in the imminent historic movement of the revolutionary working masses, these creeds will not be a serious obstacle. But this also means that Eastern women, who under present conditions are enslaved and thwarted in all their desires and ambitions, will, with the removal of the veil, see themselves deprived of all spiritual support because of the newly arisen economic conditions.

They will thirst for new ideas and a new consciousness capable of allotting them their proper place in society. Believe me, there will be no better comrade in the East and no better champion of the ideas of revolution and Communism than the awakened working women.

Comrades, that is why your university has such a world-wide historic significance. Profiting by the ideological and political experience of the West, it produces the revolutionary leaven which will permeate the East. For you the time for action is imminent. British and American finance capital is destroying the economic foundation of the East. It is creating new conditions. It destroys the old and creates the need for something new. You will sow the seed of Communism, and you will reap a far richer revolutionary harvest than the old Marxist generations of Europe.

But, comrades, I should not like my complimentary remarks to rouse in you a spirit of oriental conceit. I see that none of you have interpreted my remarks in that way. For if anyone has become imbued with such overbearance and contempt for the West, it will prove a shortcut to national-democratic ideology. No, comrades, the Communist-revolutionary students of this university must learn to look upon our world movement as a whole and to utilize the forces of East and West for the attainment of our one great aim. You must learn to coordinate the rising of Hindu peasants, the strike of bourgeois democrats of the Kuomintang, the Korean struggle for independence, the bourgeois-democratic regeneration of Turkey, and the educational and economic work in the Soviet Republic of Transcaucasia.

All this must be taken into account in connection with the work and struggle of the Communist International in Europe, and especially in Great Britain where slowly (much more slowly than we should wish) but irresistibly, British Communism is undermining MacDonalld's conservative strongholds. I repeat that your advantage over the older generation consists in the fact that you are learning the alphabet of Marxism, not in emigrant circles (far removed from the actualities of life) in countries where capitalism holds its sway, which was our fate, but in an atmosphere conquered and permeated by Leninism. We cannot tell if the last chapter of the revolutionary struggle with imperialism will be unfolded in one, two, three, or even five years' time. But we know that every year a fresh batch of graduates will leave the Communist University of the East.

Every year will produce a new nucleus of communists who have thoroughly learned the alphabet of Leninism, and who with their own eyes have seen the application of this alphabet. If the decisive events take place in twelve months' time, we shall have at our disposal one batch of graduates. If two years will have to elapse, we shall have two batches of graduates, and so on. When the moment for decisive action is upon us, the students of the Communist University of the Toilers of the East will say: "We are ready. We have not spent our time here in vain. We have not only learned to translate the ideas of Marxism and Leninism into the languages of China, India, Turkey, and Korea; we have also learned to translate into the language of Marxism the sufferings, aspirations, demands, and hopes of the working masses of the East." When these masses ask you who taught you this, your answer will be: "The Communist University of the Toilers of the East."

### *The Second Chinese Revolution: 1925-27*

*After the mass movements of 1925, Moscow was faced with the problem of the Chinese revolution. Under Stalin's and Bukharin's orders, the Executive of the Communist International instructed the Chinese communists to enter the Kuomintang and accept its discipline in the interests of China's "united front" against the Western imperialists. Stalin and Bukharin reasoned that the revolution could not at that stage become socialist, being exclusively bourgeois in character. The "progressive" bourgeoisie was the predestined head of a revolutionary "bloc of the four classes," embracing the national bourgeoisie, the urban petty bourgeoisie, the workers, and the peasants. The revolution, if successful, was to establish a "democratic dictatorship" of workers and peasants, but not a "proletarian dictatorship." At that time, it should be remembered, General Chiang Kai-shek was an honorary member of the Executive of the Communist International. After using the communists, he turned upon them, massacred the workers who rose up in Shanghai in March, 1927, and instituted his dictatorship.*

*From 1925 to 1927 the Communist course in China veered sharply from subordination to General Chiang,*

through short-lived alliance with the "Left Kuomintang" Government of Wang Ching-wei at Hankow, to armed insurrection by the Cantonese Communists. This last was staged on Stalin's orders for face-saving purposes, without much hope for success; it was suppressed by Chiang's troops. Trotsky was opposed to Moscow's policy in China through all its stages. In the following pages from his Criticism of the Draft Program of the Communist International, written in 1928, he explains his motives.

The first stage of the Kuomintang was the period of domination of the national bourgeoisie under the apologetic label of a "bloc of four classes." The second period, after Chiang Kai-shek's *coup d'état*, was an experiment of parallel and "independent" domination of Chinese Kerenskyism, in the shape of the Hankow government of the "Left" Wang Ching-wei. . . . Inasmuch as history in general does not work to order, there only remains for us to understand that *there is not and will not be* any other "democratic dictatorship" except the dictatorship exercised by the Kuomintang since 1925. This remains equally true regardless of whether the semi-unification of China accomplished by the Kuomintang is maintained in the immediate future or the country is again dismembered. But precisely at a time when the class dialectics of the revolution, having spent all its other resources, clearly and conclusively put on the order of the day the *dictatorship of the proletariat*, leading the countless millions of oppressed and disinherited in city and village, the E.C.C.I.\* advanced the slogan of a *democratic* (i.e., bourgeois democratic) dictatorship of the workers and peasants. The reply to this formula was the Canton insurrection which, with all its prematurity, with all the adventurism of its leadership, raised the curtain of a new stage, or, more correctly, of the coming *third* Chinese revolution. It is necessary to dwell on this point in some detail.

Seeking to insure themselves against their past sins, the leadership monstrously forced the course of events at the end of last year and brought about the Canton miscarriage. However, even a miscarriage can teach us a good deal con-

from *The Third International After Lenin* by Leon Trotsky, pp. 180-186

\*Executive Committee of the Communist International.



cerning the organism of the mother and the process of gestation. The tremendous and, from the standpoint of theory, truly decisive significance of the Canton events for the fundamental problems of the Chinese revolution is conditioned precisely upon the fact that we have here a phenomenon rare in history and politics, a virtual *laboratory experiment on a colossal scale*. We have paid for it dearly, but this obliges us all the more to assimilate its lessons.

One of the fighting slogans of the Canton insurrection, according to the account in *Pravda* (No. 31), was the cry "Down with the Kuomintang!" The Kuomintang banners and insignia were torn down and trampled underfoot. But even after the "betrayal" of Chiang Kai-shek, and the subsequent "betrayal" of Wang Ching-wei (betrayals not of their own class, but of our . . . illusions), the E.C.C.I. had issued the solemn vow that: "We will not surrender the banner of the Kuomintang!" The workers of Canton outlawed the Kuomintang party, *declaring all of its groupings illegal*. This means that for the solution of the basic national tasks, not only the big bourgeoisie but also the petty bourgeoisie was incapable of producing a political force, a party, or a faction in conjunction with which the party of the proletariat might be able to solve the tasks of the bourgeois-democratic revolution. The key to the situation lies precisely in the fact that *the task of winning the movement of the poor peasants already fell entirely upon the shoulders of the proletariat*, and directly upon the Communist Party; and that the approach to a genuine solution of the bourgeois-democratic tasks of the revolution necessitated the concentration of all power in the hands of the proletariat.

*Pravda* carried the following report about the policies of the short-lived Canton Soviet government: "In the interests of the workers, the Canton Soviet issued decrees establishing . . . workers' control of industry through the factory committees . . . the nationalization of big industry, transportation, and banks."

Further on such measures are mentioned as: "The confiscation of all dwellings of the big bourgeoisie for the benefit of the toilers. . . ."

Thus it was the Canton workers who were in power [during the short period of the insurrection] and, moreover, the government was actually in the hands of the communist party. The program of the new state power consisted not only in the confiscation of whatever feudal estates there

may be in Kwangtung [the province of which Canton is the capital] in general; not only in the establishment of the workers' control of production; but also in the nationalization of big industry, banks, and transportation, and even the confiscation of bourgeois dwellings and all bourgeois property for the benefit of the toilers. The question arises: if these are the methods of a bourgeois revolution then what should the proletarian revolution in China look like?

Notwithstanding the fact that the directives of the E.C.C.I. had nothing to say on the subject of the proletarian dictatorship and socialist measures; notwithstanding the fact that Canton is more petty bourgeois in character than Shanghai, Hankow, and other industrial centers of the country, the revolutionary overturn effected *against the Kuomintang* led automatically to the dictatorship of the proletariat, which, at its very first steps, found itself compelled by the entire situation to resort to more radical measures than those with which the October Revolution began. And this fact, despite its paradoxical appearance, flows quite lawfully from the social relations of China as well as from the entire development of the revolution.

Large and middle scale landed estates (such as obtain in China) are most closely interlinked with city capital, including foreign capital. There is no caste of feudal landlords in China in opposition to the bourgeoisie. The most widespread, common, and hated exploiter in the village is the kulak-usurer, the agent of finance capital in the cities. The agrarian revolution is therefore just as much anti-feudal as it is anti-bourgeois in character. In China, there will be practically no such stage as the first stage of our October Revolution in which the kulak marched with the middle and poor peasant, frequently at their head, against the landlord. The agrarian revolution in China signifies from the outset, as it will signify subsequently, an uprising not only against the few genuine feudal landlords and the bureaucracy, but also against the kulaks and usurers. If in our country the poor peasant committees appeared on the scene only during the second stage of the October Revolution, in the middle of 1918, in China, on the contrary, they will, in one form or another, appear on the scene as soon as the agrarian movement revives. The attack on the rich peasant will be the first and not the second step of the Chinese October.

The agrarian revolution, however, is not the sole content

of the present historical struggle in China. The most extreme agrarian revolution, the general division of land (which will naturally be supported by the communist party to the very end) will not by itself provide a way out of the economic blind alley. China requires just as urgently national unity and economic sovereignty, that is, customs autonomy, or more correctly, a monopoly of foreign trade. And this means *emancipation from world imperialism*—imperialism for which China remains the most important prospective source not only of enrichment but also of actual existence, constituting a safety valve against the internal explosions of European capitalism today and American capitalism tomorrow. This is what predetermines the gigantic scope and monstrous sharpness of the struggle that faces the masses of China, all the more so now when the depth of the struggle has already been plumbed and felt by all of its participants.

The enormous role of foreign capital in Chinese industry and its way of relying directly in defense of its plunder on its own "national" bayonets, render the program of workers' control in China even less realizable than it was in our country. The direct expropriation first of the foreign capitalist and then of the Chinese capitalist enterprises will most likely be made imperative by the course of the struggle, on the day after the victorious insurrection.

Those objective socio-historical causes which predetermined the "October" outcome of the Russian revolution rise before us in China in a still more accentuated form. The bourgeois and proletarian poles of the Chinese nation stand opposed to each other even more irreconcilably, if this is at all possible, than they did in Russia, since, on the one hand, the Chinese bourgeoisie is directly bound up with foreign imperialism and the latter's military machine, and since, on the other, the Chinese proletariat has from the very beginning established a close bond with the Comintern and the Soviet Union. Numerically the Chinese peasantry constitutes an even more overwhelming mass than the Russian peasantry. But being crushed in the vise of global conflicts, upon the solution of which in one way or another its fate depends, the Chinese peasantry is even less capable of playing a *leading* role than the Russian. At present this is no longer a matter of mere theoretical forecast, but a fact verified completely in all its aspects.

These fundamental and, at the same time, incontrovert-

ible social and political prerequisites of the third Chinese revolution demonstrate not only that the formula of the "democratic dictatorship" has *hopelessly outlived its usefulness*, but also that the third Chinese revolution, despite the great backwardness of China, or more correctly, because of this great backwardness . . . will not have a "democratic" period, not even such a six month period as the October Revolution had (November, 1917, to July, 1918); but it will be compelled from the very outset to effect the most decisive shake-up and abolition of bourgeois property in city and village.

. . . It would be pedantry to maintain that, had a Bolshevik policy been applied in the revolution of 1925-27, the Chinese Communist Party would *unfailingly* have come to power. But it is contemptible philistinism to assert that such a possibility was entirely out of the question. The mass movement of workers and peasants was on a scale entirely adequate for this, as was also the disintegration of the ruling classes. The national bourgeoisie sent its Chiang Kai-sheks and Wang Ching-weis as envoys to Moscow, and through its Hu Han-mins\* knocked at the door of the Comintern, precisely because it was hopelessly weak in face of the revolutionary masses; it realized its weakness and sought to insure itself. Neither the workers nor the peasants would have followed the national bourgeoisie if we ourselves had not dragged them by a rope. Had the Comintern pursued any sort of correct policy, the outcome of the struggle of the communist party for the masses would have been predetermined—the Chinese proletariat would have supported the communists, while the peasant war would have supported the revolutionary proletariat.

If, at the beginning of the Northern expedition [i.e., in 1926] we had begun to organize soviets in the "liberated" districts (and the masses were instinctively aspiring for that with all their might and main) we would have secured the necessary basis and a revolutionary start, we would have rallied around us the agrarian uprisings, we would have built *our own* army, we would have disintegrated the enemy armies; and despite the youthfulness of the Communist Party of China, the latter would have been able, thanks

\*Hu Han-min was a senior civilian leader of the Kuomintang who was elected in 1926 to the ruling body of the Peasants International in Moscow as a "representative of the Chinese farmers" and later supported Chiang in crushing the communists.

to proper guidance from the Comintern, to mature in these exceptional years and to assume power, if not in the whole of China at once, then at least in a considerable part of China. And, above all, we would have had a *party*.

But something absolutely monstrous occurred precisely in the sphere of leadership—a veritable historical catastrophe. The authority of the Soviet Union, of the Bolshevik party, and of the Comintern served entirely, first, to support Chiang Kai-shek against an independent policy of the communist party, and then to support Wang Ching-wei as the leader of the agrarian revolution. Having trampled underfoot the first principles of Leninist policy and broken the spine of the young Communist Party of China, the E.C.C.I. predetermined the victory of Chinese Kerenskyism over Bolshevism, of the Chinese Milyukovs over the Kerenskys, and of British and Japanese imperialism over the Chinese Milyukovs.

In this and in this alone lies the meaning of what took place in China in the course of 1925–27.

### *Open Letter to the Workers of India*

*The next Chinese Revolution, that of 1949–50, followed largely, though not wholly, the lines anticipated by Trotsky. With the approach of the Second World War he dwelt emphatically on the new opportunities for all colonial and semi-colonial peoples to liberate themselves from imperialist domination. India, along with China, was foremost among them. Trotsky gave wholehearted support to all of the oppressed peoples striving for their national independence; but he also pointed out that the struggle for national independence was “only a stage on the road along which the backward countries will be drawn into the international Socialist revolution.” In July, 1939, from Coyocán, a suburb of Mexico City, he addressed an open letter to the workers of India.*

Dear Friends:

Titanic and terrible events are approaching with implacable force. Mankind lives in expectation of war which will, of course, also draw into its maelstrom the colonial countries and be of vital significance for their destiny. Agents of the British government depict the matter as though the war were to be waged for the principles of "democracy" which must be saved from fascism. All classes and peoples must rally around the "peaceful" "democratic" governments so as to repel the fascist aggressors. Then "democracy" will be saved and peace stabilized forever. This gospel rests on a deliberate lie. If the British government were really concerned with the flowering of democracy, then a very simple opportunity to demonstrate this exists: let the government give complete freedom to India. The right of national independence is one of the elementary democratic rights. But actually, the London government\* is ready to betray all the democracies in the world in return for one-tenth of its colonies.

If the Indian people do not wish to remain slaves for all eternity, then they must expose and reject those false preachers who assert that the *sole* enemy of the people is fascism. Hitler and Mussolini are, beyond doubt, the bitterest enemies of the toilers and the oppressed. They are gory executioners, deserving of the greatest hatred from the toilers and oppressed of the world. But they are, before everything, the enemies of the German and Italian peoples on whose backs they sit. The oppressed classes and peoples—as Marx, Engels, Lenin, and Liebknecht\*\* have taught us—must always seek out their main enemy at home, in their own immediate oppressors and exploiters. In India that enemy is the British bourgeoisie above all. The overthrow of British imperialism would deliver a terrible blow

from *Fourth International* by Leon Trotsky, September, 1939, pp. 263–265

\*Britain was then ruled by the government of Neville Chamberlain.

\*\*Karl Liebknecht, German Socialist Reichstag Deputy imprisoned in 1916 for his antiwar agitation, liberated by the November, 1918, revolution, cofounder of the Spartacus Bund with Rosa Luxemburg and murdered along with her by reactionary officers in January, 1919.

at all the oppressors, including the Fascist dictators. In the long run the imperialists are distinguished from one another in form—not in essence. German imperialism, deprived of colonies, puts on the fearful mask of Fascism with its saberteeth protruding. British imperialism, gorged because it possesses immense colonies, hides its saberteeth behind a mask of democracy. But this democracy exists only for the metropolitan center, for the 45,000,000 souls in the metropolitan center or more correctly only for the ruling bourgeoisie there. India is deprived not only of democracy but of the most elementary right of national independence. Imperialist democracy is thus the democracy of slave owners fed by the life blood of the colonies. But India seeks her own democracy and does not wish to remain the slave owners' dunghill.

Those who desire to end Fascism, reaction, and all forms of oppression must overthrow imperialism. There is no other road. This task cannot, however, be accomplished by peaceful methods, by negotiations, and pledges. Never before in history have slave owners voluntarily freed their slaves. Only a bold, resolute struggle of the Indian people for their economic and national emancipation can free India.

The Indian bourgeoisie is incapable of leading a revolutionary struggle. They are closely bound up with and dependent upon British capitalism. They tremble for their own property. They stand in fear of the masses. They seek compromises with British imperialism no matter what the price; and they lull the Indian masses with hopes of reforms from above. The leader and prophet of this bourgeoisie is Gandhi. A fake leader and a false prophet! Gandhi and his compeers have developed a theory that India's position will constantly improve, that her liberties will continually be enlarged, and that India will gradually become a Dominion on the road of peaceful reforms. Later on, India may achieve even full independence. This entire perspective is false to the core. The imperialist classes were able to make concessions to colonial peoples as well as to their own workers only so long as capitalism marched uphill, so long as the exploiters could firmly bank on the further growth of profits. Nowadays there cannot even be talk of this. World imperialism is in decline. The condition of all imperialist nations daily becomes more difficult while the contradictions between them become more and more aggravated.

Monstrous armaments devour an ever greater share of national incomes. The imperialists can no longer make serious concessions either to their own toiling masses or to the colonies. On the contrary, they are compelled to resort to an ever more bestial exploitation. It is precisely in this that capitalism's death agony is expressed. To retain their colonies, markets, and concessions, to safeguard them from Germany, Italy, and Japan, the London government stands ready to mow down millions of people. Is it possible without losing one's senses, to have any hope that this greedy and savage financial oligarchy will voluntarily free India?

True enough, a government of the so-called Labour Party may replace the Tory government. But this will alter nothing. The Labour Party—as witness its entire past and present program—is in no way distinguished from the Tories on the colonial question. The Labour Party in reality expresses not the interests of the working class, but only the interests of the British labor bureaucracy and labor aristocracy. It is to this stratum that the bourgeoisie can toss juicy morsels, due to the fact that they themselves ruthlessly exploit the colonies, above all India. The British labor bureaucracy—in the Labour Party as well as in the trade unions—is directly interested in the exploitation of colonies. It has not the slightest desire to think of the emancipation of India. All these gentlemen—Major [Clement] Attlee, Sir Walter Citrine & Co.\*—are ready at any moment to brand the revolutionary movement of the Indian people as “betrayal,” as aid to Hitler and Mussolini, and to resort to military measures for its suppression.

In no way superior is the policy of the present day Communist International. To be sure, 20 years ago the Third, or Communist, International was founded as a genuine revolutionary organization. One of its most important tasks was the liberation of the colonial peoples. Only recollections remain today of this program, however. The leaders of the Communist International have long since become the mere tools of the Moscow bureaucracy which has stifled the So-

\*Attlee was a moderate British Labour Party leader who succeeded Churchill as prime minister in 1945 and was displaced by Churchill after Labour's defeat in the 1951 election. Citrine, British trade union leader, served as General Secretary of the British Trades Union Congress for many years after 1926 and as president of the International Federation of Trade Unions (1928-46).



viet working masses and which has become transformed into a new aristocracy. In the ranks of the Communist Parties of various countries—including India—there are no doubt many honest workers, students, etc.: but they do not fix the politics of the Comintern. The deciding word belongs to the Kremlin, which is guided not by the interests of the oppressed, but by those of the USSR's new aristocracy.

Stalin and his clique, for the sake of an alliance with the imperialist governments, have completely renounced the revolutionary program for the emancipation of the colonies. This was openly avowed at the last Congress of Stalin's party in Moscow, in March of the current year, by Manuilski\* one of the leaders of the Comintern, who declared: "The Communists advance to the forefront the struggle for the realization of the right of self-determination of nationalities enslaved by *fascist* governments. They demand free self-determination for Austria . . . the Sudeten regions . . . Korea, Formosa, Abyssinia . . ." And what about India, Indochina, Algeria, and other colonies of England and France? The Comintern representative answers this question as follows: "The Communists . . . demand of the imperialist governments of the so-called bourgeois democratic states the immediate [*sic*] drastic [!] improvement in the living standards of the toiling masses in the colonies and the granting of broad democratic rights and liberties to the colonies." (*Pravda*, issue No. 70, March 12, 1939.) In other words, as regards the colonies of England and France the Comintern has completely gone over to Gandhi's position and the position of the conciliationist colonial bourgeoisie in general. The Comintern has completely renounced revolutionary struggle for India's independence. It "demands" (on its knees) the "granting" of "democratic liberties" to India by British imperialism. The words "immediate drastic improvement in the living standards of the toiling masses in the colonies" have an especially false and cynical ring. Modern capitalism—declining, gangrenous, disintegrating—is more and more compelled to worsen the position of workers even in the metropolitan center. How then can it improve the position of the toilers in the colonies from whom it is compelled to squeeze out all the life

\*D. Z. Manuilski, Soviet diplomat. After Bukharin's disgrace in 1928, he succeeded to the leadership of the Communist International at Moscow, becoming Stalin's official spokesman there.

juices so as to keep its own balance? The improvement of the conditions of the toiling masses in the colonies is possible only by way of the complete overthrow of imperialism.

But the Communist International has travelled even farther on this road of betrayal. Communists, according to Manuiski, "subordinate the realization of this right of the [colonial people] to secede [from the Empire] . . . to the purpose of defeating Fascism." In other words, in the event of war . . . the Indian people must support their present slave owners, the British imperialists. That is to say they must shed their blood not for their own emancipation, but for the preservation of the rule of "the City" over India. And these cheaply-to-be-bought scoundrels dare to quote Marx and Lenin! As a matter of fact, their teacher and leader is none other than Stalin, the head of a new bureaucratic aristocracy, the butcher of the Bolshevik Party, the strangler of workers and peasants.

The Stalinists cover up their policy of servitude to British, French, and USA imperialism with the formula of a "People's Front." What a mockery of the people! "People's Front" is only a new name for that old policy, the gist of which lies in class collaboration, in a coalition between the proletariat and the bourgeoisie. In every such coalition, the leadership invariably turns out to be in the hands of the right-wing, that is, in the hands of the propertied class. The Indian bourgeoisie, as has already been stated, wants peaceful horse trading and not a struggle. Coalition with the bourgeoisie leads to the proletariat's abnegating the revolutionary struggle against imperialism. The policy of coalition implies marking time, temporizing, cherishing false hopes, hollow maneuvers and intrigues. As a result of this policy, disillusionment inevitably sets in among the working masses, while the peasants turn their backs on the proletariat and fall into apathy. The German revolution, the Austrian revolution, the Chinese revolution, and the Spanish revolution have all perished as a result of coalition policy. The selfsame danger also menaces the Indian revolution where the Stalinists, under the guise of a "People's Front," are putting across a policy of subordinating the proletariat to the bourgeoisie. This signifies, in action, a rejection of the revolutionary agrarian program, a refusal to arm the workers, a rejection of the struggle for power, a rejection of revolution.

If the Indian bourgeoisie ever finds itself compelled to

take even the tiniest step on the road of struggle against Britain's arbitrary domination, the proletariat will naturally support such a step. But they will support it with *their own* methods: mass meetings, bold slogans, strikes, demonstrations, and more decisive combat actions, depending on the relationship of forces and the circumstances. Precisely to do this the proletariat must have its hands free. Complete independence from the bourgeoisie is indispensable to the proletariat, above all in order to exert influence on the peasantry, the predominant mass of India's population. Only the proletariat is capable of advancing a bold, revolutionary agrarian program, of rousing and rallying tens of millions of peasants and leading them in struggle against the native oppressors and British imperialism. The alliance of workers and poor peasants is the only honest, reliable alliance that can assure the final victory of the Indian revolution.

### *The Future of Latin America*

*In May, 1940, soon after the Second World War broke out, the Fourth International, founded by Trotsky adopted the Manifesto on the Imperialist War and the Proletarian Revolution. The document contained these passages on the prospects of Latin-American revolution.*

The monstrous growth of armaments in the United States prepares for a violent solution of the complex contradictions in the Western hemisphere and should soon pose point-blank the question of the destiny of the Latin-American countries. The interlude of the "good neighbor" policy is coming to an end. Roosevelt or his successor will quickly take the iron fist out of the velvet glove. The theses of the Fourth International state: "South and Central America cannot free themselves from backwardness and servitude except by uniting all their states in a powerful federation. This grandiose historic task is destined to be solved not by the belated South American bourgeoisie, the com-

from *Manifesto on the Imperialist War and the Proletarian Revolution* by Leon Trotsky, pp. 27-28

pletely prostituted agency of foreign imperialism, but by the young South American proletariat, the destined leader of the oppressed masses. Therefore, the watchword for the struggle against the violence and the intrigues of world capitalism and against the bloodstained work of the indigenous compradore cliques is: The Soviet United States of South and Central America." . . .

Only under its own revolutionary direction is the proletariat of the colonies and the semi-colonies capable of achieving invincible collaboration with the proletariat of the metropolitan centers and with the world working class as a whole. Only this can lead the oppressed peoples to complete and final emancipation, through the overthrow of imperialism the world over. A victory of the international proletariat will deliver the colonial countries from the long drawn-out travail of capitalist development by opening up the possibility of arriving at socialism hand in hand with the proletariat of the advanced countries.

The perspective of permanent revolution in no case signifies that the backward countries must await the signal from the advanced ones, or that the colonial peoples should patiently wait for the proletariat of the metropolitan centers to free them. Help comes to him who helps himself. Workers must develop the revolutionary struggle in every country, colonial or imperialist, where favorable conditions have been established, and through this set an example for the workers of other countries. Only initiative and activity, resoluteness and boldness can give reality to the call, "Workers of the world, unite!"

THE FOURTH  
INTERNATIONAL: 1933-1940

*From 1923 to 1933 the "Trotskyist" Opposition hoped to free the Communist International (and the USSR) from Stalinism by way of internal reform. Later, however, Trotsky gave up this hope. After the German working class, misled by both Social Democrats and Stalinists, had been crushed by the Nazis, he concluded that the Third International he and Lenin had founded no longer acted as a progressive revolutionary organization. He decided to found a new International, the Fourth. For its founding conference, held in September, 1938, Trotsky wrote The Death Agony of Capitalism and the Tasks of the Fourth International, commonly referred to as "The Transitional Program." The introduction and conclusion of this program are given here. They are followed by the last document Trotsky drafted for the Fourth International: Manifesto on the Imperialist War and the Proletarian Revolution. He wrote it in 1940 "to say openly and clearly how it [the Fourth International] views this war and its participants, how it evaluates the war policies of various labor organizations, and, most important, what is the way out to peace, freedom, and plenty."*

### *The Death Agony of Capitalism*

The world political situation as a whole is chiefly characterized by a historical crisis of the leadership of the proletariat.

The economic prerequisites for the proletarian revolution from *The Death Agony of Capitalism* by Leon Trotsky, pp. 5-10, 59-60

have already in general achieved the highest point of maturity that can be reached under capitalism. Mankind's productive forces stagnate. Already new inventions and improvements fail to raise the level of material wealth. Cyclical slumps, under the conditions of the social crisis of the whole capitalist system inflict ever heavier deprivations and sufferings upon the masses. Growing unemployment, in its turn, deepens the financial crisis of the state and undermines the unstable monetary systems. Democratic as well as Fascist régimes stagger on from one bankruptcy to another.

The bourgeoisie itself sees no way out. In countries where it has already been forced to stake its last upon the card of fascism, it now toboggans with closed eyes toward an economic and military catastrophe. In the historically privileged countries, i.e., in those where the bourgeoisie can still for a certain period permit itself the luxury of democracy at the expense of national accumulation (Great Britain, France, United States, etc.), all of capital's traditional parties are in a state of perplexity bordering on a paralysis of will. The "New Deal," despite its initial pretentious resoluteness, represents but a special form of political perplexity, possible only in a country where the bourgeoisie succeeded in accumulating incalculable wealth. The present crisis, far from having run its full course, has already succeeded in showing that "New Deal" politics, like Popular Front politics in France, open no new exit from the economic blind alley.

International relations present no better picture. Under the increasing tension of capitalist disintegration, imperialist antagonisms reach an impasse at which separate clashes and bloody local disturbances (Ethiopia, Spain, the Far East, Central Europe) must inevitably coalesce into a conflagration of world dimensions. The bourgeoisie, of course, is aware of the mortal danger to its domination represented by a new war. But that class is now immeasurably less capable of averting war than on the eve of 1914.

All talk to the effect that historical conditions have not yet "ripened" for socialism is the product of ignorance or conscious deception. The objective prerequisites for the proletarian revolution have not only "ripened"; they have begun to get somewhat rotten. Without a socialist revolution, in the next historical period, a catastrophe threatens the whole culture of mankind. All now depends on the pro-

letariat, i.e., chiefly on its revolutionary vanguard. The historical crisis of mankind is reduced to the crisis of the revolutionary leadership.

The economy, the state, the politics of the bourgeoisie and its international relations are completely blighted by a social crisis, characteristic of a prerevolutionary state of society. The chief factors obstructing the transformation of the prerevolutionary state of society into a revolutionary one is the opportunist character of proletarian leadership: its petty-bourgeois cowardice before the big bourgeoisie and its perfidious connection with the latter even in its death agony.

In all countries the proletariat is wracked by a deep disquiet. The multimillioned masses again and again enter the road of revolution. But each time they are blocked by their own conservative bureaucratic machines.

The Spanish proletariat has, since April 1931, made a series of heroic attempts to take power in its hands and guide the fate of society. However, its own parties (Social Democrats, Stalinists, Anarchists, POUMists)—each in its own way—acted as a brake and thus prepared [Generalissimo] Franco's triumphs.

In France, the great wave of sit-down strikes, particularly during June, 1936, revealed the wholehearted readiness of the proletariat to overthrow the capitalist system. However, the leading organizations (Socialists, Stalinists, Syndicalists\*), under the label of the Popular Front, succeeded in canalizing and damming, at least temporarily, the revolutionary stream.

The unprecedented wave of sit-down strikes and the amazingly rapid growth of industrial unionism in the United States (the CIO) is the most indisputable expression of the instinctive striving of the American workers to raise themselves to the level of the tasks imposed on them by history. But here, too, the leading political organizations, including the newly created CIO, do everything possible to keep in check and paralyze the revolutionary pressure of the masses.

The definite passing over of the Comintern to the side of the bourgeois order, and its cynically counterrevolutionary role throughout the world, particularly in Spain, France, the United States, and other "democratic" countries, cre-

\*Syndicalist's here means trade union leaders who nominally stood for "direct action by organized labor" and "rejected" parliamentary politics but participated in the Popular Front.

ated exceptional supplementary difficulties for the world proletariat. The conciliatory policies, which the Comintern, abusing the banner of the October Revolution, practices through the "Peoples Front," doom the working class to impotence and clear the road for fascism.

"People's Fronts" on the one hand—Fascism on the other; these are the last political resources of imperialism in the struggle against the proletarian revolution. From the historical point of view, however, both these resources are stopgaps. The decay of capitalism continues under the sign of the Phrygian cap in France as under the sign of the swastika in Germany. Nothing short of the overthrow of the bourgeoisie can open a way out.

The orientation of the masses is determined firstly by the objective conditions of decaying capitalism, and secondly by the treacherous policies of the old workers' organizations. Of these factors, the first of course is the decisive one: the laws of history are stronger than the bureaucratic apparatus. No matter how the methods of the social betrayers differ—from the "social" legislation of Blum to the judicial frame-ups\* of Stalin—they will never succeed in breaking the revolutionary will of the proletariat. As time goes on, their desperate efforts to hold back the wheel of history will demonstrate more clearly to the masses that the crisis of the proletarian leadership, having become the crisis in mankind's culture, can be resolved only by the Fourth International.

The strategic task of the next period—a prerevolutionary period of agitation, propaganda, and organization—consists in overcoming the contradiction between the maturity of the objective revolutionary conditions and the immaturity of the proletariat and its vanguard (the confusion and disappointment of the older generation, the inexperience of the younger generation). It is necessary to help the masses in daily struggle to find the bridge between present demands and the socialist program of the revolution. This bridge should include a system of *transitional demands*, stemming from today's conditions and from today's consciousness of wide layers of the working class and unalterably leading to one final conclusion: the conquest of power by the proletariat.

\*A reference to the Moscow trials in the 1930's.



Classical Social Democracy, functioning in an epoch of progressive capitalism, divided its program into two parts independent of each other: the *minimum program*, limited to reforms within the framework of bourgeois society, and the *maximum program*, which promised substitution of socialism for capitalism in the indefinite future. Between the minimum and the maximum program no bridge existed. And indeed Social Democracy has no need of such a bridge, since the word *socialism* is used only for holiday speechifying. The Comintern has set out to follow the path of Social Democracy in an epoch of decaying capitalism: when, in general, there can be no question of systematic social reforms and the raising of the masses' living standards; when every serious demand of the proletariat and even every serious demand of the petty bourgeoisie inevitably reaches beyond the limits of capitalist property relations and of the bourgeois state.

The strategic task of the Fourth International lies not in reforming capitalism but in its overthrow. Its political aim is the conquest of power by the proletariat for the purpose of expropriating the bourgeoisie. However, the achievement of this strategic task is unthinkable without the most considered attention to all, even small and partial questions of tactics. All sections of the proletariat, all its layers, occupations, and groups should be drawn into the revolutionary movement. The present epoch is distinguished not for the fact that it frees the revolutionary party from day-to-day work but because it permits this work to be carried on in indissoluble connection with the actual tasks of the revolution.

The Fourth International does not discard the program of the old "minimal" demands to the degree to which these have preserved at least part of their vital forcefulness. Indefatigably, it defends the democratic rights and social conquests of the workers. But it carries on this day-to-day work within the framework of the correct contemporary, that is, revolutionary perspective. Insofar as the old partial "minimal" demands of the masses clash with the destructive and degrading tendencies of decadent capitalism—and this occurs at each step—the Fourth International advances a system of *transitional demands*, the essence of which is contained in the fact that they will be directed ever more openly and decisively against the very bases of the bourgeois régime. The old "minimal program" is superseded by

the *transitional program*, the task of which lies in systematic mobilization of the masses for the proletarian revolution. . . .

Skeptics ask: But has the moment for the creation of the Fourth International yet arrived? It is impossible, they say, to create an International "artificially"; it can arise only out of great events, etc., etc. All of these objections merely show that skeptics are no good for the building of a new International. They are good for scarcely anything at all.

The Fourth International has already arisen out of great events: the greatest defeats of the proletariat in history. The cause for these defeats is to be found in the degeneration and perfidy of the old leadership. The class struggle does not tolerate an interruption. The Third International, following the Second, is dead for purposes of revolution. Long live the Fourth International!

But has the time yet arrived to proclaim its creation? . . . the skeptics are not quieted down. The Fourth International, we answer, has no need of being "proclaimed." It exists and it fights. Is it weak? Yes, its ranks are not numerous because it is still young. They are as yet chiefly cadres. But these cadres are pledges for the future. Outside of these cadres there does not exist a single revolutionary current on this planet really meriting the name. If our International be still weak in numbers, it is strong in doctrine, program, tradition, in the incomparable tempering of its cadres. Who does not perceive this today, let him in the meantime stand aside. Tomorrow it will become more evident.

The Fourth International, already today, is deservedly hated by the Stalinists, Social Democrats, bourgeois liberals, and fascists. There is not and there cannot be a place for it in any of the People's Fronts. It uncompromisingly gives battle to all political groupings tied to the apron strings of the bourgeoisie. Its task—the abolition of capitalism's domination. Its aim—Socialism. Its method—the proletarian revolution.

Without inner democracy—no revolutionary education. Without discipline—no revolutionary action. The inner structure of the Fourth International is based on the principles of *democratic centralism*; full freedom in discussion, complete unity in action.

The present crisis in human culture is the crisis in the proletarian leadership. The advanced workers, united in the

Fourth International, show their class the way out of the crisis. They offer a program based on international experience in the struggle of the proletariat and of all the oppressed of the world for liberation. They offer a spotless banner.

Workers—men and women—of all countries, place yourselves under the banner of the Fourth International. It is the banner of your approaching victory!

### *The Second World War*

The victory of the Spanish revolution could have opened up an era of revolutionary overturns throughout Europe and so forestalled the present war. But that heroic revolution, which contained within itself every possibility of victory, was smothered in the embrace of the Second and Third Internationals, with the active cooperation of the anarchists. The world proletariat became poorer in its loss of another great hope and richer in the lessons of another monstrous betrayal.

The mighty movement of the French proletariat in June, 1936,\* revealed exceptionally favorable conditions for the revolutionary conquest of power. A French soviet republic would immediately have gained revolutionary hegemony of Europe, created revolutionary repercussions in every country, rocked the totalitarian régimes and in this way saved humanity from the present imperialist slaughter with its countless victims. But the thoroughly debased, cowardly, and treacherous policies of Léon Blum and Léon Jouhaux\*\* with the active support of the French section of the Comintern, led to the collapse of one of the most promising movements of the last decade.

The strangling of the Spanish revolution and the sabotaging of the proletarian offensive in France—these two tragic

from *Manifesto on the Imperialist War and the Proletarian Revolution* by Leon Trotsky, pp. 28–29, 40–41

\*A reference to the massive strike wave that swept over France during May–June, 1936, in which a million and a half workers occupied the factories and raised red flags over them.

\*\*Jouhaux was Secretary of the French General Confederation of Labor (CGT) for almost forty years (1909–47).

facts stand at the threshold of the present war. The bourgeoisie convinced itself that with such "labor leaders" at its disposal it could go ahead with anything, even a new slaughter of peoples. The leaders of the Second International prevented the proletariat from overthrowing the bourgeoisie at the close of the first imperialist war. The leaders of the Second and Third Internationals helped the bourgeoisie unloose a second imperialist war. Let it become their political grave! . . .

The basic conditions for the victory of the proletarian revolution have been established by historical experience and clarified theoretically. (1) The bourgeois impasse and the resulting confusion of the ruling class; (2) the sharp dissatisfaction and the striving towards decisive changes in the ranks of the petty bourgeoisie without whose support the big bourgeoisie cannot maintain itself; (3) the consciousness of the intolerable situation and readiness for revolutionary actions in the ranks of the proletariat; (4) a clear program and a firm leadership of the proletarian vanguard—these are the four conditions for the victory of the proletarian revolution. The main reason for the defeats of many revolutions is rooted in the fact that these four conditions rarely attain the necessary degree of maturity at one and the same time. In history, war has not infrequently been the mother of revolution precisely because it rocks super-annuated régimes to their foundation, weakens the ruling class, and hastens the growth of revolutionary indignation among the oppressed classes.

Already the disorientation of the bourgeoisie, the alarm and dissatisfaction of the popular masses are intense, not only in the warring but also in the neutral countries; these phenomena will become intensified with every passing month of the war. In the last twenty years, it is true, the proletariat has suffered one defeat after another, each graver than the preceding one, became disillusioned with its old parties and met the war undoubtedly in depressed spirits. One should not, however, overestimate the stability or durability of such moods. Events created them, events will dispel them.

War, as well as revolution, is made first and foremost by the younger generation. Millions of the youth unable to find access to industry began their lives as unemployed and therefore remained outside of political life. Today they are finding their place or they will find it on the morrow: the

state organizes them into regiments and for this very reason opens the possibility for their revolutionary unification. Without a doubt the war will also shake off the apathy of the older generations.

There remains the question of leadership. Will not the revolution be betrayed this time too, inasmuch as there are two Internationals in the service of imperialism while the genuine revolutionary elements constitute a tiny minority? In other words, shall we succeed in preparing in time a party capable of leading the proletarian revolution? In order to answer this question correctly it is necessary to pose it correctly. Naturally, this or that uprising may end and surely will end in defeat, owing to the immaturity of the revolutionary leadership. But it is not a question of a single uprising. It is a question of an entire revolutionary epoch.

The capitalist world has no way out, unless a prolonged death agony is so considered. It is necessary to prepare for long years, if not decades, of war, uprisings, brief interludes of truce, new wars, and new uprisings. A young revolutionary party must base itself on this perspective. History will provide it with enough opportunities and possibilities to test itself, to accumulate experience, and to mature. The swifter the ranks of the vanguard are fused, the more the epoch of bloody convulsions will be shortened, the less destruction will our planet suffer. But the great historical problem will not be solved in any case until a revolutionary party stands at the head of the proletariat. The question of *tempos* and time intervals is of enormous importance; but it alters neither the general historical perspective nor the direction of our policy. The conclusion is a simple one: it is necessary to carry on the work of educating and organizing the proletarian vanguard with tenfold energy. Precisely in this lies the task of the Fourth International. . . .

## THE MOSCOW TRIALS: 1936-1938

*Stalin's terror reached its peak in the Moscow trials of 1936 to 1938. Four of these are best known: the "trial of the sixteen" (Zinoviev, Kamenev, Smirnov, Mrachkovsky and others) held in August, 1936; "the trial of the seventeen" (Piatakov, Radek, Sokolnikov, Muralov, Serebriakov, and others) in January, 1937; the secret trial of Marshal Tukhachevsky and a group of the highest Red Army generals in June, 1937; finally "the trial of the twenty-one" (Rykov, Bukharin, Krestinsky, Rakovsky, Yagoda, and others) in March, 1938. The men in the dock included all the members of Lenin's Politbureau, except Stalin himself. Trotsky, though absent, was the chief defendant. Trotsky and the Bolshevik old guard were accused of plotting to assassinate Stalin and other Soviet leaders, of conspiring to wreck the country's military and economic power, and of killing masses of Russian workers. It was also charged that from the earliest days of the revolution they had worked for the espionage services of Britain, France, Japan, and Germany and had entered secret compacts with agents of Hitler and the Mikado to cut up and cede vast slices of Soviet territory to Germany and Japan.*

*These trials were followed by a prolonged purge that affected party men, soldiers, Comintern leaders, ordinary workers and peasants, officials in government, industry, and agriculture, scientists, writers, and artists, people from every walk of Soviet life. The actual number of victims is still unknown, but it must have run into millions. Stalin's closest associates were not exempted and even the secret police chiefs, Yagoda and Yezhov, who organized the early trials, were caught in the sweeping slaughter. Many victims were executed without trial, because they refused to bear false witness. The forced confessions of the defendants in*

*the public trials were the only basis for the proceedings and verdicts.*

*Trotsky alone was beyond Stalin's reach and could not be silenced. Between the first and second trials, on February 9, 1937, he prepared a speech for delivery by direct telephone wire from Mexico City to the Hippodrome in New York where a large audience awaited the sound of his voice. An unexplained break in the transmission lines prevented a good connection. Though he was not heard that night, his speech was read. Parts of it are here reproduced under the title "I Stake My Life." Somewhat later in the year an International Commission, headed by the eminent American philosopher and liberal educator John Dewey, was formed to "inquire into the charges against Leon Trotsky in the Moscow Trials." After nine months of investigation this body issued a report that established the innocence of the accused and proved Stalin's trials to be frame-ups. We reprint the conclusion of Trotsky's summary speech before the Dewey Commission at the close of its preliminary hearings at Coyoacán, Mexico, from April 10-17, 1937.*

### *I Stake My Life!*

... Why does Moscow so fear the voice of a single man? Only because I know the truth, the whole truth. Only because I have nothing to hide. Only because I am ready to appear before a public and impartial commission of inquiry with documents, facts, and testimonies in my hands, and to disclose the truth to the very end. *I declare: if this commission decides that I am guilty in the slightest degree of the crimes which Stalin imputes to me, I pledge in advance to place myself voluntarily in the hands of the executioners of the G.P.U.* That, I hope, is clear. Have you all heard? I make this declaration before the entire world. I ask the press to publish my words in the farthest corners of our planet. But if the commission establishes—do you hear me?—that the Moscow trials are a conscious and premeditated frame-up, constructed with the bones and nerves of human beings, I will not ask my ac-

from *I Stake My Life* by Leon Trotsky, pp. 5, 18-22

users to place themselves voluntarily before a firing squad. No, the eternal disgrace in the memory of human generations will be sufficient for them! Do the accusers of the Kremlin hear me? I throw my defiance in their faces. And I await their reply!

Through this declaration I reply in passing to the frequent objections of superficial skeptics: "Why must we believe Trotsky and not Stalin?" It is absurd to busy one's self with psychological divinations. It is not a question of personal confidence. It is a question of *verification!* I propose a verification! I demand the verification! . . .

Among you, dear listeners, there must be not a few people who freely say: "The confessions of the accused are false, that is clear; but how was Stalin able to obtain such confessions; therein lies the secret!" In reality the secret is not so profound. The Inquisition, with a much more simple technique, extorted all sorts of confessions from its victims. That is why the democratic penal law renounced the methods of the Middle Ages, because they led not to the establishment of the truth, but to a simple confirmation of the accusations dictated by the inquiring judge. The G.P.U. trials have a thoroughly inquisitorial character: that is the simple secret of the confessions!

The whole political atmosphere of the Soviet Union is impregnated with the spirit of the Inquisition. Have you read André Gide's little book, *Return from the USSR*? Gide is a friend of the Soviet Union, but not a lackey of the bureaucracy. Moreover, this artist has eyes. A little episode in Gide's book is of incalculable aid in understanding the Moscow trials. At the end of his trip Gide wished to send a telegram to Stalin, but not having received the inquisitorial education, he referred to Stalin with the simple democratic word "you." They refused to accept the telegram! The representatives of authority explained to Gide: "When writing to Stalin one must say: 'leader of the workers' or 'chieftain of the people,' not the simple democratic word 'you'." Gide tried to argue: "Isn't Stalin above such flattery?" It was no use. They still refused to accept his telegram without the Byzantine flattery. At the very end Gide declared: "I submit in this wearisome battle, but disclaim all responsibility. . . ." Thus a universally recognized writer and honored guest was worn out in a few minutes and forced to sign not the telegram which he himself



wanted to send, but that which was dictated to him by petty inquisitors. Let him who has a particle of imagination picture to himself, not a well-known traveller but an unfortunate Soviet citizen, an oppositionist, isolated and persecuted, a pariah, who is constrained to write not telegrams of salutation to Stalin but dozens and scores of confessions of his crimes. Perhaps in this world there are many heroes who are capable of bearing all kinds of tortures, physical or moral, which are inflicted on themselves, their wives, their children. I do not know. . . . My personal observations inform me that the capacities of the human nervous system are limited. Through the G.P.U. Stalin can trap his victim in an abyss of black despair, humiliation, infamy, in such a manner that he takes upon himself the most monstrous crimes, with the prospect of imminent death or a feeble ray of hope for the future as the sole outcome. If, indeed, he does not contemplate suicide, which Tomsky preferred! Joffe earlier found the same way out, as well as two members of my military secretariat, Glazman and Boutov, Zinoviev's secretary, Bogdan, my daughter Zinaida, and many dozens of others. Suicide or moral prostration: there is no other choice! But do not forget that in the prisons of the G.P.U. even suicide is often an inaccessible luxury!

The Moscow trials do not dishonor the revolution, because they are the progeny of reaction. The Moscow trials do not dishonor the old generation of Bolsheviks; they only demonstrate that even Bolsheviks are made of flesh and blood, and that they do not resist endlessly when over their heads swings the pendulum of death. The Moscow trials dishonor the political régime which has conceived them: the régime of Bonapartism, without honor and without conscience! All the executed died with curses on their lips for this régime.

Let him who wishes weep bitter tears because history moves ahead so perplexingly: two steps forward, one step back. But tears are of no avail. It is necessary, according to Spinoza's advice, not to laugh, not to weep, but to understand!

Who are the principal defendants? Old Bolsheviks, builders of the party, of the Soviet state, of the Red Army, of the Communist International. Who is the accuser against them? [Andre] *Vishinsky*,\* bourgeois lawyer, who called

\*Vishinsky was State Prosecutor in the Moscow Trials.

himself a Menshevik after the October revolution and joined the Bolsheviks after their definitive victory. Who wrote the disgusting libels about the accused in *Pravda*? *Zaslavsky*, former pillar of a [prerevolutionary] banking journal, whom Lenin treated in his articles only as a "rascal." The former editor of *Pravda*, [Nikolai] Bukharin, is arrested. The pillar of *Pravda* is now *Koltzov*, bourgeois feuilletonist, who remained throughout the civil war in the camp of the Whites. *Sokolnikov*, a participant in the October revolution and the civil war is condemned as a traitor. *Rakovsky* awaits accusation. *Sokolnikov* and *Rakovsky* were ambassadors to London. Their place is now occupied by *Maisky*, Right Menshevik, who during the civil war was a minister of the White government in Kolchak's territory. *Trojanovsky*, Soviet ambassador to Washington, treats the Trotskyists as counterrevolutionaries. He himself, during the first years of the October Revolution, was a member of the Central Committee of the Mensheviks and joined the Bolsheviks only after they began to distribute attractive posts. Before becoming ambassador, *Sokolnikov* was People's Commissar of Finance. Who occupies that post today? *Grinko*, who in common with the White Guards\* struggled in the Committee of Welfare during 1917-18 against the soviets. One of the best soviet diplomatists was *Joffe*, first Ambassador to Germany, who was forced to suicide by the persecutions. Who replaced him in Berlin? First the repented oppositionist *Krestinski*, then *Khinchuk*, former Menshevik, a participant in the counterrevolutionary Committee of Welfare, and finally *Suritz*, who also went through 1917 on the other side of the barricades. I could prolong this list indefinitely.

These grandiose alterations in personnel, especially striking in the provinces, have profound social causes. What are they? It is time, my listeners, it is high time, to recognize, finally, that a new aristocracy has been formed in the Soviet Union. The October Revolution proceeded under the banner of equality. The bureaucracy is the embodiment of monstrous inequality. The Revolution destroyed the nobility. The bureaucracy creates a new gentry. The Revolution destroyed titles and decorations. The new aristocracy produces marshals and generals. The new aristocracy absorbs an enormous part of the national income. Its position before

\*The Whites is a general term for the counterrevolutionary forces in the Civil War, 1918-21.

the people is deceitful and false. Its leaders are forced to hide the reality, to deceive the masses, to cloak themselves, calling black white. The whole policy of the new aristocracy is a frame-up. The new constitution is nothing but a frame-up.

Fear of criticism is fear of the masses. The bureaucracy is afraid of the people. The lava of the revolution is not yet cold. The bureaucracy cannot crush the discontented and the critics by bloody repressions only because they demand a cutting down of privileges. That is why the false accusations against the opposition are not occasional acts but a *system*, which flows from the present situation of the ruling caste.

Let us recall how the Thermidorians of the French Revolution acted toward the Jacobins. The historian [François] Aulard writes: "The enemies did not satisfy themselves with the assassination of Robespierre and his friends; they calumniated them, representing them in the eyes of France as royalists, as people who had sold out to foreign countries." Stalin has invented nothing. He has simply replaced royalists with Fascists.

When the Stalinists call us "traitors," there is in that accusation not only hatred but also a certain sort of sincerity. They think that we betray the interests of the holy caste of generals and marshals, the only ones capable of "constructing socialism," but who in fact compromise the very idea of socialism. For our part, we consider the Stalinists as traitors to the interests of the soviet masses and of the world proletariat. It is absurd to explain such a furious struggle by personal motives. It is a question not only of different programs, but also of different social interests, which clash in an increasingly hostile fashion. . . .

### *The Why and Wherefore of These Trials*

An American writer complained to me in a conversation: "It is difficult for me to believe," he said, "that you entered into an alliance with Fascism; but it is equally difficult for me to believe that Stalin carried out

from *The Case of Leon Trotsky*, pp. 580-585

such horrible frame-ups." I can only pity the author of this remark. It is, in fact, difficult to find a solution if one approaches the question exclusively from an individual psychological and not political viewpoint. I do not wish to deny by this the importance of the individual element in history. Neither Stalin nor I find ourselves in our present positions by accident. But we did not create these positions. Each of us is drawn into this drama as the representative of definite ideas and principles. In their turn, the ideas and principles do not fall from the sky, but have profound social roots. That is why one must take, not the psychological abstraction of Stalin as a "man," but his concrete, historical personality as leader of the Soviet bureaucracy. One can understand the acts of Stalin only by starting from the conditions of existence of the new privileged stratum, greedy for power, greedy for material comforts, apprehensive for its positions, fearing the masses, and mortally hating all opposition.

The position of a privileged bureaucracy in a society which that bureaucracy itself calls Socialist is not only contradictory, but also false. The more precipitate the jump from the October overturn—which laid bare all social falsehood—to the present situation, in which a caste of upstarts is forced to cover up its social ulcers, the cruder the Thermidorian lies. It is, consequently, a question not simply of the individual depravity of this or that person, but of the corruption lodged in the position of a whole social group for whom lying has become a vital political necessity. In the struggle for its newly gained positions, this caste has reeducated itself and simultaneously reeducated—or rather, demoralized—its leaders. It raised upon its shoulders the man who best, most resolutely, and most ruthlessly expresses its interests. Thus Stalin, who was once a revolutionist, became the leader of the Thermidorian caste.

The formulas of Marxism, expressing the interests of the masses, more and more inconvenienced the bureaucracy, in so far as they were inevitably directed against its interests. From the time that I entered into opposition to the bureaucracy, its courtier-theoreticians began to call the revolutionary essence of Marxism—*Trotskyism*. At the same time, the official conception of *Leninism* changed from year to year, becoming more and more adapted to the needs of the ruling caste. Books devoted to Party history, to the October Revolution, or to the theory of Leninism, were revised annually.

I have adduced an example from the literary activity of Stalin himself. In 1918 he wrote that the victory of the October insurrection was "principally and above all" assured by Trotsky's leadership. In 1924 Stalin wrote that Trotsky could not have played any special role in the October Revolution. To this tune the whole historiography was adjusted. This signifies in practice that hundreds of young scholars and thousands of journalists were systematically trained in the spirit of falsification. Whoever resisted was stifled. This applies in a still greater measure to the propagandists, functionaries, judges, not to speak of the examining magistrates of the G.P.U. The incessant Party purges were directed above all toward the uprooting of "Trotskyism," and during these purges not only discontented workers were called "Trotskyites," but also all writers who honestly presented historical facts or citations which contradicted the latest official standardization. Novelists and artists were subject to the same régime. The spiritual atmosphere of the country became completely impregnated with the poison of conventionalities, lies, and direct frame-ups.

All the possibilities along this road were soon exhausted. The theoretical and historical falsifications no longer attained their aims—people grew too accustomed to them. It was necessary to give to bureaucratic repression a more massive foundation. To bolster up the literary falsifications, accusations of a criminal character were brought in.

My exile from the USSR was officially motivated by the allegation that I had prepared an "armed insurrection." However, the accusation launched against me was not even published in the press. Today it may seem incredible, but already in 1929 we were confronted with accusations against the Trotskyites of "sabotage," "espionage," "preparation of railroad wrecks," etc., in the Soviet press. However, there was not a single trial involving these accusations. The matter was limited to a literary calumny, which represented, nevertheless, the first link in the preparation of the future judicial frame-ups. To justify the repressions, it was necessary to have framed accusations. To give weight to the false accusations, it was necessary to reinforce them with more brutal repressions. Thus the logic of the struggle drove Stalin along the road of gigantic judicial amalgams.

They also became necessary to him for international reasons. If the Soviet bureaucracy does not want revolutions and fears them, it cannot, at the same time, openly re-

nounce the revolutionary traditions without definitely undermining its prestige within the USSR. However, the obvious bankruptcy of the Comintern opens the way for a new International. Since 1933, the idea of new revolutionary parties under the banner of the Fourth International has met with great success in the Old and New Worlds. Only with difficulty can an outside observer appreciate the real dimensions of this success. It cannot be measured by membership statistics alone. The general tendency of development is of much greater importance. Deep, internal fissures are spreading throughout all the sections of the Comintern, which at the first historic shock will result in splits and debacles. If Stalin fears the little *Bulletin of the Opposition* \* and punishes its introduction into the USSR with death, it is not difficult to understand what fright seizes the bureaucracy at the possibility that news of the self-sacrificing work of the Fourth International in the service of the working class may penetrate into the USSR.

The moral authority of the leaders of the bureaucracy and, above all, of Stalin, rests in large measure upon the Tower of Babel of slanders and falsifications erected over a period of thirteen years. The moral authority of the Comintern rests entirely and exclusively on the moral authority of the Soviet bureaucracy. In its turn, the authority of the Comintern, as well as its support, is necessary for Stalin before the Russian workers. This Tower of Babel, which frightens its own builders, is maintained inside the USSR with the aid of more and more terrible repressions, and outside the USSR with the aid of a gigantic apparatus which, through resources drawn from the labor of the Soviet workers and peasants, poisons world public opinion with the virus of lies, falsifications, and blackmail. Millions of people throughout the world identify the October Revolution with the Thermidorian bureaucracy, the Soviet Union with Stalin's clique, the revolutionary workers with the utterly demoralized Comintern apparatus.

The first great breach in this Tower of Babel will necessarily cause it to collapse entirely and bury beneath its debris the authority of the Thermidorian chiefs. That is why it is for Stalin a life-and-death question to kill the Fourth

\**The Bulletin of the Opposition*, launched by Trotsky after his expulsion from the Soviet Union in 1929, appeared as organ of the Russian Left Opposition until it suspended publication after his death in 1941.

International while it is still in embryo! Now, as we are here examining the Moscow trials, the Executive Committee of the Comintern, according to information in the press, is sitting in Moscow. Its agenda is: *The struggle against world Trotskyism*. The session of the Executive Committee of the Comintern is not only a link in the long chain of the Moscow frame-ups, but also the projection of the latter on the world arena. Tomorrow we shall hear about new misdeeds of the Trotskyites in Spain, of their direct or indirect support of the Fascists. Echoes of this base calumny, indeed, have already been heard in this room. Tomorrow we shall hear how the Trotskyites in the United States are preparing railroad wrecks and the obstruction of the Panama Canal, in the interests of Japan. We shall learn the day after tomorrow how the Trotskyites in Mexico are preparing measures for the restoration of Porfirio Diaz.\* You say Diaz died a long time ago? The Moscow creators of amalgams do not stop before such trifles. They stop before nothing—nothing at all. Politically and morally, it is a question of life and death for them. Emissaries of the G.P.U. are prowling in all countries of the Old and the New World. They do not lack money. What does it mean to the ruling clique to spend twenty or fifty millions of dollars, more or less, to sustain its authority and its power? These gentlemen buy human consciences like sacks of potatoes. We shall see this in many instances.

Fortunately, not everybody can be bought. Otherwise humanity would have rotted away a long time ago. Here, in the person of the Commission, we have a precious cell of unmarketable public conscience. All those who thirst for purification of the social atmosphere will turn instinctively toward the Commission. In spite of intrigues, bribes, and calumny, it will be rapidly protected by the armor of the sympathy of broad, popular masses.

Ladies and gentlemen of the Commission! Already for five years—I repeat, five years—I have incessantly demanded the creation of an international commission of inquiry. The day I received the telegram about the creation of your subcommission was a great holiday in my life. Some friends anxiously asked me: Will not the Stalinists penetrate into the Commission, as they at first penetrated into the Committee for the Defense of Trotsky? I answered:

\*Diaz, president and dictator of Mexico for decades (1877–80, 1884–1911), was deposed by the 1911 revolution.

Dragged into the light of day, the Stalinists are not fearsome. On the contrary, I will welcome the most venomous questions from the Stalinists; to break them down I have only to tell what actually happened. The world press will give the necessary publicity to my replies. I knew in advance that the G.P.U. would bribe individual journalists and whole newspapers. But I did not doubt for one moment that the conscience of the world cannot be bribed and that it will score, in this case as well, one of its most splendid victories.

Esteemed Commissioners! The experience of my life, in which there has been no lack either of successes or of failures, has not only not destroyed my faith in the clear, bright future of mankind, but on the contrary, has given it an indestructible temper. This faith in reason, in truth, in human solidarity, which at the age of eighteen I took with me into the workers' quarters of the provincial [Ukrainian] Russian town of Nikolaev—this faith I have preserved fully and completely. It has become more mature, but not less ardent. In the very fact of your Commission's formation—in the fact that at its head is a man of unshakable moral authority, a man who by virtue of his age should have the right to remain outside of the skirmishes in the political arena—in this fact I see a new and truly magnificent reinforcement of the revolutionary optimism which constitutes the fundamental element of my life. . . .



THE DEGENERATION OF THE RUSSIAN  
REVOLUTION AND THE ROAD  
TO ITS REGENERATION

*The most complex and difficult problems Trotsky had to grapple with in the late nineteen thirties involved the deep transformations in the Soviet régime. The degeneration of a workers' state was, as he often said, a phenomenon without precedent in history. Although Stalin asserted that the Soviet Union had already "entered Socialism," some of the anti-Stalinists contended that the totalitarian reaction had wiped out all the fundamental conquests of the October Revolution and that the Soviet Union was no longer a "workers' state." Trotsky held a different position: Stalin's parasitic bureaucracy had destroyed democracy in the soviets' party, and trade unions, deprived the people of all political rights, and administered a police state. But however oppressive, the bureaucracy did not constitute a new class of exploiters; it was rather a "privileged caste," a "tumorous growth" upon the social organism of the USSR, a dangerously malignant yet a transitory product of the Soviet Union's international isolation and inherited poverty and backwardness. Thus, although the postcapitalist planned economy of the USSR had unexampled successes, it was still very far from Socialism. Its unbalanced, inharmonious structure was torn by tense contradictions and above all by the irreconcilable antagonism between the bureaucracy and the working masses. To clear the way for the march toward socialism, the Soviet workers would have to defeat the bureaucratic oligarchy, and they would have to do this by way of a new "political revolution." Meanwhile, the economic foundations of the USSR, its collectivized and planned economy, and its monopoly of foreign trade constituted an immeasurable advance over any other system of production; and every Socialist was duty-*

*bound to defend them from all attacks, internal or external.*

*The following selections contain Trotsky's views on these problems. The first, which discusses the character of the political revolution he advocated, is taken from The Revolution Betrayed. The second, "on the USSR and the Problems of the Transitional Epoch," forms part of the program of the Fourth International. The Letter to the Workers of the USSR, written in May, 1940, gives the last words Trotsky addressed to the Soviet people before his death.*

### *Whither the Soviet Union?*

The present régime in the Soviet Union provokes protest at every step, a protest the more burning in that it is repressed. The bureaucracy is not only a machine of compulsion but also a constant source of provocation. The very existence of a greedy, lying, and cynical caste of rulers inevitably creates a hidden indignation. The improvement of the material situation of the workers does not reconcile them with the authorities; on the contrary, by increasing their self-respect and freeing their thought for general problems of politics, it prepares the way for an open conflict with the bureaucracy.

The unremovable "leaders" love to issue statements about the necessity of "studying," of "acquiring technique," "cultural self-education," and other admirable things. But the ruling layer itself is ignorant and little cultured; it studies nothing seriously, is disloyal and rude in social contacts. Its pretension to patronize all spheres of social life, to take command not only of cooperative shops but of musical compositions is the more intolerable for that. The Soviet population cannot rise to a higher level of culture without freeing itself from this humiliating subjection to a caste of usurpers.

Will the bureaucrat devour the workers' state, or will the working class clean up the bureaucrat? Thus stands the question upon whose decision hangs the fate of the Soviet Union. The vast majority of the Soviet workers are even now hostile to the bureaucracy. The peasant masses hate

from *The Revolution Betrayed* by Leon Trotsky, pp. 284-290

them with their healthy plebeian hatred. If in contrast to the peasants, the workers have almost never come out on the road of open struggle, thus condemning the protesting villages to confusion and impotence, this is not only because of the repressions. The workers fear lest, in throwing out the bureaucracy, they will open the way for a capitalist restoration. The mutual relations between state and class are much more complicated than they are represented by the vulgar "democrats." Without a planned economy the Soviet Union would be thrown back for decades. In that sense the bureaucracy continues to fulfill a necessary function. But it fulfills it in such a way as to prepare an explosion of the whole system which may completely sweep out the results of the revolution. The workers are realists. Without deceiving themselves with regard to the ruling caste—at least with regard to its lower tiers which stand near to them—they see in it the watchman for the time being of a certain part of their own conquests. They will inevitably drive out the dishonest, impudent, and unreliable watchman as soon as they see another possibility. For this it is necessary that in the West or the East another revolutionary dawn arise.

The cessation of visible political struggle is portrayed by the friends and agents of the Kremlin as a "stabilization" of the régime. In reality it signalizes only a temporary stabilization of the bureaucracy. With popular discontent driven deep, the younger generation feels with special pain the yoke of this "enlightened absolutism" in which there is so much more absolutism than enlightenment. The increasingly ominous vigilance of the bureaucracy against any ray of living thought, and the unbearable tensivity of the hymns of praise addressed to a blessed providence in the person of the "leader," testify alike to a growing separation between the state and society. They testify, to a steady intensifying of inner contradictions, a pressure against the walls of the state which seeks a way out and must inevitably find one.

In a true appraisal of the situation, the not infrequent terrorist acts against representatives of power have a very high significance. The most notorious of these was the murder of [Sergei] Kirov, a clever and unscrupulous Lenin-grad dictator, a typical representative of his corporation. In themselves, terrorist acts are least of all capable of overthrowing a Bonapartist oligarchy. Although the individual bureaucrat dreads the revolver, the bureaucracy

as a whole is able to exploit an act of terror for the justification of its own violences, and incidentally to implicate in the murder its own political enemies (the affair of Zinoviev, Kamenev, and the others).<sup>\*</sup> Individual terror is a weapon of impatient or despairing individuals, belonging most frequently to the younger generation of the bureaucracy itself. But, as was the case in Tsarist times, political murders are unmistakable symptoms of a stormy atmosphere and foretell the beginning of an open political crisis.

In introducing the new constitution, the bureaucracy shows that it feels this danger and is taking preventive measures. However, it has happened more than once that a bureaucratic dictatorship, seeking salvation in "liberal" reforms, has only weakened itself. While exposing Bonapartism, the new constitution creates at the same time a semilegal cover for the struggle against it. The rivalry of bureaucratic cliques at the elections may become the beginning of a broader political struggle. The whip against "badly working organs of power" may be turned into a whip against Bonapartism. All indications agree that the further course of development must inevitably lead to a clash between the culturally developed forces of the people and the bureaucratic oligarchy. There is no peaceful outcome for this crisis. No devil ever yet voluntarily cut off his own claws. The Soviet bureaucracy will not give up its positions without a fight. The development leads obviously to the road of revolution.

With energetic pressure from the popular mass, and the disintegration of the government apparatus inevitable in such circumstances, the resistance of those in power may prove much weaker than now appears. But as to this, only hypotheses are possible. In any case, the bureaucracy can be removed only by a revolutionary force. And, as always, there will be fewer victims the more bold and decisive is the attack. To prepare this and stand at the head of the masses in a favorable historic situation—that is the task of the Soviet section of the Fourth International. Today it is still weak and driven underground. But the illegal existence of a party is not nonexistence. It is only a difficult form of

<sup>\*</sup>In January, 1935, Zinoviev, Kamenev, Smirnov and others were indicted and tried for being "politically and morally" responsible for assassinating Sergei M. Kirov, a Politburo member. They escaped death and were sentenced to various terms of imprisonment only to be retried in August, 1936, and executed on the ground that they had actually helped plot Kirov's murder.

existence. Repressions can prove fully effective against a class that is disappearing from the scene—this was fully proven by the revolutionary dictatorship of 1917 to 1923—but violences against a revolutionary vanguard cannot save a caste which, if the Soviet Union is destined in general to further development, has outlived itself.

The revolution which the bureaucracy is preparing against itself will not be social, like the October Revolution of 1917. It is not a question this time of changing the economic foundations of society, of replacing certain forms of property with other forms. History has known elsewhere not only social revolutions which substituted the bourgeois for the feudal régime, but also political revolutions which, without destroying the economic foundations of society, swept out an old ruling upper crust (1830 and 1848 in France, February, 1917, in Russia, etc.). The overthrow of the Bonapartist caste will, of course, have deep social consequences, but in itself it will be confined within the limits of political revolution.

This is the first time in history that a state resulting from a workers' revolution has existed. The stages through which it must go are nowhere written down. It is true that the theoreticians and creators of the Soviet Union hoped that the completely transparent and flexible soviet system would permit the state peacefully to transform itself, dissolve, and die away, in correspondence with the stages of the economic and cultural evolution of society. Here again, however, life proved more complicated than theory anticipated. The proletariat of a backward country was fated to accomplish the first socialist revolution. For this historic privilege, it must, according to all evidences, pay with a second supplementary revolution—against bureaucratic absolutism. The program of the new revolution depends to a great extent upon the moment when it breaks out, upon the level which the country has then attained, and to a great degree upon the international situation. . . .

It is not a question of substituting one ruling clique for another, but of changing the very methods of administering the economy and guiding the culture of the country. Bureaucratic autocracy must give place to soviet democracy. A restoration of the right of criticism and a genuine freedom of elections are necessary conditions for the further development of the country. This assumes a revival of freedom of soviet parties, beginning with the party of Bolsheviki, and

a resurrection of the trade unions. The bringing of democracy into industry means a radical revision of plans in the interests of the toilers. Free discussion of economic problems will decrease the overhead expense of bureaucratic mistakes and zigzags. Expensive playthings—palaces of the soviets, new theaters, show-off subways—will be crowded out in favor of workers' dwellings. "Bourgeois norms of distribution" will be confined within the limits of strict necessity, and, in step with the growth of social wealth, will give way to Socialist equality. Ranks will be immediately abolished. The tinsel of decorations will go into the melting pot. The youth will receive the opportunity to breathe freely, criticize, make mistakes, and grow up. Science and art will be freed of their chains. And, finally, foreign policy will return to the traditions of revolutionary internationalism. . . .

### *The USSR and the Problems of the Transitional Epoch*

The Soviet Union emerged from the October revolution as a workers' state. State ownership of the means of production, a necessary prerequisite to socialist development, opened up the possibility of rapid growth of the productive forces. But the apparatus of the workers' state underwent a complete degeneration at the same time: it was transformed from a weapon of the working class into a weapon of bureaucratic violence against the working class and more and more a weapon for the sabotage of the country's economy. The bureaucratization of a backward and isolated workers' state and the transformation of the bureaucracy into an all-powerful privileged caste constitute the most convincing refutation—not only theoretically but this time practically—of the theory of socialism in one country.

The USSR thus embodies terrific contradictions. But it still remains a *degenerated workers' state*. Such is the social

from *The Death Agony of Capitalism* by Leon Trotsky, pp. 47, 51-52

diagnosis. The political prognosis has an alternative character: either the bureaucracy, becoming ever more the organ of the world bourgeoisie in the workers' state, will overthrow the new forms of property and plunge the country back to capitalism; or the working class will crush the bureaucracy and open the way to socialism. . . .

A fresh upsurge of the revolution in the USSR will undoubtedly begin under the banner of the struggle against *social inequality* and *political oppression*. Down with the privileges of the bureaucracy! Down with Stakhanovism!\* Down with the Soviet aristocracy and its ranks and orders! Greater equality of wages for all forms of labor!

The struggle for the freedom of the trade unions and the factory committees, for the right of assembly and freedom of the press, will unfold in the struggle for the regeneration and development of *Soviet democracy*.

The bureaucracy replaced the soviets as class organs with the fiction of universal electoral rights—in the style of Hitler-Goebbels. It is necessary to return to the soviets not only their free democratic form but also their class content. As once the bourgeoisie and kulaks were not permitted to enter the soviets, so now *it is necessary to drive the bureaucracy and the new aristocracy out of the soviets*. In the soviets there is room only for representatives of the workers, rank-and-file collective farmers, peasants, and Red Army men.

Democratization of the soviets is impossible without *legalization of soviet parties*. The workers and peasants themselves by their own free vote will indicate what parties they recognize as soviet parties.

A revision of *planned economy* from top to bottom in the interests of producers and consumers! Factory committees should be returned the right to control production. A democratically organized consumers' cooperative should control the quality and price of products.

Reorganization of the collective farms in accordance with the will and in the interests of the workers there engaged!

\*A Soviet system of work organization, introduced under Stalin in 1935, that stressed overfulfillment of production quotas and facilitated speedup. Name derived from Aleksey Stakhanov, a coal miner whose team increased daily output sevenfold. Stakhanovite workers were paid higher wages and received special privileges.

The reactionary *international policy* of the bureaucracy should be replaced by the policy of proletarian internationalism. The complete diplomatic correspondence of the Kremlin to be published. *Down with secret diplomacy!*

All political trials, staged by the Thermidorian bureaucracy, to be reviewed in the light of complete publicity and controversial openness and integrity. Only the victorious revolutionary uprising of the oppressed masses can revive the Soviet régime and guarantee its further development toward socialism. There is but one party capable of leading the Soviet masses to insurrection—the party of the Fourth International!

Down with the bureaucratic gang of Cain-Stalin!

Long live Soviet democracy!

Long live the international socialist revolution!

## *Letter to the Workers of the USSR*

Greetings to the Soviet workers, collective farmers, soldiers of the Red Army, and sailors of the Red Navy! Greetings from distant Mexico where I found refuge after the Stalinist clique had exiled me to Turkey and after the bourgeoisie had hounded me from country to country!

Dear Comrades! The mendacious Stalinist press has been maliciously deceiving you for a long time on all questions, including those which relate to myself and my political co-thinkers. You possess no workers' press; you read only the press of the bureaucracy, which lies systematically so as to keep you in the dark and thus render secure the rule of a privileged parasitic caste.

Those who dare raise their voices against the universally hated bureaucracy are called "Trotskyists," agents of a foreign power; branded as spies—yesterday it was spies of Germany, today it is spies of England and France—and then sent to face the firing squad. Tens of thousands of revolutionary fighters have fallen before the muzzles of G.P.U. Mausers in the USSR and in countries abroad, es-

from *Fourth International* by Leon Trotsky, October, 1940, pp. 140–141



pecially in Spain. All of them were depicted as agents of Fascism. Do not believe this abominable slander! Their crime consisted of defending workers and peasants against the brutality and rapacity of the bureaucracy. The entire old guard of Bolshevism, all the collaborators and assistants of Lenin, all the fighters of the October revolution, all the heroes of the civil war, have been murdered by Stalin. In the annals of history Stalin's name will forever be recorded with the infamous brand of Cain!

The October Revolution was accomplished for the sake of the toilers and not for the sake of new parasites. But because of the lag of the world revolution, and the fatigue, and, to a large measure, the backwardness of the Russian workers and especially the Russian peasants, there raised itself over the Soviet Republic and against its peoples a new oppressive and parasitic caste whose leader is Stalin. The former Bolshevik party was turned into an instrument of the caste. The world organization which the Communist International once was is today a pliant tool of the Moscow oligarchy. Soviets of Workers and Peasants have long perished. They have been replaced by degenerate Commissars, Secretaries, and G.P.U. agents.

But, fortunately, among the surviving conquests of the October revolution are the nationalized industry and the collectivized Soviet economy. Upon this foundation Workers' Soviets can build a new and happier society. This foundation cannot be surrendered by us to the world bourgeoisie under any conditions. It is the duty of revolutionists to defend tooth and nail every position gained by the working class, whether it involves democratic rights, wage scales, or so colossal a conquest of mankind as the nationalization of the means of production and planned economy. Those who are incapable of defending conquests already gained can never fight for new ones. Against the imperialist foe we will defend the USSR with all our might. However, the conquests of the October revolution will serve the people only if they prove themselves capable of dealing with the Stalinist bureaucracy, as in their day they dealt with the Tsarist bureaucracy and the bourgeoisie.

• If Soviet economic life had been conducted in the interests of the people; if the bureaucracy had not devoured and vainly wasted the major portion of the national income; if the bureaucracy had not trampled underfoot the vital interests of the population, then the USSR would have been a

great magnetic pole of attraction for the toilers of the world and the inviolability of the Soviet Union would have been assured. But the infamous oppressive régime of Stalin has deprived the USSR of its attractive power. During the war with Finland, not only the majority of the Finnish peasants but also the majority of the Finnish workers, proved to be on the side of their bourgeoisie. This is hardly surprising since they know of the unprecedented oppression to which the Stalinist bureaucracy subjects the workers of nearby Leningrad and the whole of the USSR. The Stalinist bureaucracy, so bloodthirsty and ruthless at home and so cowardly before the imperialist enemies, has thus become the main source of war danger to the Soviet Union.

The old Bolshevik party and the Third International have disintegrated and decomposed. The honest and advanced revolutionists have organized abroad the Fourth International, which has sections already established in most of the countries of the world. I am a member of this new International. In participating in this work I remain under the very same banner that I served together with you or your fathers and your older brothers in 1917 and throughout the years of the civil war—the very same banner under which together with Lenin we built the Soviet state and the Red Army.

The goal of the Fourth International is to extend the October Revolution to the whole world and at the same time to regenerate the USSR by purging it of the parasitic bureaucracy. This can be achieved only in one way: by the workers, peasants, Red Army soldiers, and Red Navy sailors, rising against the new caste of oppressors and parasites. To prepare this uprising, a new party is needed—a bold and honest revolutionary organization of the advanced workers. The Fourth International sets as its task the building of such a party in the USSR.

Advanced workers! Be the first to rally to the banner of Marx and Lenin which is now the banner of the Fourth International! Learn how to create, in the conditions of Stalinist illegality, tightly fused, reliable revolutionary circles! Establish contacts between these circles! Learn how to establish contacts—through loyal and reliable people, especially the sailors—with your revolutionary co-thinkers in bourgeois lands! It is difficult, but it can be done.

The present war will spread more and more, piling ruins on ruins, breeding more sorrow, despair, and protest, driv-

ing the whole world toward new revolutionary explosions. The world revolution shall reinvigorate the Soviet working masses with new courage and resoluteness and shall undermine the bureaucratic props of Stalin's caste. It is necessary to prepare for this hour by stubborn systematic revolutionary work. The fate of our country, the future of our people, the destiny of our children and grandchildren are at stake.

Down with Cain Stalin and his Camarilla!  
Down with the Rapacious Bureaucracy!  
Long Live the Soviet Union, the Fortress of the Toilers!  
Long Live the World Socialist Revolution!

Fraternally,

May, 1940

LEON TROTSKY

**WARNING!** Stalin's press will of course declare that this letter is transmitted to the USSR by "agents of imperialism." Be forewarned that this, too, is a lie. This letter will reach the USSR through reliable revolutionists who are prepared to risk their lives for the cause of socialism. Make copies of this letter and give it the widest possible circulation—L.T.

## THE MASTERS OF MARXISM

*For over forty years Trotsky defended Marxism: he drew some memorable portraits of its founders and chief representatives. In the essay reproduced below, written in 1937 on the ninetieth anniversary of the publication of The Communist Manifesto (as a preface to the translation of the Manifesto into Afrikaans) he sought to define, with extraordinary conciseness and precision, what remained valid in the Manifesto and what had to be revised in the light of subsequent world developments. In the second selection, a character sketch of Lenin drawn in 1920, on the occasion of Lenin's fiftieth birthday, Trotsky manages in a few brief paragraphs to bring Lenin to life and to relate his personality to his environment, and his national Russian character to his role as international revolutionary leader; in a single stroke the figures of Marx and Lenin are contrasted. He draws every feature of Lenin with unadulterated admiration and love, the more remarkable in view of his many past differences with Lenin and the essential, deep, and passionate independence of his mind and character.*

*Ninety Years of the Communist Manifesto*

It is hard to believe that the centennial of the *Manifesto of the Communist Party* is only ten years away! This pamphlet, displaying greater genius than any other in world literature, astounds us even today by its freshness. Its most important sections appear to have been written yesterday. Assuredly, the young authors (Marx was

from *Fourth International* by Leon Trotsky, February, 1948, pp. 28-31

29, Engels 27) were able to look further into the future than anyone before them, and perhaps than anyone since them.

Already in their joint preface to the edition of 1872, Marx and Engels declared that despite the fact that certain secondary passages in the *Manifesto* were antiquated, they felt that they no longer had any right to alter the original text inasmuch as the *Manifesto* had already become a historical document during the intervening period of twenty-five years. Sixty-five additional years have elapsed since that time. Isolated passages in the *Manifesto* have receded still further into the past. We shall try to establish succinctly in this Preface both those ideas in the *Manifesto* which retain their full force today and those which require important alteration or amplification.

1. The materialist conception of history, discovered by Marx only a short while before and applied with consummate skill in the *Manifesto*, has completely withstood the test of events and the blows of hostile criticism. It constitutes today one of the most precious instruments of human thought. All other interpretations of the historical process have lost all scientific meaning. We can state with certainty that it is impossible in our time not only to be a revolutionary militant but even a literate observer in politics without assimilating the materialist interpretation of history.

2. The first chapter of the *Manifesto* opens with the following words: "The history of all hitherto existing society is the history of class struggles." This postulate, the most important conclusion drawn from the materialist interpretation of history, immediately became an issue in the class struggle. Especially venomous attacks were directed by reactionary hypocrites, liberal doctrinaires, and idealistic democrats against the theory which replaced "common welfare," "national unity," and "eternal moral truths" as the driving force by the struggle of material interests. They were later joined by recruits from the ranks of the labor movement itself, by the so-called revisionists, i.e., the proponents of reviewing ("revising") Marxism in the spirit of class collaboration and class conciliation. Finally, in our own time, the same path has been followed in practice by the contemptible epigones of the Communist International (the "Stalinists"): the policy of the so-called "People's Front" flows wholly from the denial of the laws of the class struggle. Meanwhile, it is precisely the epoch of imperial-

ism, bringing all social contradictions to the point of highest tension, which gives to the *Communist Manifesto* its supreme *theoretical* triumph.

3. The anatomy of capitalism, as a specific stage in the economic development of society, was given by Marx in its finished form in *Capital* (1867). But already in the *Communist Manifesto* the main lines of the future analysis are firmly sketched: the payment for labor power as equivalent to the cost of its reproduction; the appropriation of surplus value by the capitalists; competition as the basic law of social relations; the ruination of intermediate classes, i.e., the urban petty bourgeoisie and the peasantry; the concentration of wealth in the hands of an ever diminishing number of property owners at the one pole, and the numerical growth of the proletariat, at the other; the preparation of the material and political preconditions for the socialist régime.

4. The proposition in the *Manifesto* concerning the tendency of capitalism to lower the living standards of the workers and even to transform them into paupers had been subjected to a heavy barrage. Parsons, professors, ministers, journalists, social-democratic theoreticians, and trade-union leaders came to the front against the so-called "theory of impoverishment". They invariably discovered signs of growing prosperity among the toilers, palming off the labor aristocracy as the proletariat, or taking a fleeting tendency as permanent. Meanwhile, even the development of the mightiest capitalism in the world, namely, U.S. capitalism, has transformed millions of workers into paupers who are maintained at the expense of federal, municipal or private charity.

5. As against the *Manifesto*, which depicted commercial and industrial crises as a series of ever more extensive catastrophes, the revisionists vowed that the national and international development of trusts would assure control over the market and lead gradually to the abolition of crises. The close of the last century and the beginning of the present one were in reality marked by a development of capitalism so tempestuous as to make crises seem only "accidental" stoppages. But this epoch has gone beyond return. In the last analysis, truth proved to be on Marx's side in this question as well.

6. "The executive of the modern state is but a committee for managing the common affairs of the whole bourgeoisie."

This succinct formula, which the leaders of the social democracy looked upon as a journalistic paradox, contains in fact the only scientific theory of the state. The democracy fashioned by the bourgeoisie is not, as both [Edward] Bernstein and Kautsky thought, an empty sack which one can undisturbedly fill with any kind of class content. Bourgeois democracy can serve only the bourgeoisie. A government of the "People's Front," whether headed by Blum or [Camille] Chautemps, [Largo] Caballero or [Juan] Negrín,\* is only "a committee for managing the common affairs of the whole bourgeoisie." Whenever this "committee" manages affairs poorly, the bourgeoisie dismisses it with a boot.

7. "Every class struggle is a political struggle." "The organization of the proletariat as a class (is) consequently its organization into a political party." Trade unionists, on the one hand, and anarcho-syndicalists on the other, have long shied away—and even now try to shy away—from the understanding of these historical laws. "Pure" trade unionism has now been dealt a crushing blow\*\* in its chief refuge: the United States. Anarcho-syndicalism has suffered an irreparable defeat in its last stronghold—Spain. Here too the *Manifesto* proved correct.

8. The proletariat cannot conquer power within the legal framework established by the bourgeoisie. "Communists openly declare that their ends can be attained only by the forcible overthrow of all existing social conditions." Reformism sought to explain this postulate of the *Manifesto* on the grounds of the immaturity of the movement at that time and the inadequate development of democracy. The fate of Italian, German, and a great number of other "democracies" [replaced by nazism and fascism] proves that "immaturity" is the distinguishing trait of the ideas of

\*Chautemps was a Radical Socialist party leader, several times premier during the final decade of the Third French Republic, Minister of State in the Blum Cabinet (1936–37). Negrín, a Spanish physician and politician, became leader of the socialists in 1931, took post as Minister of Finance in the Caballero cabinet (1936), and succeeded him as prime minister for the rest of the Civil War.

Trotsky cites these two personages to characterize a Popular Front led by either a socialist or a bourgeois-liberal.

\*\*Trotsky here refers to the temporary setback experienced by the industrial-union movement owing to the economic recession of 1937 and the failure of its leadership to form a labor party.

the reformists themselves.

9. For the socialist transformation of society, the working class must concentrate in its hands such power as can smash each and every political obstacle barring the road to the new system. "The proletariat organized as the ruling class"—this is the dictatorship. At the same time it is the only true proletarian democracy. Its scope and depth depend upon concrete historical conditions. The greater the number of states that take the path of the socialist revolution, the freer and more flexible forms will the dictatorship assume, the broader and more deep-going will be workers' democracy.

10. The international development of capitalism has predetermined the international character of the proletarian revolution. "United action, of the leading civilized countries at least, is one of the first conditions for the emancipation of the proletariat." The subsequent development of capitalism has so closely knit all sections of our planet, both "civilized" and "uncivilized," that the problem of the socialist revolution has completely and decisively assumed a world character. The Soviet bureaucracy attempted to liquidate the *Manifesto* with respect to this fundamental question. The Bonapartist degeneration of the Soviet state is an overwhelming illustration of the falseness of the theory of socialism in one country.

11. "When, in the course of development, class distinctions have disappeared and all production has been concentrated in the hands of a vast association of the whole nation, the public power will lose its political character." In other words: the state withers away. Society remains, freed from the straitjacket. This is nothing else but socialism. The converse theorem: the monstrous growth of state coercion in the USSR is eloquent testimony that society is moving away from socialism.

12. "The workingmen have no fatherland." These words of the *Manifesto* have more than once been evaluated by philistines as an agitational quip. As a matter of fact they provided the proletariat with the sole conceivable directive in the question of the capitalist "fatherland." The violation of this directive by the Second International brought about not only four years of devastation in Europe but the present stagnation of world culture. In view of the impending new war, for which the betrayal of the Third International has



paved the way, the *Manifesto* remains even now the most reliable counsellor on the question of the capitalist "fatherland."

Thus, we see that the joint and rather brief production of two young authors still continues to give irreplaceable directives upon the most important and burning questions of the struggle for emancipation. What other book could even distantly be compared with the *Communist Manifesto*? But this does not imply that, after ninety years of unprecedented development of productive forces and vast social struggles, the *Manifesto* needs neither corrections nor additions. Revolutionary thought has nothing in common with idol worship. Programs and prognoses are tested and corrected in the light of experience, which is the supreme criterion of human reason. The *Manifesto*, too, requires corrections and additions. However, as is evidenced by historical experience itself, those corrections and additions can be successfully made only by proceeding in accord with the method which forms the basis of the *Manifesto* itself. We shall try to indicate this in several most important instances.

1. Marx taught that no social system departs from the arena of history before exhausting its creative potentialities. The *Manifesto* excoriates capitalism for retarding the development of the productive forces. During that period, however, as well as in the following decades, this retardation was only *relative* in nature. Had it been possible in the second half of the nineteenth century to organize economy on socialist beginnings, its tempos of growth would have been immeasurably greater. But this theoretically irrefutable postulate does not, however, invalidate the fact that the productive forces kept expanding on a world scale right up to the world war. Only in the last twenty years, despite the most modern conquests of science and technology, has the epoch begun of out-and-out stagnation and even decline of world economy. Mankind is beginning to expend its accumulated capital, while the next war threatens to destroy the very foundations of civilization for many years to come. The authors of the *Manifesto* thought that capitalism would be scrapped long prior to the time when from a relatively reactionary régime it would turn into an absolutely reactionary régime. This transformation took final shape only before the eyes of the present generation and changed our epoch into the epoch of wars, revolutions, and fascism.

2. The error of Marx and Engels in regard to the historical dates flowed, on the one hand, from an underestimation of future possibilities latent in capitalism and, on the other, from an overestimation of the revolutionary maturity of the proletariat. The revolution of 1848 did not turn into a socialist revolution as the *Manifesto* had calculated, but opened up to Germany the possibility of a vast future capitalist ascension. The Paris Commune proved that the proletariat, without having a tempered revolutionary party at its head, cannot wrest power from the bourgeoisie. Meanwhile, the prolonged period of capitalist prosperity that ensued brought about not the education of the revolutionary vanguard, but rather the bourgeois degeneration of the labor aristocracy, which became in turn the chief brake on the proletarian revolution. In the nature of things, the authors of the *Manifesto* could not possibly have foreseen this "dialectic."

3. For the *Manifesto*, capitalism was—the kingdom of free competition. While referring to the growing concentration of capital, the *Manifesto* did not draw the necessary conclusion in regard to monopoly, which has become the dominant capitalist form in our epoch and the most important precondition for socialist economy. Only afterwards, in *Capital*, did Marx establish the tendency toward the transformation of free competition into monopoly. It was Lenin who gave a scientific characterization of monopoly capitalism in his *Imperialism*.

4. Basing themselves primarily on the example of the "industrial revolution" in England, the authors of the *Manifesto* pictured far too unilaterally the process of liquidation of the intermediate classes, as a wholesale proletarianization of crafts, petty trades, and peasantry. In point of fact, the elemental forces of competition have far from completed this simultaneously progressive and barbarous work. Capitalism has ruined the petty bourgeoisie at a much faster rate than it has proletarianized it. Furthermore, the bourgeois state has long directed its conscious policy toward the artificial maintenance of petty bourgeois strata. At the opposite pole, the growth of technology and the rationalization of large scale industry engenders chronic unemployment and obstructs the proletarianization of the petty bourgeoisie. Concurrently, the development of capitalism has accelerated in the extreme the growth of legions of technicians, administrators, commercial employees, in short, the so-called "new

middle class." In consequence, the intermediate classes, to whose disappearance the *Manifesto* so categorically refers, comprise even in a country as highly industrialized as Germany about one-half of the population. However, the artificial preservation of antiquated petty bourgeois strata nowise mitigates the social contradictions, but, on the contrary, invests them with an especial malignancy, and together with the permanent army of the unemployed constitutes the most malevolent expression of the decay of capitalism.

5. Calculated for a revolutionary epoch, the *Manifesto* contains (end of Chapter II) ten demands, corresponding to the period of direct transition from capitalism to Socialism. In their Preface of 1872, Marx and Engels declared these demands to be in part antiquated and, in any case, only of secondary importance. The reformists seized upon this evaluation to interpret it in the sense that transitional revolutionary demands had forever ceded their place to the social-democratic "minimum program," which, as is well known, does not transcend the limits of bourgeois democracy. As a matter of fact, the authors of the *Manifesto* indicated quite precisely the main correction of their transitional program, namely, "the working class cannot simply lay hold of the ready-made state machinery and wield it for its own purposes." In other words, the correction was directed against the fetishism of bourgeois democracy. Marx later counterposed to the capitalist state, the state of the type of the Commune. This "type" subsequently assumed the much more graphic shape of soviets. There cannot be a revolutionary program today without *soviets* and without *workers' control*. As for the rest, the ten demands of the *Manifesto*, which appeared "archaic" in an epoch of peaceful parliamentary activity, have today regained completely their true significance. The social democratic "minimum program," on the other hand, has become hopelessly antiquated.

6. Basing its expectation that "the German bourgeois revolution . . . will be but a prelude to an immediately following proletarian revolution," the *Manifesto* cites the much more advanced conditions of European civilization as compared with what existed in England in the seventeenth century and in France in the eighteenth century, and the far greater development of the proletariat. The error in this prognosis was not only in the date. The Revolution of 1848

revealed within a few months that precisely under more advanced conditions, none of the bourgeois classes is capable of bringing the revolution to its termination: the big and middle bourgeoisie is far too closely linked with the landowners and fettered by the fear of the masses; the petty bourgeoisie is far too divided, and in its leading upper strata far too dependent on the big bourgeoisie. As evidenced by the entire subsequent course of development in Europe and Asia, the bourgeois revolution, taken by itself, can no more in general be consummated. A complete purge of feudal rubbish from society is conceivable only on the condition that the proletariat, freed from the influence of bourgeois parties, can take its stand at the head of the peasantry and establish its revolutionary dictatorship. By this token, the bourgeois revolution becomes interlaced with the first stage of the Socialist revolution, subsequently to dissolve in the latter. The national revolution therewith becomes a link in the world revolution. The transformation of the economic foundation and of all social relations assumes a permanent (uninterrupted) character.

For revolutionary parties in backward countries of Asia, Latin America, and Africa, a clear understanding of the organic connection between the democratic revolution and the dictatorship of the proletariat—and thereby, the international socialist revolution—is a life-and-death question.

7. While depicting how capitalism draws into its vortex backward and barbarous countries, the *Manifesto* contains no reference to the struggle of colonial and semi-colonial countries for independence. To the extent that Marx and Engels considered the social revolution “in the leading civilized countries at least,” to be a matter of the next few years, the colonial question was resolved automatically for them, not in consequence of an independent movement of oppressed nationalities but in consequence of the victory of the proletariat in the metropolitan centers of capitalism. The questions of revolutionary strategy in colonial and semi-colonial countries are therefore not touched upon at all by the *Manifesto*. Yet these questions demand an independent solution. For example, it is quite self-evident that while the “national fatherland” has become the most baneful historical brake in advanced capitalist countries, it still remains a relatively progressive factor in backward countries compelled to struggle for an independent existence.

“The Communists,” declares the *Manifesto*, “everywhere

support every revolutionary movement against the existing social and political order of things." The movement of the colored races against their imperialist oppressors is one of the most important and powerful movements against the existing order and therefore calls for the complete, unconditional, and unlimited support on the part of the proletariat of the white race. The credit for developing revolutionary strategy for oppressed nationalities belongs primarily to Lenin.

8. The most antiquated section of the *Manifesto*—not with respect to method but material—is the criticism of "socialist" literature for the first part of the nineteenth century (Chapter III) and the definition of the position of the Communists in relation to various opposition parties (Chapter IV). The movements and parties listed in the *Manifesto* were so drastically swept away either by the revolution of 1848 or the ensuing counterrevolution that one must look up even their names in a historical dictionary. However, in this section, too, the *Manifesto* is perhaps closer to us now than it was to the previous generation. In the epoch of the flowering of the Second International, when Marxism seemed to exert an undivided sway, the ideas of pre-Marxist socialism could have been considered as having receded decisively into the past. Things are otherwise today. The decomposition of the social democracy and the Communist International at every step engenders monstrous ideological relapses. Senile thought seems to have become infantile. In search of all-saving formulas the prophets in the epoch of decline discover anew doctrines long since buried by scientific socialism. . . .

We have already remarked that according to Marx no social order departs from the scene without first exhausting the potentialities latent in it. However, even an antiquated social order does not cede its place to a new order without resistance. A change in social régimes presupposes the harshest form of the class struggle, i.e., revolution. If the proletariat, for one reason or another, proves incapable of overthrowing with an audacious blow the outlived bourgeois order, then finance capital in the struggle to maintain its unstable rule can do nothing but turn the petty bourgeoisie ruined and demoralized by it into the storm troops of fascism. The bourgeois degeneration of the social democracy and the fascist degeneration of the petty bourgeoisie are interlinked as cause and effect.

At the present time, the Third International far more wantonly than the Second performs in all countries the work of deceiving and demoralizing the toilers. By massacring the vanguard of the Spanish proletariat, the unbridled hirelings of Moscow not only pave the way for Fascism but execute a goodly share of its labors. The protracted crisis of the international revolution, which is turning more and more into a crisis of human culture, is reducible in its essentials to the crisis of revolutionary leadership. . . .

### *Lenin on his 50th Birthday*

Lenin's internationalism needs no recommendation. It is best characterized by Lenin's irreconcilable break, in the first days of the world war, with that counterfeit internationalism which reigned in the Second International. The official leaders of "Socialism" used the parliamentary tribune to reconcile the interests of the fatherland with the interests of mankind by way of abstract arguments in the spirit of the old Cosmopolites.\* In practice this led, as we know, to the support of the predatory fatherland by the proletarian forces.

Lenin's internationalism is in no sense a formula for verbally reconciling nationalism with internationalism. It is a formula for international revolutionary action. The world's territory in the clutches of the so-called civilized section of mankind is regarded as a unified arena where a gigantic struggle occurs, whose component elements are constituted by the individual peoples and their respective classes. No single major issue can be kept restricted within a national framework. Visible and invisible threads connect such an issue with dozens of events in all corners of the world. In the evaluation of international factors and forces Lenin is freer than anyone else from national prejudices.

Marx concluded that the philosophers had sufficiently interpreted the world and that the real task was to change it.

from *Fourth International* by Leon Trotsky, January-February, 1951, pp. 28-29

\*"Cosmopolites" probably designates the philanthropic advocates of the universal brotherhood of mankind who first came forward during the French Enlightenment.

But he, the pioneering genius, did not live to see it done. The transformation of the old world is now in full swing and Lenin is the foremost worker on this job. His internationalism is a practical appraisal plus a practical intervention into the march of historical events on a world scale and with worldwide aims. Russia and her fate is only a single element in this titanic historical struggle upon whose outcome hinges the fate of mankind.

Lenin's internationalism needs no recommendation. But at the same time Lenin himself is profoundly national. His roots are deep in modern Russian history, he draws it up into himself, gives it its highest expression, and precisely in this way attains the highest levels of international action and world influence.

At first glance the characterization of Lenin as a "national" figure may seem surprising, but, in essence, this follows as a matter of course. To be able to lead such a revolution, without parallel in the history of peoples, as Russia is now living through, it is obviously necessary to have an indissoluble, organic bond with the main forces of the people's life, a bond which springs from the deepest roots.

Lenin personifies the Russian proletariat, a young class, which politically is scarcely older than Lenin himself, but a class which is profoundly national, for recapitulated in it is the entire past development of Russia, in it lies Russia's entire future, with it the Russian nation rises or falls. Freedom from routine and banality, freedom from imposition and convention, resoluteness of thought, audacity in action—an audacity which never turns into foolhardiness—this is what characterizes the Russian working class, and with it also Lenin.

The nature of the Russian proletariat, which has made it today the most important force of the world revolution, had been prepared beforehand by the entire course of Russian national history: the barbaric cruelty of the Tsarist autocracy, the insignificance of the privileged classes, the feverish growth of capitalism fed by the lees of the world stock market, the escheated character of the Russian bourgeoisie, their decadent ideology, their shoddy politics. Our "Third Estate" knew neither a Reformation nor a great revolution of their own and could never have known them. Therefore the revolutionary tasks of the Russian proletariat assumed a more all-embracing character. Our past history knows no Luther, no Thomas Münzer, no Mirabeau, no

Danton, no Robespierre. Exactly for that reason the Russian proletariat has its Lenin. What was lost in way of tradition has been won in the sweep of the revolution.

Lenin mirrors the working class, not only in its proletarian present but also in its peasant past, still so recent. This quite indisputable leader of the proletariat resembles a peasant not only outwardly; there is something inwardly in him strongly smacking of a peasant. Facing the Smolny stands the statue of the other great figure of the world proletariat, Karl Marx, on a stone pedestal in a black frock coat. Assuredly, this is a trifle, but it is impossible even to imagine Lenin putting on a black frock coat. Some portraits of Marx show him wearing a dress shirt against whose broad expanse something resembling a monocle dangles.

That Marx was not inclined to foppery is quite clear to all who have an inkling of the spirit of Marx. But Marx was born and grew up on a different national cultural soil, lived in a different atmosphere, as did also the leading personalities of the German working class, whose roots reach back not to a peasant village, but to the corporation guilds and the complex city culture of the middle ages.

Marx's very style, rich and beautiful, in which strength and flexibility, wrath and irony, severity and refinement are combined, also contains the literary and esthetic accumulations of the entire German socio-political literature since the days of the Reformation and even before. Lenin's literary and oratorical style is awesomely simple, utilitarian, ascetic, as is his whole makeup. But in this mighty asceticism there is not a trace of a moralistic attitude. There is no dogma here, no elaborated system and, of course, no posturing; it is simply the outward expression of inward conservation of strength for action. It is a peasant's practical proficiency but on a colossal scale.

The entire Marx is contained in the *Communist Manifesto*, in the foreword to his *Critique*, in *Capital*. Even if he had not been the founder of the First International he would always remain what he is today. Lenin, on the other hand, is contained entirely in revolutionary action. His scientific works are only a preparation for action. If he never published a single book in the past, he would forever enter into history just as he enters it now: the leader of the proletarian revolution, the founder of the Third International.

A clear, scientific system—the materialist dialectic—



is necessary for action on such a historical scale as devolved upon Lenin—it is necessary but not sufficient. Needed here in addition is that irreplaceable creative power we call intuition: the ability to judge events correctly on the wing, to separate the essential and important from the husks and incidentals, to fill in mentally the missing parts of the picture, to draw to conclusion the thoughts of others and above all those of the enemy, to connect all this into a unified whole and to deal a blow the moment that the "formula" for this blow comes to mind. This is the intuition for action. In one of its aspects it merges with what we call shrewdness.

When Lenin, screwing up his left eye, listens over the radio to a parliamentary speech of one of the imperialist makers of destiny or goes over the text of the latest diplomatic note, a mixture of bloodthirsty duplicity and polished hypocrisy, he resembles a very wise muzhik [peasant] whom words cannot cajole nor sugary phrases ensnare. This is the peasant shrewdness elevated to genius, armed with the last word of scientific thought.

The young Russian proletariat was able to accomplish what it has only by pulling behind itself, by its roots, the heavy mass of the peasantry. This was prepared for by our whole national past. But precisely because the proletariat has come to power through the course of events, our revolution has been able suddenly and drastically to overcome the national narrowness and provincial benightedness of Russia's past history. Soviet Russia has become not only the haven for the Communist International, but also the living embodiment of its program and methods.

By paths, unknown and as yet unexplored by science, by which the human personality is molded, Lenin has assimilated from the national milieu everything he needed for the greatest revolutionary action in the history of humanity. Exactly because the socialist revolution, which has long had its international theoretical expression, found for the first time in Lenin its national embodiment, Lenin became, in the full and true sense of the word, the revolutionary leader of the world proletariat. And that is how his fiftieth birthday found him.

QUESTIONS OF CULTURE, LITERATURE,  
ART, MORALS

*While politics formed the vital center of Trotsky's activities, his mind probed into the most diversified areas of human experience. "Man does not live by politics alone" was the title he gave to one of his essays on the manners and morals of postrevolutionary Russia. In a volume of these essays, Problems of Everyday Life (1923) he discussed upheavals in family life, bureaucracy "enlightened and unenlightened," civility and politeness, vodka, the Church, the movies, and other subjects. He reviewed the relations between material and spiritual culture in an article published in the journal Novy Mir [New World] for January, 1927. His approach to these matters deserves particular attention in light of recent Russian history. His defense of Freudianism, interesting especially for its analogy between Freud and Pavlov, the head of the "reflexological" school in psychology, was virtually banned in Russia as early as the 1920's.*

*In the summers of 1922-23, Trotsky wrote his Literature and Revolution with a twofold purpose. One was to survey the impact of the revolutionary upheaval upon Russian literature; the other was to combat the theory of "proletarian culture" which was then fashionable in various party circles. The workers, he argued, would have neither the time nor the social necessity to fabricate a specific culture of their own. Socialism would aim at creating for the first time in civilization the universal culture of a classless society. In the meantime, the Soviet state, and its ruling party, had no right to dictate to artists and writers what they should do or how they should do it. "The domain of art is not one in which the Party is called upon to command." Even where it consciously served the revolutionary cause, artistic creation obeyed its own laws; it could not flourish and be true to itself without experimentation and*

unhampered development. This conception, which Lenin shared with Trotsky, clashed, of course, with the Stalinist practice of stringent control over art. The preface to *Literature and Revolution*, reprinted here, outlines the general relations between artistic creation and social revolution. The conclusion expresses the Marxist vision of culture under Socialism.

During his second exile in Western Europe (1907-17) Trotsky wrote many brilliant pieces of literary criticism on both European and Russian writers for the Russian democratic and social-democratic press. These compose several volumes of his collected works. Presented here is his tribute to Tolstoy (or rather an excerpt from it), written on the occasion of the novelist's eightieth birthday in 1908.

Finally, in *Their Morals and Ours*, written in 1938, Trotsky came to grips with the problem of means and ends in social action and individual conduct. This is one of the most striking statements—it would perhaps be more correct to say, the most striking statement—ever made by a Marxist on ethics and historical materialism. Trotsky dedicated this essay to the memory of his 32-year-old son, Leon, who died under mysterious circumstances in a Paris hospital while he was writing it.

### *The Struggle for Cultured Speech*

I read lately in one of our papers that at a general meeting of the workmen at the boot factory, the *Paris Commune*, a resolution was carried to abstain from swearing, to impose fines for bad language, etc.

This is a small incident in the turmoil of the present day—but a very telling small incident. Its importance, however, depends on the response the initiative of the boot factory is going to meet with in the working class.

Abusive language and swearing are a legacy of slavery, humiliation, and disrespect for human dignity—one's own and that of other people. This is particularly the case with swearing in Russia. I should like to hear from our philologists, our linguists, and experts in folklore, whether they

from *Problems of Life* by Leon Trotsky, pp. 78-87

know of such loose, sticky, and low terms of abuse in any other language but Russian. As far as I know, there is nothing, or nearly nothing, of the kind outside Russia. Russian swearing in "the lower depths" was the result of despair, embitterment, and, above all, of slavery without hope, without escape. The swearing of the upper classes, on the other hand, the swearing that came out of the throats of the gentry, the authorities, was the outcome of class rule, slave owner's pride, unshakable power. Proverbs are supposed to contain the wisdom of the masses—Russian proverbs also show the ignorant and the superstitious mind of the masses and their slavishness. "Abuse does not stick to the collar," says an old Russian proverb, not only accepting slavery as a fact, but submitting to the humiliation of it. Two streams of Russian abuse—that of the masters, the officials, the police, replete and fatty, and the other, the hungry, desperate, tormented swearing of the masses—have colored the whole of Russian life with despicable patterns of abusive terms. Such was the legacy the Revolution received, among others, from the past.

But the Revolution is, in the first place, an awakening of human personality in the masses—which were supposed to possess no personality. In spite of occasional cruelty and the sanguinary relentlessness of its methods, the Revolution is before and above all the awakening of humanity, its onward march, and is marked with a growing respect for the personal dignity of every individual, with an ever increasing concern for those who are weak. A revolution does not deserve its name if, with all its might and all the means at its disposal, it does not help the woman—twofold and threefold enslaved as she has been in the past—to get out on the road of individual and social progress. A revolution does not deserve its name if it does not take the greatest care possible of the children—the future race for whose benefit the revolution has been made. And how could one create day by day, if only by little bits, a new life based on mutual consideration, on self-respect, on the real equality of women, looked upon as fellow workers, on the efficient care of the children—in an atmosphere poisoned with the roaring, rolling, ringing, and resounding swearing of masters and slaves, that swearing which spares no one and stops at nothing? The struggle against "bad language" is a condition of intellectual hygiene, just as the fight against filth and

vermin is a condition of physical hygiene.

To do away radically with abusive speech is not an easy thing, considering that unrestrained speech has psychological roots and is an outcome of uncivilized surroundings. We certainly welcome the initiative of the boot-factory workers, and above all we wish the promoters of the new movement much perseverance. Psychological habits which come down from generation to generation and saturate the whole atmosphere of life are very tenacious, and, on the other hand, it often happens with us in Russia that we just make a violent rush forward, strain our forces and then let things drift in the old way.

Let us hope that the working women—those of the Communist ranks in the first place—will support the initiative of the *Paris Commune* factory. As a rule—which has exceptions of course—men who use bad language scorn women, and have no regard for children. This does not apply only to the uncultured masses, but also to the advanced and even the so-called “responsible” elements of the present social order. There is no denying that the old prerevolutionary forms of bad language are still in use at the present time, six years after October, and are quite the fashion at the “top.” When away from town, particularly from Moscow, our dignitaries consider it in a way their duty to use strong language. They evidently think it a means of getting into closer contact with the peasantry.

Our life in Russia is made up of the most striking contrasts—in economics as well as in everything else. In the very center of the country, close to Moscow, there are miles of swamps, of impassable roads—and close by you might suddenly see a factory which would impress a European or American engineer by its technical equipment. Similar contrasts abound in our national life. Side by side with some old-time type of domineering, rapacious profiteer, who has come to life again in the present generation, who has passed through revolution and expropriation, engaged in swindling and in masked and legalized profiteering, preserving intact all the while his suburban vulgarity and greediness—we see the best type of Communists of the working class who devote their lives day by day to the interests of the world’s proletariat and are ready to fight at any given moment for the cause of the revolution in any country, even one they would be unable perhaps to locate on the

map. In addition to such social contrasts—obtuse bestiality and the highest revolutionary idealism—we often witness psychological contrasts in the same mind. A man is a sound Communist, devoted to the cause, but women are for him just “females,” not to be taken seriously in any way. Or it happens that a very deserving Communist, when discussing the smaller nationalities, starts talking hopelessly reactionary stuff. To account for that we must remember that different parts of the human consciousness do not change and develop simultaneously and on parallel lines. There is a certain economy in the process. Human psychology is very conservative by nature, and the change due to the demands and the push of life affects, in the first place, those parts of the mind which are directly concerned in the case. In Russia the social and political development of the last decades proceeded in quite an unusual way, in astounding leaps and bounds, and this accounts for our present disorganization and muddle, which is not confined only to economics and politics. The same defects show in the minds of many people resulting in a rather curious blending of advanced, well-pondered political views with tendencies, habits, and, to some extent, ideas which are a direct legacy from ancestral domestic laws. To obviate that, we must straighten out the intellectual front, that is to say, we must test by Marxist methods the whole complex of a man's mentality—and this should be the general scheme of education and self-education of our own party, beginning at the top. But there again the problem is extremely complicated and could not be solved by school teaching and books alone: the roots of contradictions and psychological inconsistencies lie in the disorganization and muddle of the conditions in which people live. Psychology, after all, is determined by life. But the dependency is not purely mechanical and automatic: it is active and reciprocal. The problem in consequence must be approached in many different ways—that of the *Paris Commune* factory men is one in the number. Let us wish them all possible success.

P.S.—The fight against bad language is also a part of a struggle for the purity, clearness, and beauty of Russian speech.

Reactionary blockheads maintain that the Revolution, without having altogether ruined, is in the way of spoiling the Russian language. There is actually an enormous quan-

tity of words in use now which have originated by chance, many of them perfectly needless, provincial expressions, some contrary to the spirit of our language. And yet the reactionary blockheads are quite mistaken about the future of the Russian language—as about all the rest. Out of the revolutionary turmoil our language will come strengthened, rejuvenated, with an increased flexibility and delicacy. Our prerevolutionary, obviously ossified bureaucratic and liberal press language is already considerably enriched by new descriptive forms, by new, much more precise and dynamic expressions. But during all these stormy years our language has certainly become greatly obstructed, and part of our progress in culture will, among other things, show in our casting out of our speech all useless words and expressions, and those which are not in keeping with the spirit of the language, whilst preserving the unquestionable and invaluable linguistic acquisitions of the revolutionary epoch.

Language is the instrument of thought. Precision and correctness of speech is an indispensable condition of correct and precise thinking. The political power has passed now, for the first time in our history, into the hands of labor. The working class possesses a rich store of work and life experience, and a language based on that experience. But our proletariat has not had sufficient schooling in elementary reading and writing, not to speak of literary education. And this is the reason why the now governing working class, which is in itself and by its social nature a powerful safeguard of the integrity and greatness of the Russian language in the future, does not, nevertheless, stand up now with the necessary energy against the intrusion of needless, corrupt, and sometimes hideous new words and expressions. . . . The struggle for education and culture will provide the advanced elements of the working class with all the resources of the Russian language in its extreme richness, subtlety, and refinement. To preserve the greatness of the language, all faulty words and expressions must be weeded out of daily speech. Speech is also in need of hygiene. And the working class needs a healthy language not less but rather more than the other classes: for the first time in history it begins to think independently about nature, about life and its foundations—and to do the thinking, it needs the instrument of a clear incisive language.

## *Culture and Socialism*

Let us recall first of all that culture meant originally a ploughed, cultivated field, as distinct from virgin forest and virgin soil. Culture was contrasted with nature, that is, what was acquired by man's efforts was contrasted with what was given by nature. This antithesis fundamentally retains its value today.

Culture is everything that has been created, built, learnt, conquered by man in the course of his entire history, in distinction from what nature has given, including the natural history of man himself as a species of animal. The science which studies man as a product of animal evolution is called [physical] anthropology. But from the moment that man separated himself from the animal kingdom—and this happened when he first grasped primitive tools of stone and wood and armed the organs of his body with them—from that time there began the creation and accumulation of culture, that is, all kinds of knowledge and skill in the struggle with nature and subjugation of nature.

When we speak of the culture accumulated by past generations we think first and foremost of its material achievements in the form of tools, machinery, buildings, monuments, and so on. Is this culture? Undoubtedly it is the material forms in which culture is deposited—material culture. It creates, on the basis provided by nature, the fundamental setting of our lives, our everyday way of living, our creative work. But the most precious part of culture is its deposit in the consciousness of man himself—those methods, habits, skills, acquired abilities of ours which have developed out of the whole of preexisting material cultural and which, while drawing on this preexisting material culture, also improves upon it. We will, then, consider it as firmly established that culture has grown out of man's struggle with nature for existence, for the improvement of his conditions of life, for the enlargement of his power. But out of this same basis classes also have grown. In the process of adapting itself to nature, in conflict with the hostile forces of nature, human society has taken shape



as a complex organization of classes. The class structure of society has determined to a decisive degree the content and form of human history, that is, its material relations and their ideological reflections. This means that historical culture has possessed a class character.

Slave-owning society, feudal serf-owning society, bourgeois society, each engendered a corresponding culture, different at different stages and with a multitude of transitional forms. Historical society has been an organization for the exploitation of man by man. Culture has served the class organization of society. Exploiters' society has given rise to an exploiters' culture. But does this mean that we are against all the culture of the past?

There exists, in fact, a profound contradiction here. Everything that has been conquered, created, built by man's efforts and which serves to enhance man's power is culture. But since it is not a matter of individual man but of social man, since culture is a social-historical phenomenon in its very essence, and since historical society has been and continues to be class society, culture is found to be the basic instrument of class oppression. Marx said: "The ruling ideas of an epoch are essentially the ideas of the ruling class of that epoch." This also applies to culture as a whole. And yet we say to the working class: master all the culture of the past, otherwise you will not build socialism. How is this to be understood?

Over this contradiction many people have stumbled, and they stumble so frequently because they approach the understanding of class society superficially, semi-idealistically, forgetting that fundamentally this is the organization of production. Every class society has been formed on the basis of definite modes of struggle with nature, and these modes have changed in accordance with the development of technique. What is the basis of bases—the class organization of society or its productive forces? Without doubt the productive forces. It is precisely upon them, at a certain level of their development, that classes are formed and reformed. In the productive forces is expressed the materialized economic skill of mankind, his historical ability to ensure his existence. On this dynamic foundation there arise classes which by their interrelations determine the character of culture.

And here, first and foremost, we have to ask ourselves regarding technique: it is *only* an instrument of class op-

pression? It is enough to put such a question for it to be answered at once: no, technique is the fundamental conquest of mankind; although it has also served, up to the present, as an instrument of exploitation, yet it is at the same time the fundamental condition for the emancipation of the exploited. The machine strangles the wage slave in its grip. But he can free himself only through the machine. Therein is the root of the entire question.

If we do not let ourselves forget that the driving force of the historical process is the growth of the productive forces, liberating man from the domination of nature, then we shall find that the proletariat needs to master the sum total of the knowledge and skill worked out by humanity in the course of its history, in order to raise itself up and rebuild life on principles of solidarity.

"Does culture advance technique or does technique advance culture?" asks one of the written questions lying before me. It is wrong to put the question that way. Technique cannot be counterposed to culture, for it is its mainspring. Without technique, no culture. The growth of technique advances culture. But the science and general culture which have arisen on the basis of technique constitute a powerful aid to the further growth of technique. Here we have a dialectical interaction.

Comrades, if you want a simple but expressive example of the contradiction contained in technique itself, you will not find a better one than railways. If you take a look at West European passenger trains you will see that they have carriages of different "classes." These classes remind us of the classes of capitalist society. The first-class carriages are for the privileged upper circles, the second-class for the middle bourgeoisie, the third for the petty bourgeoisie, and the fourth for the proletariat, which was formerly called, with good reason, the Fourth Estate. In themselves railways constitute a colossal cultural-technical conquest by mankind which has very greatly transformed the face of the earth in the course of a single century. But the class structure of society also influences the structure of the means of communication. And our Soviet railways are still a long way from equality—not only because they make use of carriages inherited from the past but also because NEP\*

\*The "New Economic Policy" introduced in Soviet Russia in 1921, following the liquidation of "War Communism."—Translator's note.

merely prepares the way for equality, it does not accomplish it.

Before the railway age civilization was hemmed in by the shores of the seas and the banks of the great rivers. The railways opened up whole continents to capitalist culture. One of the fundamental causes, if not the most fundamental cause, of the backwardness and desolation of our Russian countryside is the lack of railways, metalled roads, and access roads. In this respect the majority of our villages exist in precapitalist conditions. We must overcome our great ally which is at the same time our greatest adversary—our great spaces.\* Socialist economy is planned economy. Planning presupposes first and foremost communication. The most important means of communication are roads and railways. Every new railway line is a path to culture, and in our conditions also a path to socialism. Besides, with improvement in the technique of communications and in the country's prosperity the social profile of our railway trains will change: the separation into "classes" will disappear, everybody will travel in "soft" carriages . . . that is, if when that time comes people are still travelling by rail and don't prefer to use aeroplanes, which will be available to one and all.

Let us take another example, the instruments of militarism, the means of extermination. In this sphere the class nature of society is expressed in an especially vivid and repulsive way. But there is no destructive (explosive or poisonous) substance the discovery of which would not be in itself a valuable scientific and technical achievement. Explosive and poisonous substances are used also for creative and not only for destructive purposes and open up new possibilities in the field of discovery and invention.

The proletariat can take power only by breaking up the old machinery of the class state. We have carried out this task as decisively as anybody has ever done. However, in building the new machinery of state we have found that we have to utilize, to a certain, fairly considerable extent, elements of the old. The further Socialist reconstruction of the state machine is inseparably linked with our political, economic, and cultural work in general.

We must not smash up technique. The proletariat has

\*Trotsky here refers to the value of Russia's enormous distances and expanses for the purpose of defence, as shown in the wars of intervention.—Translator's note.

taken over the factories equipped by the bourgeoisie in that state in which the revolution found them. The old equipment is still serving us to this day. This fact most graphically and directly shows us that we do not renounce the "heritage." How could it be otherwise? After all, the revolution was undertaken, first and foremost, in order to get possession of the "heritage." However, the old technique, in the form in which we took it over, is quite unsuitable for socialism. It constitutes a crystallization of the anarchy of capitalist economy. Competition between different enterprises, chasing after profits, unevenness of development between different branches of the economy, backwardness of certain areas, parcellization of agriculture, plundering of human forces, all this finds in technique its expression in iron and brass. But whereas the machinery of class oppression can be smashed by a revolutionary blow, the productive machinery of capitalist anarchy can be reconstructed only gradually. The completion of the restoration period, on the basis of the old equipment, has only brought us to the threshold of this tremendous task. We must carry it through at all costs.

Spiritual culture is as contradictory as material culture. And just as from the arsenals and storehouses of material culture we take and put into circulation not bows and arrows, not stone tools or the tools of the Bronze Age, but the most improved tools available, of the most up-to-date technique, in this way also must we approach spiritual culture as well.

The fundamental element in the culture of the old society was religion. It possessed paramount importance as a form of human knowledge and human unity; but there was reflected in this form above all man's weakness in the face of nature and his helplessness within society. We utterly reject religion, along with all substitutes for it.

It is different with philosophy. We have to take from the philosophy created by class society two invaluable elements—materialism and dialectics. It was in fact from the organic combination of materialism and dialectics that Marx's method was born and that his system arose. This method lies at the basis of Leninism.

If we pass on to science in the strict sense of the word, here we find it quite obvious that we are confronted with a huge reservoir of knowledge and skill accumulated by mankind during its long life. True, one can show that in science,

the aim of which is the cognition of reality, there are many tendentious class adulterations. That is quite true. If even the railways give expression to the privileged position of some and the poverty of others, this applies even more to science, the material of which is a great deal more flexible than the metal and wood out of which they make railway carriages. But we have to reckon with the fact that scientific work is basically nourished by the need to obtain knowledge of nature. Although class interests have introduced and are still introducing false tendencies even into natural science, nevertheless this falsification process is restricted by the limits beyond which it begins directly to prevent the progress of technology. If you examine natural science from the bottom upwards, from the field of accumulation of elementary facts up to the highest and most complex generalizations, you will see that the more empirical a piece of scientific research is, the closer it is to its material, to facts, the more indubitable are the results which it produces. The wider the field of generalization, the nearer natural science approaches to questions of philosophy, the more is it subjected to the influence of class inspiration.

Matters are more complicated and worse in the case of the social sciences and what are called the "humanities." In this sphere too, of course, what is fundamental is the striving to get to know that which exists. Thanks to this fact we have, incidentally, the brilliant school of classical bourgeois economists. But class interest, which tells very much more directly and imperatively in the social sciences than in natural science, soon called a halt to the development of the economic thought of bourgeois society. In this field, however, we Communists are equipped better than in any other. Socialist theoreticians, awakened by the class struggle of the proletariat, basing themselves on bourgeois science and also criticizing it, created in the teachings of Marx and Engels the powerful method of historical materialism and the peerless application of this method in *Capital*. This does not mean, of course, that we are insured against the influence of bourgeois ideas in the field of economics and sociology generally. No, the most vulgar professional Socialist and petty-bourgeois-Narodnik\* tendencies burst

\*A reference to the "populis" school, disposed to idealize the peasantry, whom the Marxists had to dislodge from the leadership of the Russian revolutionary movement at the end of the 19th century.—Translator's note.

out at every step into currency among us, from the old "treasure houses" of knowledge, finding a nutrient medium for themselves in the unformed and contradictory relations of the transitional epoch. But in this sphere we have the indispensable criteria of Marxism, verified and enriched in the works of Lenin. And we will give an all the more triumphant rebuff to the vulgar economists and sociologists the less we shut ourselves up in the experience of the passing day, the more widely we embrace world development as a whole, distinguishing its fundamental trends beneath mere conjunctural changes.

In questions of law, morality, and ideology in general the situation of bourgeois science is even more lamentable than in the field of economics. A pearl of genuine knowledge can be found in these spheres only after digging through dozens of professional dunghills.

Dialectics and materialism are the basic elements in the Marxist cognition of the world. But this does not mean at all that they can be applied to any sphere of knowledge, like an ever ready master key. Dialectics cannot be imposed upon facts, it has to be deduced from facts, from their nature and development. Only painstaking work on a vast mass of material enabled Marx to advance the dialectical system of economics to the conception of value as social labor. Marx's historical works were constructed in the same way, and even his newspaper articles likewise. Dialectical materialism can be applied to new spheres of knowledge only by mastering them from within. The purging of bourgeois science presupposes a mastery of bourgeois science. You will get nowhere with sweeping criticism or bald commands. Learning and application here go hand in hand with critical reworking. We have the method, but there is work enough for generations to do.

Marxist criticism in science must be not only vigilant but also prudent, otherwise it can degenerate into mere sycophancy, into Famusovism.\* Take psychology, even. Pavlov's reflexology proceeds entirely along the paths of dialectical materialism. It conclusively breaks down the wall

\*From Famusov, a character in Griboyedov's play *The Folly of Being Wise* (1824), a high official whose sole interest is in living up to his rank; he has a horror of anything that may give offence to authority and so disturb his comfortable situation.—Translator's note.

between physiology and psychology. The simplest reflex is physiological, but a system of reflexes gives us "consciousness." The accumulation of physiological quantity gives a new "psychological" quality. The method of Pavlov's school is experimental and painstaking. Generalizations are won step by step: from the saliva of dogs to poetry—that is, to the mental mechanics of poetry, not to its social content—though the paths that bring us to poetry have as yet not been revealed.

The school of the Viennese psychoanalyst Freud proceeds in a different way. It assumes in advance that the driving force of the most complex and delicate of psychic processes is a physiological need. In this general sense it is materialistic, if you leave aside the question whether it does not assign too big a place to the sexual factor at the expense of others, for this is already a dispute within the frontiers of materialism. But the psychoanalyst approaches the problems of consciousness not experimentally, going from the lowest phenomena to the highest, from the simple reflex to the complex reflex, but attempts to take all these intermediate stages in one jump, from above downwards, from the religious myth, the lyrical poem, or the dream straight to the physiological basis of the psyche.

The idealists tell us that the psyche is an independent entity, that the "soul" is a bottomless well. Both Pavlov and Freud think that the bottom of the soul is physiology. But Pavlov, like a diver, descends to the bottom and laboriously investigates the well from there upwards; while Freud stands over the well and with penetrating gaze tries to pierce its ever shifting and troubled waters and to make out or guess the shape of things down below. Pavlov's method is experiment, Freud's is conjecture, sometimes fantastic conjecture. The attempt to declare psychoanalysis "incompatible" with Marxism and simply turn one's back on Freudism is too simple, or, more accurately, too simplistic. But we are in any case not obliged to adopt Freudism. It is a working hypothesis which can produce and undoubtedly does produce deductions and conjectures which proceed along the lines of materialist psychology. The experimental procedure will in due course provide the tests for these conjectures. But we have no grounds and no right to put a ban on the other procedure which, even though it may be less reliable, yet tries to anticipate the conclusions to which the experi-

mental procedure is advancing only very slowly.\*

By means of these examples I wished to show, if only partially, both the heterogeneity of our scientific heritage and also the complexity of the paths by way of which the proletariat can advance to mastery of it. If it is true that in economic construction, problems are not solved by decree and we have to "learn to trade," so also in science the mere issuing of bald commands can achieve nothing but harm and disgrace. In this sphere we have to "learn to learn."

Art is one of the ways in which man finds his bearings in the world; in this sense the heritage of art is not distinguished from the heritage of science and technique—and it is no less contradictory than they. Unlike science, however, art is a form of cognition of the world, not as a system of laws but as a group of images, and at the same time it is a way of inspiring certain feelings and moods. The art of past centuries has made man more complex and flexible, has raised his mentality to a higher level, has enriched him in an all-round way. This enrichment is a precious achievement of culture. Mastery of the art of the past is, therefore, a necessary precondition not only for the creation of new art but also for the building of the new society, for communism needs people with highly developed minds. Can, however, the art of the past enrich us with an artistic knowledge of the world? It can, precisely because it is able to give nourishment to our feelings and to educate them. If we were groundlessly to repudiate the art of the past, we should at once become poorer spiritually.

One notices nowadays a tendency here and there to put forward the idea that art has as its purpose only the inspiration of certain moods and not at all the cognition of reality. The conclusion drawn from this is: with what sort of sentiments can the art of the nobility or of the bourgeoisie infect us? This is radically false. The significance of art as a means of cognition—including for the mass of the people, and in particular for them—is not at all less than its "sentimental" significance. The ancient epic, the fable, the song, the tra-

\*This question has, of course, nothing in common with the cultivation of a sham Freudism as an erotic indulgence or piece of "naughtiness." Such claptrap has nothing to do with science and merely expresses decadent moods; the centre of gravity is shifted from the cortex to the spinal cord...—Trotsky's note.



ditional saying, the folk rhyme provide knowledge in graphic form, they throw light on the past, they generalize experience, they widen the horizon, and only in connection with them and thanks to this connection is it possible to "tune in." This applies to all literature generally, not only to epic poetry but to lyric poetry as well. It applies to painting and to sculpture. The only exception, to a certain degree, is music, the effect of which is powerful but one-sided! Music too, of course, relies upon a particular knowledge of nature, its sounds and rhythms. But here the knowledge is so deeply hidden, the results of the inspiration of nature are to such an extent refracted through a person's nerves, that music acts as a self-sufficing "revelation." Attempts to approximate all forms of art to music, as to the art of "infection"\* have often been made and have always signified a depreciation in art of the role of the intelligence in favor of formless feeling, and in this sense they were and are reactionary. . . . Worst of all, of course, are those works of "art" which offer neither graphic knowledge nor artistic "infection" but instead advance exorbitant pretensions. In our country no few such works are printed, and, unfortunately, not in the students' books of art schools but in many thousands of copies. . . .

Culture is a social phenomenon. Just because of this, language, as the organ of intercourse between men, is its most important instrument. The culture of language itself is the most important condition for the growth of all branches of culture, especially science and art. Just as technique is not satisfied with the old measuring apparatus but is creating new ones, micrometers, voltameters, and so on, striving for and attaining ever greater accuracy, so in the matter of language, of skill in choosing the appropriate words and combining them in the appropriate ways, constant, systematic, painstaking work is necessary in order to achieve the highest degree of accuracy, clarity, and vividness. The foundation for this work must be the fight against illiteracy, semi-literacy and near-illiteracy. The next stage of this work is the mastering of Russian classical literature.

Yes, culture was the main instrument of class oppression. But it also, and only it, can become the instrument of Socialist emancipation.

\*Here Trotsky tilts at Tolstoy's ideas on art, and their revival by Bukharin, in *Historical Materialism*.—Translator's note.

## *Literature and Revolution*

The place of art can be determined by the following general argument.

If the victorious Russian proletariat had not created its own army, the Workers' State would have been dead long ago, and we would not be thinking now about economic problems, and much less about intellectual and cultural ones.

If the dictatorship of the proletariat should prove incapable, in the next few years, of organizing its economic life and of securing at least a living minimum of material comforts for its population, then the proletarian régime will inevitably turn to dust. The economic problem at present is the problem above all problems.

But even a successful solution of the elementary problems of food, clothing, shelter, and even of literacy, would in no way signify a complete victory of the new historic principle, that is, of socialism. Only a movement of scientific thought on a national scale and the development of a new art would signify that the historic seed has not only grown into a plant, but has even flowered. In this sense, the development of art is the highest test of the vitality and significance of each epoch.

Culture feeds on the sap of economics, and a material surplus is necessary, so that culture may grow, develop, and become subtle. Our bourgeoisie laid its hand on literature, and did this very quickly at the time when it was growing rich. The proletariat will be able to prepare the formation of a new, that is, a Socialist culture and literature, not by the laboratory method on the basis of our present-day poverty, want, and illiteracy, but by large social, economic, and cultural means. Art needs comfort, even abundance. Furnaces have to be hotter, wheels have to move faster, looms have to turn more quickly, schools have to work better.

Our old literature and "culture" were the expressions of the nobleman and the bureaucrat and were based on the

from *Literature and Revolution* by Leon Trotsky, pp. 9-15, 240-245, 253-256

peasant. The nobleman who did not doubt himself as well as the "repentant nobleman" laid their imprints upon the most significant period of Russian literature. Later the intellectual-commoner arose, based on the peasant and bourgeois, and he, too, wrote his chapter into the history of Russian literature. After going through a period of fullest "simplification" [of leading the simple life of the people] the intellectual-commoner became modernized, differentiated, and individualized, in the bourgeois sense of the term. Here lies the role of the Decadent and Symbolic schools. Already at the beginning of the century, but especially after 1907-08, the rebirth of the bourgeois intelligentsia and its literature proceeds at full speed. The [First World] War made this process end patriotically.

The Revolution overthrew the bourgeoisie, and this decisive fact burst into literature. The literature which was formed around a bourgeois center, is no more. Everything more or less vital, which remained in the field of culture, and this is especially true of literature, tried and still tries to find a new orientation. In view of the fact that the bourgeoisie no longer exists, its center can be only the people, without the bourgeoisie. But who are the people? First of all, they are the peasantry, and to some extent the small burghers of the city, and after that those workers who cannot be separated from the protoplasm of peasant and folk. This is the basic approach of all the "fellow travelers" of the Revolution. So thought the late [Aleksandr] Blok. Thus [Boris] Pilnyak, the "Serapion Fraternity," the Imagists, who are still alive and doing well. Thus some of the Futurists\* ([Velemir] Khlebnikov, Kruchenikh and V. Ka-

\*Blok was a symbolist poet, best known for *The Twelve*, a poetic masterpiece inspired by the revolution and full of striking images of the doomed old order. Pilnyak was a novelist and short story writer, author of *The Naked Year* and *The Volga Flows to the Caspian Sea*.

The Serapion Fraternity headed by Vsevolod Ivanov and Nikolai Nikitin was a postrevolutionary school of young writers who wanted literature to be free of ideological influences. It later came to include such important Soviet literary figures as Fedin, Pilnyak, and Babel.

Imagism was a school of poetic experimentation that saw in the image a self-sufficient vehicle of expression. The lyrics of Yesenin exhibit both the merits and limits of the school.

Futurism was an artistic group which called for a total break with all past traditions. Its best-known representative was the poet V. V. Mayakovsky.

mensky). The peasant basis of our culture—or rather, of our lack of culture—reveals indirectly all its strength.

Our revolution is the expression of the peasant turned proletarian, who yet leans upon the peasant and lays out the path to be followed. Our art is the expression of the intellectual, who hesitates between the peasant and the proletarian and who is incapable organically of merging either with one or the other, but who gravitates more towards the peasant because of his intermediary position and because of his connections. He cannot become a peasant, but he can sing the peasant. At the same time, however, there can be no revolution without the leadership of the worker. That is the source of the fundamental contradiction at the very approach to the subject. One can say that the poets and writers of these sharply critical years differ from one another in the way they escape from this contradiction and in the manner in which they fill in the gaps; one with mysticism, another with romanticism, a third with cautious aloofness, and a fourth with a cry which drowns everything. Regardless of the variety of methods of overcoming the contradiction, its essence remains one and the same. It consists in the separation created by bourgeois society of intellectual work, including art, from physical work, and it appears that the Revolution is the work of men doing physical work. One of the ultimate aims of the Revolution is to overcome completely the separation of these two kinds of activity. In this sense, as in all other senses, the problem of creating a new art proceeds entirely along the lines of the fundamental problem of constructing a Socialist culture.

It is silly, absurd, stupid to the highest degree to pretend that art will remain indifferent to the convulsions of our epoch. The events are prepared by people, they are made by people, they fall upon people and change these people. Art, directly or indirectly, affects the lives of the people who make or experience the events. This refers to all art, to the grandest as well as to the most intimate. If nature, love, or friendship had no connection with the social spirit of an epoch, lyric poetry would long ago have ceased to exist. A profound break in history, that is, a rearrangement of classes in society, shakes up individuality, establishes the perception of the fundamental problems of lyric poetry from a new angle, and so saves art from eternal repetition.

But does not the "spirit" of an epoch work imperceptibly and independently of the subjective will? Of course in the final analysis, this spirit is reflected in everybody, in those who accept it and who embody it as well as in those who hopelessly struggle against it, and in those who passively try to hide from it. But those who hide themselves passively are imperceptibly dying off. Those who resist are able to revive the old art with one kind of antiquated flame or another. But the new art, which will lay out new landmarks and which will expand the channel of creative art, can be created only by those who are at one with their epoch. If a line were extended from present art to the Socialist art of the future, one would say that we have hardly now passed through the stage of even preparing for its preparation.

A short outline of the groups of present-day Russian literature is as follows:

Nonrevolutionary literature, from the *feuilleton* writers in Suvorin's newspaper\* to the subtlest lyricists of the aristocrat's vale of tears, is dying, together with the classes which it served. Genealogically, as far as form is concerned, it represents the completion of the elder line of our old literature, which began as a nobleman's literature and finished as completely bourgeois literature.

The "Soviet" rustic or peasant singing literature can trace its genealogy, in the sense of form, though less clearly, from the Slavophile and populist tendencies of the old literature. To be sure, the peasant-singing writers are not directly the product of the peasant. They would be unthinkable without the preceding literature of the nobility and the bourgeoisie, the junior line of which they represent. At present, they are all adjusting themselves to be more in tune with the new social situation.

Futurism also undoubtedly represents an offshoot of the old literature. But Russian Futurism did not reach its full development under the old literature and did not undergo the necessary bourgeois transformation which would have given it official recognition. When the War and the Revolution began, Futurism was still Bohemian, which is a normal condition for every new literary school in capitalistic cities.

\*Aleksey Suvorin was the publisher of the Russian daily newspaper, *New Times*, founded in 1826. Friend of Chekhov and publisher of his works.

Under the impulse of events, Futurism directed its development into the new channels of the Revolution. In the very nature of the thing, this could not and did not result in a revolutionary art. But though remaining, in some respects, a Bohemian revolutionary offshoot of the old art, Futurism contributes to a greater degree and more directly and actively than all other tendencies in forming the new art.

However significant the achievements of individual proletarian poets may be in general, their so-called "proletarian art" is only passing through an apprenticeship. It sows the elements of artistic culture widely, it helps a new class to assimilate the old achievements, even though in a very thin veneer, and in this way it is one of the currents of the Socialist art of the future.

It is fundamentally incorrect to contrast bourgeois culture and bourgeois art with proletarian culture and proletarian art. The latter will never exist, because the proletarian régime is temporary and transient. The historic significance and the moral grandeur of the proletarian revolution consist in the fact that it [the proletarian revolution] is laying the foundations of a culture which is above classes and which will be the first culture that is truly human.

Our policy in art, during a transitional period, can and must be to help the various groups and schools of art which have come over to the Revolution to grasp correctly the historic meaning of the Revolution, and to allow them complete freedom of self-determination in the field of art, after putting before them the categorical standard of being for or against the Revolution.

The Revolution is reflected in art, for the time being only partially so, to the extent to which the artist ceases to regard it as an external catastrophe, and to the extent to which the guild of new and old poets and artists becomes a part of the living tissue of the Revolution and learns to see it from within and not from without.

The social whirlpool will not calm down so soon. There are decades of struggle ahead of us, in Europe and in America. Not only the men and women of our generation, but of the coming one, will be its participants, its heroes and its victims. The art of this epoch will be entirely under the influence of revolution. This art needs a new self-consciousness. It is, above all, incompatible with mysticism, whether it be frank, or whether it masquerades as romanticism,

because the Revolution starts from the central idea that collective man must become sole master and that the limits of his power are determined by his knowledge of natural forces and by his capacity to use them. This new art is incompatible with pessimism, with skepticism, and with all the other forms of spiritual collapse. It is realistic, active, vitally collectivist, and filled with a limitless creative faith in the future.

. . . But can a great art be created out of our infidel epoch, ask certain mystics, who are willing to accept the Revolution if it can secure them immortality. Tragedy is a great and monumental form of literature. The tragedy of classic antiquity was deduced from its myths. All ancient tragedy is penetrated by a profound faith in fate, which gave a meaning to life. The Christian myth unified the monumental art of the Middle Ages and gave a significance not only to the temples and the mysteries, but to all human relationships. The union of the religious point of view on life with an active participation in it, made possible a great art in those times. If one were to remove religious faith, not the vague, mystic buzzing that goes on in the soul of our modern intelligentsia, but the real religion, with God and a heavenly law and a church hierarchy, then life is left bare, without any place in it for supreme collisions of hero and destiny, of sin and expiation. The well-known mystic Stepun approaches art from this point of view in his article on "Tragedy and the Contemporary Life." He starts from the needs of art itself, tempts us with a new and monumental art, shows us a revival of tragedy in the distance, and, in conclusion, demands, in the name of art, that we submit to and obey the powers of heaven. There is an insinuating logic in Stepun's scheme. In fact, the author does not care for tragedy, because the laws of tragedy are nothing to him as compared to the laws of heaven. He only wishes to catch hold of our epoch by the small finger of tragic esthetics in order to take hold of its entire hand. This is a purely Jesuitic approach. But from a dialectic point of view, Stepun's reasoning is formalistic and shallow. It ignores the materialistic and historical foundation from which the ancient drama and the Gothic art grew and from which a new art must grow.

The faith in an inevitable fate disclosed the narrow limits within which ancient man, clear in thought but poor in technique, was confined. He could not as yet undertake to conquer nature on the scale we do today, and nature hung over him like a fate. Fate is the limitation and the immobility of technical means, the voice of blood, of sickness, of death, of all that limits man, and that does not allow him to become "arrogant." Tragedy lay inherent in the contradiction between the awakened world of the mind, and the stagnant limitation of means. The myth did not create tragedy, it only expressed it in the language of man's childhood.

The bribe of spiritual expiation of the Middle Ages and, in general, the whole system of heavenly and earthly double bookkeeping, which followed from the dualism of religion, and especially of historic, positive Christianity, did not make the contradictions of life, but only reflected them and solved them fictitiously. Medieval society overcame the growing contradictions by transferring the promissory note to the Son of God; the ruling classes signed this note, the Church hierarchy acted as endorser, and the oppressed masses prepared to discount it in the other world.

Bourgeois society broke up human relationships into atoms and gave them unprecedented flexibility and mobility. Primitive unity of consciousness, which was the foundation of a monumental religious art, disappeared, and with it went primitive economic relationships. As a result of the Reformation, religion became individualistic. The religious symbols of art, having had their cord cut from the heavens, fell on their heads and sought support in the uncertain mysticism of individual consciousness.

In the tragedies of Shakespeare, which would be entirely unthinkable without the Reformation, the fate of the ancients and the passions of the Medieval Christians are crowded out by individual human passions, such as love, jealousy, revengeful greediness, and spiritual dissension. But in every one of Shakespeare's dramas, the individual passion is carried to such a high degree of tension that it outgrows the individual, becomes superpersonal, and is transformed into a fate of a certain kind. The jealousy of Othello, the ambition of Macbeth, the greed of Shylock, the love of Romeo and Juliet, the arrogance of Coriolanus, the spiritual wavering of Hamlet are all of this kind. Tragedy



in Shakespeare is individualistic, and in this sense has not the general significance of *Ædipus Rex*, which expresses the consciousness of a whole people. Nonetheless, compared with Æschylus, Shakespeare represents a great step forward and not backward. Shakespeare's art is more human. At any rate, we shall no longer accept a tragedy in which God gives orders and man submits. Moreover, there will be no one to write such a tragedy.

Having broken up human relations into atoms, bourgeois society, during the period of its rise, had a great aim for itself. Personal emancipation was its name. Out of it grew the dramas of Shakespeare and Goethe's *Faust*. Man placed himself in the center of the universe and therefore in the center of art also. This theme sufficed for centuries. In reality, all modern literature has been nothing but an enlargement of this theme.

But to the degree in which the internal bankruptcy of bourgeois society was revealed as a result of its unbearable contradictions, the original purpose, the emancipation and qualification of the individual, faded away and was relegated more and more into the sphere of a new mythology, without soul or spirit.

However, the conflict between what is personal and what is beyond the personal can take place not only in the sphere of religion but in the sphere of a human passion that is larger than the individual. The superpersonal element is, above all, the social element. So long as man will not have mastered his social organization, the latter will hang over him as his fate. Whether at the same time society casts a religious shadow or not is a secondary matter and depends upon the degree of man's helplessness. Babeuf's struggle for communism in a society which was not yet ready for it was a struggle of a classic hero with his fate. Babeuf's destiny had all the characteristics of true tragedy, just as the fate of the [Second-Century, B.C., Romans] Gracchi had, whose name Babeuf used.

Tragedy based on detached personal passions is too flat for our days. Why? Because we live in a period of social passions. The tragedy of our period lies in the conflict between the individual and the collectivity, or in the conflict between two hostile collectivities in the same individual. Our age is an age of great aims. This is what stamps it. But the grandeur of these aims lies in man's effort to free

himself from mystic and from every other intellectual vagueness and in his effort to reconstruct society and himself in accord with his own plan. This, of course, is much bigger than the child's play of the ancients, which was becoming to their childish age, or the Medieval ravings of monks, or the arrogance of individualism which tears personality away from the collectivity and then, draining it to the very bottom, pushes it off into the abyss of pessimism or sets it on all fours before the remounted bull Apis [of Egyptian mythology].

Tragedy is a high expression of literature because it implies the heroic tenacity of strivings, of limitless aims, of conflicts and sufferings. In this sense, Stepun was right when he characterized our "on the eve" art, as he called it, that is, the art which preceded the War and the Revolution, as insignificant.

Bourgeois society, individualism, the Reformation, the Shakespearean dramas, the great Revolution, these have made impossible the tragic significance of aims that come from without; great aims must live in the consciousness of a people, or of a class which leads a people, if they are to arouse heroism or create a basis for great sentiments which inspire tragedy. The Tsarist War, whose purpose did not penetrate consciousness, gave birth to cheap verse only, with personal poetry trickling by its side, unable to rise to an objectivity and unable to form a great art.

If one were to regard the Decadent and the Symbolist schools, with all their offshoots, from the point of view of the development of art as a social form, they would appear merely as scratches of the pen, as an exercise in craftsmanship, as a tuning up of instruments. The "on the eve" period in art was without aims. Those who had aims had no time for art. At present, one has to carry out great aims by means of art. One cannot tell whether revolutionary art will succeed in producing "high" revolutionary tragedy. But Socialist art will revive tragedy. Without God, of course. The new art will be atheist. It will also revive comedy, because the new man of the future will want to laugh. It will give new life to the novel. It will grant all rights to lyrics, because the new man will love in a better and stronger way than did the old people, and he will think about the problems of birth and death. The new art will revive all the old forms which arose in the course of the

development of the creative spirit. The disintegration and decline of these forms are not absolute, that is, they do not mean that these forms are absolutely incompatible with the spirit of the new age. All that is necessary is for the poet of the new epoch to re-think in a new way the thoughts of mankind, and to re-feel its feeling. . . .

The personal dreams of a few enthusiasts today for making life more dramatic and for educating man himself rhythmically find a proper and real place in this outlook. Having rationalized his economic system, that is, having saturated it with consciousness and planfulness, man will not leave a trace of the present stagnant and worm-eaten domestic life. The care for food and education, which weighs like a millstone on the present-day family, will be removed and will become the subject of social initiative and of an endless collective creativeness. Woman will at last free herself from her semi-servile condition. Side by side with technology, education, in the broad sense of the psycho-physical molding of new generations, will rise to become the climax of all social thinking. Powerful "parties" will form themselves around pedagogic systems. Experiments in social education and an emulation of different methods will develop to an undreamt-of degree. The Communist way of life will not form itself blindly, like coral islands, but will be built consciously, will be tested by thought, will be directed and corrected. Life will cease to be elemental and, for this reason, stagnant. Man will learn to move rivers and mountains, to build peoples' palaces on the peaks of Mont Blanc and at the bottom of the Atlantic; and he will not only be able to impart richness, brilliancy, and intensity to his life but also the highest dynamic quality. The shell of life will hardly have time to form before it will burst open again under the pressure of new technical and cultural inventions and achievements. Life in the future will not be monotonous.

More than that. Man at last will begin to harmonize himself in earnest. He will make it his business to achieve beauty by giving the movement of his own limbs the utmost precision, purposefulness, and economy in his work, his walk and his play. He will try to master first the semi-conscious and then the subconscious processes in his own organism, such as breathing, the circulation of the blood, digestion, reproduction, and, within necessary limits, he will

try to subordinate them to the control of reason and will. Even purely physiologic life will become subject to collective experiments. The human species, the coagulated *homo sapiens*, will once more enter into a state of radical transformation and will become an object, in his own hands, of the most complicated methods of artificial selection and psycho-physical training. This is entirely in accord with evolution. Man first drove the dark elements out of industry and ideology, displacing barbarian routine by scientific technique, and religion by science. Afterwards he drove the unconscious out of politics, overthrowing monarchy and serfdom and replacing them by democracy and rationalist parliamentarianism, and then establishing an open and lucid soviet dictatorship. The blind elements have settled most heavily in economic relations, but man is driving them out from there also, by means of the Socialist organization of economic life. This makes it possible to reconstruct fundamentally the traditional family life. Finally, the nature of man himself is hidden in the deepest and darkest recesses of the unconscious, the elemental and the submerged. Is it not self-evident that the greatest efforts of inquiring thought and of creative initiative will move in that direction? The human race will not have ceased to crawl on all four before God, kings and capital, in order later to submit humbly to the dark laws of heredity and to blind sexual selection! Emancipated man will want to attain a better balance in the work of his organs and a better rhythm in the growth and wear and tear of his tissues, in order to reduce the fear of death to a rational reaction of the organism towards danger. There can be no doubt that man's extreme anatomical and physiological disharmony, that is, the extreme disproportion in the growth and wear and tear of organs and tissues, give the life instinct the form of a pinched, morbid, and hysterical fear of death, which darkens reason and feeds the nonsensical and humiliating fantasies about life after death.

Man will make it his purpose to master his own feelings, to raise his instincts to the height of his consciousness, to make them transparent, to extend the wires of his will into the hidden recesses of his personality, and thereby to raise himself to a new plane, to create a higher social-biologic type, or, if you please, a superman.

It is difficult to predict the extent of self-mastery which the man of the future may reach or the heights to which he may carry his technique. Social construction and psycho-

physical self-education will become two aspects of one and the same process. All the arts—literature, drama, painting, music, and architecture—will lend this process beautiful form. More correctly, the framework in which the cultural construction and self-education of Communist man will proceed will also develop all the vital elements of contemporary art to the highest point. Man will become immeasurably stronger, wiser, and subtler; his body will become more harmonious, his movements more rhythmical, his voice more musical. The forms of life will become dynamically dramatic. The average human type will rise to the heights of an Aristotle, a Goethe, or a Marx. And above these heights, new peaks will rise.

### *Tolstoy: Poet and Rebel*

Tolstoy has passed his eightieth birthday and now stands before us like an enormous jagged cliff, moss-covered and belonging to a different historical world.

A remarkable thing! Karl Marx and even . . . Heinrich Heine still appear to be contemporaries of ours. But from our great contemporary of Yasnaya Polyana\* we are already separated by the irreversible flow of time.

This man was already thirty-three years old when serfdom was abolished in Russia. As the descendant of "ten generations untouched by labor," he matured and was shaped in an atmosphere of the old nobility; among inherited acres, in a spacious manorial home, and in the shade of linden-tree alleys, so tranquil and patrician.

The traditions of landlord rule, its romanticism, its poetry, its whole style of living were irresistibly absorbed by Tolstoy and became an organic part of his spiritual makeup. From the first years of his consciousness he was, as he remains to this very day, an *aristocrat* in the deepest and most secret recesses of his creativeness; and this, despite all his subsequent spiritual crises.

In the ancestral home of the Princes Volkonsky, inherited from *Fourth International* by Leon Trotsky, May–June, 1951, pp. 90–92

\*Toystoy's ancestral estate and home, where he lies buried.

by the Tolstoy family [now a Tolstoy museum], the author of *War and Peace* occupies a simple, plainly furnished room in which a handsaw is seen hanging on a wall, a scythe standing in a corner, and an ax lying nearby. But on the upper floor of this same dwelling, like stony guardians of its traditions, the illustrious ancestors of many generations keep watch from the walls. In this there is a symbol. We find both these floors also in the heart of the master of the house, only inverted in order. At the top of his consciousness he is the philosopher of the simple life and of self-submergence in the people; from below, whence well up the emotions, the passions, and the will, there stares upon us the long gallery of ancestors.

In the wrath of repentance Tolstoy renounced the false and worldly-vain art of the ruling classes, which glorifies their artificially cultivated tastes and envelops their caste prejudices in the flattery of false beauty. But what happened? In his latest major work, *Resurrection*, Tolstoy still places in the center of his artistic attention the one and the same wealthy and wellborn Russian landlord, surrounding him just as solicitously with the golden cobweb of aristocratic connections, habits, and remembrances as if outside this "worldly-vain" and "false" universe there were nothing of importance or of beauty.

From the landlord's manor there runs a short and narrow path straight to the hut of the peasant. Tolstoy, the poet, was accustomed to walk this path often and lovingly even before Tolstoy, the moralist, turned it into a road of salvation. Even after the abolition of serfdom, he continues to regard the peasant as "his"—an inalienable part of his material and spiritual inventory. From behind Tolstoy's unquestionable "physical love for the genuine toiling people" about which he himself tells us, there looks down upon us just as unquestionably his collective aristocratic ancestor—only illumined by an artist's genius.

*Landlord and muzhik*—these are in the last analysis the only people whom Tolstoy has wholly accepted into his creative sanctuary. But neither before nor after his spiritual crisis did he strive or was he ever able to free himself from the purely patrician contempt for all those figures who stand between the landlord and the peasant, or those who occupy positions beyond the sacred poles of this ancient order—the German superintendent, the merchant, the French tutor, the physician, the "intellectual," and, finally,

the factory worker with his watch and chain. Tolstoy never feels a need to understand these types, to peer into their souls or question them about their faith. And they pass before his artist's eye like so many insignificant and largely comical silhouettes. When he does create images of revolutionists of the Seventies or Eighties, as for example in *Resurrection*, he simply adapts his old landlord and peasant types to a new milieu or offers us purely external and humorously painted sketches.

At the beginning of the Sixties when a flood of new European ideas and, what is more important, of new *social relations* swept over Russia, Tolstoy, as I said, had already left a third of a century behind him; psychologically he was already molded.

Needless to recall, Tolstoy did not become an apologist for serfdom as did his intimate friend Fet (Shenshin), landlord and subtle lyric poet, in whose heart a tender receptivity to nature and to love was coupled with adoring prostration before the salutary whiplash of feudalism. But imbued in Tolstoy was a deep hatred for the new social relations, coming in the place of the old. "Personally I fail to see any amelioration of morals," he wrote in 1861, "nor do I propose to take anyone's word for it. I do not find, for instance, that the relation between the factory owner and the worker is more humane than that between the landlord and the serf."

Everywhere and in everything around there was hurly-burly and turmoil, the decomposition of the old nobility, the distintegration of the peasantry, universal chaos, the rubbish and litter of demolition, the bustle and din of city life, the tavern and tobacco smoke in the village, the factory limerick in place of the folksong—and all this repelled Tolstoy, the aristocrat and the artist. Psychologically he turned his back on this immense process and forever refused it artistic recognition. He felt no inner urge to defend feudal slavery, but he did remain wholeheartedly on the side of those old social relationships in which he saw wise simplicity and which he was able to unfold into artistically perfected forms.

His whole heart was fixed in a way of existence where life is reproduced changelessly from one generation to the next, century after century; where sacred necessity rules over everything; where every decision and action depends on the sun, the rain, the wind, and the green grass growing;

where nothing comes from one's own reason or from an individual's rebellious volition and, therefore, no personal responsibility exists either. Everything is predetermined, everything justified in advance, sanctified. Responsible for nothing, thinking of nothing, man lives only by *hearing and obeying*, says [Gleb]Uspensky, the remarkable poet of "The Dominion of the Land." And this perpetual hearing and obeying converted into perpetual toil, is precisely what shapes the *life* which outwardly leads to no results whatever but which has its result in its very self . . . And lo, a miracle! This convict-labor dependence—without reflection or choice, without errors or pangs of repentance—is what gives rise to the great moral "*ease*" of existence under the harsh guardianship of "the ears of rye."\* Mikula Seylanovich,\*\* peasant hero of the folk epic, says of himself: "I am the *beloved* of raw mother earth."

Such is the religious myth of Russian Populism which ruled for decades over the minds of the Russian intellectuals. Stone-deaf to its radical tendencies, Tolstoy always remained personally a Populist and represented in the Populist movement its aristocratic-conservative wing.

Tolstoy was repelled by the new, and in order to create artistically Russian life as he knew, understood, and loved it, he was compelled to withdraw into the past, back to the very beginnings of the nineteenth century. *War and Peace* (written in 1867-69)\*\*\* in his best and unsurpassed work.

The anonymous massivity of life and its sacred irresponsibility were incarnated by Tolstoy in his character Karatayev, a type least comprehensible to a European reader; at all events, furthest removed from him.

Karatayev's life, as he himself saw it, had no meaning as an individual life. It had meaning only as a small particle of the great whole, which Karatayev constantly felt. Of attachments, of friendship, and love as Pierre understood them, Karatayev had none. He loved and lovingly lived with everything that life brought him into contact with, and particularly with human beings. . . . Pierre felt that Karatayev, despite all his affectionate

\*"The ears of rye" refers to backbreaking toil in raising crops, I presume. The poetry of A. A. Fet-Shensin is noted for its moody depictions of rural nature.

\*\*The hero of *Dominion of the Land*.

\*\*\**War and Peace*, in fact, was begun in 1864, completed in 1869.



tenderness toward him, would not grieve for a moment over their parting.

That is the stage when the spirit, as Hegel put it, has not yet attained inner self-consciousness and therefore manifests itself only as spirit indwelling in nature. Despite his rather rare appearances Karatayev is the philosophical, if not the artistic axis, of *War and Peace*; and Kutuzov, whom Tolstoy turns into a national hero, is this very same Karatayev, only in the post of commander-in-chief.

In contrast to Napoleon, Kutuzov has no personal plans, no personal ambition. In his semi-conscious tactics, he is not guided by reason but by that which rises above reason—by a dim instinct for physical conditions and by the promptings of the people's spirit. Tsar Alexander, in his more lucid moments, as well as the least of Kutuzov's soldiers all stand equally under the dominion of the land. . . . In this moral unity is the solemn pathos of Tolstoy's book.

How miserable, in reality, is this Old Russia, with its nobility disinherited by history, without any brilliant past of hierarchical estates, without the Crusades, without knightly love or tournaments of knighthood, without even romantic highway robberies. How poverty-stricken, so far as inner beauty is concerned; what a ruthless plunder of the peasant masses amid the half animal-like existence of all!

But what a miracle of reincarnation is a genius capable of! From the raw material of this drab and colorless life he extracts its secret multicolored beauty. With Homeric calm and with Homer's love of children, he endows everything and everybody with his attention. Kutuzov, the manorial household servants, the cavalry horse, the adolescent countess, the muzhik, the Tsar, a louse on a soldier, the freemason—he gives preference to none among them, deprives none of his due share. Step by step, stroke by stroke he creates a limitless panorama whose parts are all inseparably bound together by an internal bond. In his work Tolstoy is as unhurried as the life he pictures. It is terrifying to think of, but he rewrote his colossal book *seven times*. . . . Perhaps what is most astounding in this titanic creativeness is that the artist permits neither himself nor the reader to become attached to any individual character.

He never puts his heroes on display, as does Turgenev, whom Tolstoy disliked, amid bursts of firecrackers and the

glare of magnesium flares. He does not seek out situations for them that would set them off to advantage; he hides nothing, suppresses nothing. He shows us his restless seeker of truth, Pierre Bezukhov, turned at the end into a smug head of a family and a happy landlord; Natasha Rostov, so touching in her semi-childlike sensitiveness, he turns, with godlike mercilessness, into a shallow breeding female, soiled diapers in hand. But from behind this seemingly indifferent attentiveness to individual parts there rises a mighty apotheosis of the whole, where everything breathes the spirit of inner necessity and harmony. It might be correct to say that this creative effort is permeated with an *aesthetic pantheism* for which there exists neither beauty nor ugliness, neither the great nor the small, because it sees the whole of life in the perpetual circuit of its manifestations as great and beautiful. This is the aesthetic of the tiller of the land, mercilessly conservative by nature. And it is this that lends to the epics of Tolstoy kinship with the Pentateuch and the Iliad. . . .

### *Ends and Means in Morality*

. . . The most popular and most imposing accusation directed against Bolshevik "amoralism" bases itself on the so-called Jesuitical maxim of Bolshevism: "The end justifies the means." From this it is not difficult to reach the further conclusion: Since the Trotskyists, like all Bolsheviks (or Marxists) do not recognize the principles of morality, there is, consequently, no "principled" difference between Trotskyism and Stalinism. Q.E.D.

One completely vulgar and cynical American monthly conducted a questionnaire on the moral philosophy of Bolshevism. The questionnaire, as is customary, was to have simultaneously served the ends of ethics and advertisement. The inimitable H. G. Wells, whose high fancy is surpassed only by his Homeric self-satisfaction, was not slow in solidarizing himself with the reactionary snobs of *Common Sense*\*. Here everything fell into order. But even those par-

from *Their Morals & Ours* by Leon Trotsky, pp. 9-14, 34-37

\**Common Sense*, an American monthly edited in New York by A. M. Bingham and Selden Rodman, 1932-46.

ticipants who considered it necessary to defend Bolshevism did so, in the majority of cases, not without timid evasions ([Max] Eastman): The principles of Marxism are, of course, bad, but among the Bolsheviks there are, nevertheless, worthy people. Truly, such "friends" are more dangerous than enemies.

Should we care to take Messrs. Accusers seriously, then first of all we would ask them: What are your own moral principles? Here is a question which will scarcely receive an answer. Let us admit for the moment that neither personal nor social ends can justify the means. Then it is obviously necessary to seek criteria outside of historical society. . . . But where? If not on earth, then in the heavens. In divine revelation the priests long ago discovered infallible moral criteria. Petty secular priests speak about eternal moral truths without naming their original source. However, we are justified in concluding: Since these truths are eternal, they should have existed not only before the appearance of half-monkey-half-man upon the earth but before the evolution of the solar system. Whence then did they arise? The theory of eternal morals can in nowise survive without God.

Moralists of the Anglo-Saxon type, insofar as they do not confine themselves to rationalist utilitarianism, the ethics of bourgeois bookkeeping, appear conscious or unconscious students of Viscount [actually Earl of] Shaftesbury, who—at the beginning of the eighteenth century!—deduced moral judgments from a special "moral sense" supposedly once and for all given to man. Supraclass morality inevitably leads to the acknowledgment of a special substance, of a "moral sense," "conscience," some kind of absolute which is nothing more than the philosophically cowardly pseudonym for God. Independent of "ends," that is, of society, morality, whether we deduce it from eternal truths or from the "nature of man," proves in the end to be a form of "natural theology." Heaven remains the only fortified position for military operations against dialectic materialism.

At the end of the last century there arose a whole school of "Marxists" in Russia, (Struve, [Nikolai] Berdyaev, Bulgakov, and others) who wished to supplement the teachings of Marx with a self-sufficient, that is, supraclass moral principle. These people began, of course, with [Immanuel] Kant and the categorical imperative. But how did they end? Struve is now a retired minister of the Crimean Baron [Piotr] Wrangel and a faithful son of the church;

Bulgakov is an orthodox priest; Berdyaev expounds the Apocalypse in sundry languages. These metamorphoses, which seem so unexpected at first glance, are not at all explained by the "Slavic soul"—Struve has a German soul—but by the sweep of the social struggle in Russia. The fundamental trend of this metamorphosis is essentially international.

Classical philosophic idealism insofar as it aimed in its time to secularize morality, that is, to free it from religious sanction represented a tremendous step forward. . . . But having torn itself from heaven, moral philosophy had to find earthly roots. To discover these roots was one of the tasks of materialism. After Shaftesbury came Darwin, after [Georg] Hegel—Marx. To appeal now to "eternal moral truths" signifies attempting to turn the wheels backward. Philosophic idealism is only a stage: from religion to materialism, or, contrariwise, from materialism to religion.

The Jesuit order, organized in the first half of the sixteenth century for combatting Protestantism, never taught, let it be said, that *any* means, even though it be criminal from the point of view of the Catholic morals, was permissible if only it led to the "end," that is, to the triumph of Catholicism. Such an internally contradictory and psychologically absurd doctrine was maliciously attributed to the Jesuits by their Protestant and partly even by Catholic opponents who were not shy in choosing the means for achieving *their own* ends. Jesuit theologians who, like the theologians of other schools, were occupied with the question of personal responsibility, actually taught that the means in itself may be a matter of indifference but that the moral justification or condemnation of any given means flows from the end. Thus shooting in itself is a matter of indifference; shooting a mad dog that threatens a child—a virtue; shooting with the aim of violation or murder—a crime. Outside of these commonplaces, the theologians of the Jesuit order made no promulgations.

In their practical morality the Jesuits were not at all worse than other monks or Catholic priests, on the contrary, they were superior to them; in any case, more consistent, bolder, and perspicacious. The Jesuits represented a militant organization, strictly centralized, aggressive, and dangerous not only to enemies but also to allies. In his psychology and method of action, the Jesuit of the "heroic" period distinguished himself from an average priest as the

warrior of a church from its shopkeeper. We have no reason to idealize either one or the other. But it is altogether unworthy to look upon a fanatic warrior with the eyes of an obtuse and slothful shopkeeper.

If we are to remain in the field of purely formal or psychological similtudes, then it can, if you like, be said that the Bolsheviks appear in relation to the democrats and social-democrats of all hues as did the Jesuits—in relation to the peaceful ecclesiastical hierarchy. Compared to revolutionary Marxists, the social-democrats and centrists appear like morons, or like quacks beside physicians: they do not think one problem through to the end, believe in the power of conjuration, and cravenly avoid every difficulty, hoping for a miracle. Opportunists are peaceful shopkeepers in socialist ideas while Bolsheviks are its inveterate warriors. From this comes the hatred and slander against Bolsheviks from those who have an abundance of their historically conditioned faults but not one of their merits.

However, the juxtaposition of Bolshevism and Jesuitism still remains completely one-sided and superficial, rather of a literary than historical kind. In accordance with the character and interests of those classes upon which they based themselves, the Jesuits represented reaction, the Protestants—progress. The limitedness of this “progress” in its turn found direct expression in the morality of the Protestants. Thus the teachings of Christ “purified” by them did not at all hinder the city bourgeois, Luther, from calling for the execution of revolting peasants as “mad dogs.” Dr. Martin [Luther] evidently considered that “the end justifies the means” even before that maxim was attributed to the Jesuits. In turn the Jesuits, competing with Protestantism, adapted themselves ever more to the spirit of bourgeois society, and of the three vows: poverty, chastity, and obedience, preserved only the third, and at that in an extremely attenuated form. From the point of view of the Christian ideal, the morality of the Jesuits degenerated the more they ceased to be Jesuits. The warriors of the church became its bureaucrats and, like all bureaucrats, passable swindlers.

This brief review is sufficient, perhaps, to show what ignorance and narrowness are necessary to consider seriously the contraposition of the “Jesuit” principle, “the end justifies the means,” to another seemingly higher morality, in which each “means” carries its own moral tag like mer-

chandise with fixed prices in a department store. It is remarkable that the common sense of the Anglo-Saxon Philistine has managed to wax indignant at the "Jesuit" principle and simultaneously to find inspiration in the utilitarian morality, so characteristic of British philosophy. Yet, the criterion of [Jeremy] Bentham—John Mill, "the greatest possible happiness of the greatest possible number," signifies that those means are moral which lead to the common welfare as the highest end. In its general philosophical formulations Anglo-Saxon utilitarianism thus fully coincides with the "Jesuit" principle, "the end justifies the means." Empiricism, we see, exists in the world only to free us from the necessity of making both ends meet.

Herbert Spencer, into whose empiricism Darwin inculcated the idea of "evolution" as a special vaccine, taught that in the moral sphere evolution proceeds from "sensations" to "ideas." Sensations impose the criterion of immediate pleasure, whereas ideas permit one to be guided by the criterion of *future, lasting and higher pleasure*. Thus the moral criterion here too is "pleasure" and "happiness." But the content of this criterion acquires breadth and depth depending upon the level of "evolution." In this way Herbert Spencer too, through the methods of his own "evolutionary" utilitarianism, showed that the principle, "the end justifies the means," does not embrace anything immoral.

It is naive, however, to expect from this abstract "principle" an answer to the practical question: What may we and what may we not do? Moreover, the principle, the end justifies the means, naturally raises the question: And what justifies the end? In practical life as in the historical movement, the end and the means constantly change places. A machine under construction is an "end" of production only that upon entering the factory it may become the "means." Democracy in certain periods is the "end" of the class struggle only that later it may be transformed into its "means." Not embracing anything immoral, the so-called "Jesuit" principle fails, however, to resolve the moral problem.

The "evolutionary" utilitarianism of Spencer likewise abandons us half-way without an answer, since, following Darwin, it tries to dissolve the concrete historical morality in the biological needs or in the "social instincts" characteristic of gregarious animals, and this at a time when the very understanding of morality arises only in an antagonistic milieu, that is, in a society divided into classes.

Bourgeois evolutionism halts impotently at the threshold of historical society because it does not wish to acknowledge the driving force in the evolution of social forms: *the class struggle*. Morality is one of the ideological functions in this struggle. The ruling class forces *its* ends upon society and habituates it into considering all those means which contradict its ends as immoral. That is the chief function of official morality. It pursues the idea of the "greatest possible happiness" not for the majority but for a small and ever diminishing minority. Such a régime could not have endured for even a week through force alone. It needs the cement of morality. The production of this cement constitutes the profession of the petty-bourgeois theoreticians and moralists. They radiate all the colors of the rainbow but in the final analysis remain apostles of slavery and submission.

Whoever does not care to return to Moses, Christ, or Mohammed; whoever is not satisfied with eclectic *hodgepodes* must acknowledge that morality is a product of social development; that there is nothing immutable about it; that it serves social interests; that these interests are contradictory; that morality more than any other form of ideology has a class character.

But do not elementary moral precepts exist, worked out in the development of mankind as a whole and indispensable for the existence of every collective body? Undoubtedly such precepts exist but the extent of their action is extremely limited and unstable. Norms "obligatory upon all" become the less forceful the sharper the character assumed by the class struggle. The highest form of the class struggle is civil war, which explodes into midair all moral ties between the hostile classes.

Under "normal" conditions a "normal" man observes the commandment: "Thou shalt not kill!" But if he kills under exceptional conditions for self-defense, the jury acquits him. If he falls victim to a murderer, the court will kill the murderer. The necessity of courts, as well as that of self-defense, flows from antagonistic interests. Insofar as the state is concerned, in peaceful times it limits itself to legalized killings of individuals so that in time of war it may transform the "obligatory" commandment, "Thou shalt not kill!" into its opposite. The most "humane" governments, which in peaceful times "detest" war, proclaim during war that the

highest duty of their armies is the extermination of the greatest possible number of people.

The so-called "generally recognized" moral precepts in essence preserve an algebraic, that is, an indeterminate character. They merely express the fact that man, in his individual conduct, is bound by certain common norms that flow from his being a member of society. The highest generalization of these norms is the "categorical imperative" of Kant. But in spite of the fact that it occupies a high position in the philosophic Olympus, this imperative does not embody anything categorical because it embodies nothing concrete. It is a shell without content.

This vacuity in the norms obligatory upon all arises from the fact that in all decisive questions people feel their class membership considerably more profoundly and more directly than their membership in "society." The norms of "obligatory" morality are in reality filled with class, that is, antagonistic content. The moral norm becomes the more categorical the less it is "obligatory upon all." The solidarity of workers, especially of strikers or barricade fighters, is incomparably more "categorical" than human solidarity in general.

The bourgeoisie, which far surpasses the proletariat in the completeness and irreconcilability of its class consciousness, is vitally interested in imposing *its* moral philosophy upon the exploited masses. It is exactly for this purpose that the concrete norms of the bourgeois catechism are concealed under moral abstractions patronized by religion, philosophy, or that hybrid which is called "common sense." The appeal to abstract norms is not a disinterested philosophic mistake but a necessary element in the mechanics of class deception. The exposure of this deceit which retains the tradition of thousands of years is the first duty of a proletarian revolutionist. . . .

A means can be justified only by its end. But the end in its turn needs to be justified. From the Marxist point of view, which expresses the historical interests of the proletariat, the end is justified if it leads to increasing the power of man over nature and to the abolition of the power of man over man.

"We are to understand then that in achieving this end anything is permissible?" sarcastically demands the Philis-



tine, demonstrating that he understood nothing. That is permissible, we answer, which *really* leads to the liberation of mankind. Since this end can be achieved only through revolution, the liberating morality of the proletariat of necessity is endowed with a revolutionary character. It irreconcilably counteracts not only religious dogma but all kinds of idealistic fetishes, those philosophic gendarmes of the ruling class. It deduces a rule for conduct from the laws of the development of society, thus primarily from the class struggle, this law of all laws.

"Just the same," the moralist continues to insist, "does it mean that in the class struggle against capitalists all means are permissible: lying, frame-up, betrayal, murder, and so on?" Permissible and obligatory are those and only those means, we answer, which unite the revolutionary proletariat, fill their hearts with irreconcilable hostility to oppression, teach them contempt for official morality and its democratic echoers, imbue them with consciousness of their own historic mission, raise their courage and spirit of self-sacrifice in the struggle. Precisely from this it flows that *not* all means are permissible. When we say that the end justifies the means, then for us the conclusion follows that the great revolutionary end spurns those base means and ways which set one part of the working class against other parts or attempt to make the masses happy without their participation; or lower the faith of the masses in themselves and their organization, replacing it by worship for the "leaders." Primarily and irreconcilably, revolutionary morality rejects servility in relation to the bourgeoisie and haughtiness in relation to the toilers, that is, those characteristics in which petty-bourgeois pedants and moralists are thoroughly steeped.

These criteria do not, of course, give a ready answer to the question as to what is permissible and what is not permissible in each separate case. There can be no such automatic answers. Problems of revolutionary morality are fused with the problems of revolutionary strategy and tactics. The living experience of the movement, illumined by theory, provides the correct answer to these problems.

Dialectic materialism does not know the dualism of means and end. The end flows naturally from the historical movement. Organically the means are subordinated to the end. The immediate end becomes the means for a further end. In his play, *Franz von Sickingen*, Ferdinand Lassalle

[see p. 170] puts the following words into the mouth of one of the heroes:

... Show not the *goal*.  
But show also the *path*. So closely interwoven  
Are path and goal that each with other  
Ever changes, and other *paths* forthwith  
Another *goal set up*.

Lassalle's lines are not at all perfect. Still worse is the fact that in practical politics Lassalle himself diverged from the above expressed precept—it is sufficient to recall that he went as far as secret agreements with [Prince Otto von] Bismarck! But the dialectic interdependence between means and end is expressed entirely correctly in the above-quoted sentences. Seeds of wheat must be sown in order to yield an ear of wheat.

Is individual terror, for example, permissible or impermissible from the point of view of "pure morals"? In this abstract form the question does not exist at all for us. Conservative Swiss bourgeois even now render official praise to the terrorist William Tell. Our sympathies are fully on the side of Irish, Russian, Polish, or Hindu terrorists in their struggle against national and political oppression. The assassinated Kirov [see p. 276], a rude satrap, does not call forth any sympathy. Our relation to the assassin remains neutral only because we know not what motives guided him. If it became known that Nikolayev acted as a conscious avenger for workers' rights trampled upon by Kirov, our sympathies would be fully on the side of the assassin. However, not the question of subjective motives but that of objective expediency has for us the decisive significance. Are the given means really capable of leading to the goal? In relation to individual terror, both theory and experience bear witness that such is not the case. To the terrorist we say: It is impossible to replace the masses; only in the mass movement can you find expedient expression for your heroism. However, under conditions of civil war, the assassination of individual oppressors ceases to be an act of individual terror. If, we shall say, a revolutionist bombed General Franco and his staff into the air, it would hardly evoke moral indignation even from the democratic eunuchs. Under the conditions of civil war a similar act would be politically completely expedient. Thus, even in the sharpest question—murder of man by man—moral absolutes

prove futile. Moral evaluations, together with political ones, flow from the inner needs of struggle.

The liberation of the workers can come only through the workers themselves. There is, therefore, no greater crime than deceiving the masses, palming off defeats as victories, friends as enemies, bribing workers' leaders, fabricating legends, staging false trials, in a word, doing what the Stalinists do. These means can serve only one end: lengthening the domination of a clique already condemned by history. But they cannot serve to liberate the masses. That is why the Fourth International wages a life and death struggle against Stalinism.

The masses, of course, are not at all impeccable. Idealization of the masses is foreign to us. We have seen them under different conditions, at different stages and in addition in the biggest political shocks. We have observed their strong and weak sides. Their strong side—resoluteness, self-sacrifice, heroism—has always found its clearest expression in times of revolutionary upsurge. During this period the Bolsheviks headed the masses. Afterward a different historical chapter loomed when the weak side of the oppressed came to the forefront: heterogeneity, insufficiency of culture, narrowness of world outlook. The masses tired of the tension, became disillusioned, lost faith in themselves—and cleared the road for the new aristocracy. In this epoch the Bolsheviks (“Trotskyists”) found themselves isolated from the masses. Practically we went through two such big historic cycles: 1897–1905, years of flood tide; 1907–13, years of the ebb; 1917–23, a period of upsurge unprecedented in history; finally, a new period of reaction which has not ended even today. In these immense events the “Trotskyists” learned the rhythm of history, that is, the dialectics of the class struggle. They also learned, it seems, and to a certain degree successfully, how to subordinate their subjective plans and programs to this objective rhythm. They learned not to fall into despair over the fact that the laws of history do not depend upon their individual tastes and are not subordinated to their own moral criteria. They learned to subordinate their individual tastes to the laws of history. They learned not to become frightened by the most powerful enemies if their power is in contradiction to the needs of historical development. They know how to swim against the stream in the deep conviction that the new historic flood will carry them to the other shore. Not all will reach that

shore, many will drown. But to participate in this movement with open eyes and with an intense will—only this can give the highest moral satisfaction to a thinking being!

P.S.—I wrote these lines during those days when my son struggled, unknown to me, with death. I dedicate to his memory this small work which, I hope, would have met with his approval—Leon Sedoff was a genuine revolutionist and despised the Pharisees.

## SCIENCE AND PHILOSOPHY

*The scientific and technical achievements of the Soviet Union in recent years have astounded the world. Trotsky's contribution to these achievements, the contribution of a forethinker, can hardly be exaggerated, though Soviet officialdom has done all it could to make Soviet society, and the world, forget it. After the Political Bureau removed Trotsky from the Commissariat of War in January, 1925, he was appointed director of the Board for Electrotechnical Development and the Committee for Industry and Technology. His duties as head of all Soviet scientific institutions stimulated his interest in the relations between social régimes and scientific thought. He made two notable pronouncements on this theme: the first in 1925 on the occasion of the centennial of the birth of Dmitri Mendeleev, the great discoverer of the periodic table of the elements; and the second in 1926 in an inaugural address at the First All-Russian Congress of the Society of Friends of Radio. There, more than fifteen years before the event, he predicted the release of nuclear energy. (Who of the world's statesmen thought of such things in 1926?!) Finally, in his last big controversy with some of his own "followers," especially with James Burnham, then a prominent figure among American Trotskyists, Trotsky gave a succinct exposition of the basic ideas of dialectical logic, which is reproduced here.*

***Dialectical Materialism and Science***

Every new social order appropriates the cultural heritage of the past not in its totality but only in

from *Fourth International* by Leon Trotsky, February, 1940, pp. 25-28

accordance with its own structure. Thus, medieval society embodied in Christianity many elements of ancient philosophy, subordinating them, however, to the needs of the feudal régime and transforming them into scholasticism, the "handmaiden of theology." Similarly, bourgeois society inherited Christianity among other things, from the Middle Ages, but subjected it either to the Reformation . . . or [to the Counter-Reformation]. During the bourgeois epoch Christianity was brushed aside to the extent that the road had to be cleared for scientific research, at least, within limits required for the development of the productive forces.

Socialist society in its relation to its scientific and cultural inheritance in general holds to a far lesser degree an attitude of indifference or passive acceptance. It can be said: The greater the trust of socialism in sciences devoted to the direct study of nature, all the greater is also its critical distrust of those sciences and pseudosciences which are linked closely to the structure of human society, its economic institutions, its state, laws, ethics, etc. Of course these two spheres are not separated by an impenetrable wall. But it is an indisputable fact that the heritage embodied in those sciences which deal not with human society but with "matter"—in natural sciences at large, and consequently of course in chemistry—is of incomparably greater weight.

The need to know nature is imposed upon men by their need to subordinate nature to themselves. In this sphere any digressions from objective relationships, relationships determined by the properties of matter itself, are corrected by practical experience. This alone seriously guarantees the natural sciences, chemical research in particular, from intentional, unintentional, semideliberate distortions, misinterpretations, and falsifications. Social research however has devoted its efforts primarily toward justifying historically arisen society, so as to preserve it against the attacks of "destructive theories," etc. Herein is rooted the apologetic role of the official social sciences of bourgeois society; and this is the reason why their accomplishments are of little value.

So long as science as a whole remained a "handmaiden of theology," it could produce valuable results only surreptitiously. This was the case in the Middle Ages. It was during the bourgeois régime, as already pointed out, that the natural sciences gained the possibility of wide development.

But social science remained the servant of capitalism. This is also true, to a large extent, of psychology, which links the social and natural sciences; and of philosophy, which systematizes the generalized conclusions of all sciences.

I have said that *official* social science has produced little of value. This is best revealed by the inability of bourgeois science to foresee tomorrow. We have observed this in relation to the first imperialist World War and its consequences. We have seen it again in relation to the October revolution. We now see it in the complete helplessness of official social science in the evaluation of the European situation, the interrelations with America and with the Soviet Union; in its inability to draw any conclusions regarding tomorrow. Yet the significance of science lies precisely in this: To know in order to foresee.

Natural science—and chemistry occupies a most important place in that field—indisputably constitutes the most valuable portion of our inheritance. Your Congress stands under the banner of Mendelejev who was and remains the pride of Russian science.

There is a difference in the degree of foresight and precision achieved in the various sciences. But it is through foresight—passive in some instances, as in astronomy, active, as in chemistry and chemical engineering—that science is able to verify itself and justify its social purpose. An individual scientist may not at all be concerned with the practical application of his research. The wider his scope, the bolder his flight, the greater his freedom in his mental operations from practical daily necessity, the better. But science is not a function of individual scientists; it is a social function. The social evaluation of science, its historical evaluation is determined by its capacity to increase man's power and arm him with the power to foresee events and master nature. Science is knowledge that endows us with power. When [French astronomer Urbain] Leverrier, on the basis of the "eccentricities" in the orbit of Uranus, concluded that there must exist an unknown celestial body "disturbing" the movement of Uranus; when, on the basis of his purely mathematical calculations, he requested the German astronomer Galle to locate a body wandering without a passport in the skies at such and such an address; and when [Johann] Galle focussed his telescope in that direction and discovered the planet called Neptune—at that

moment the celestial mechanics of Newton celebrated a great victory.

This occurred in the autumn of 1846. In the year 1848 revolution swept like a whirlwind through Europe, demonstrating its "disturbing" influence on the movement of peoples and states. In the intervening period, between the discovery of Neptune and the revolution of 1848, two young scholars, Marx and Engels, wrote *The Communist Manifesto*, in which they not only predicted the inevitability of revolutionary events in the near future, but also analyzed in advance their component forces, the logic of their movement—up to the inevitable victory of the proletariat and the establishment of the dictatorship of the proletariat. It would not at all be superfluous to juxtapose this prognosis with the prophecies\* of the official social science of the Hohenzollerns, the Romanovs, Louis Philippe, and others in 1848.

In 1869, Mendeleev on the basis of his researches and reflection upon atomic weight established his periodic law of the elements. To the atomic weight, as a more stable criterion, Mendeleev linked a series of other properties and traits, arranged the elements in a definite order, and then through this order revealed the existence of a certain disorder, namely, the absence of certain elements. These unknown elements, or chemical units, as Mendeleev once called them, should in accordance with the logic of this "law" occupy specific vacant places in that order. Here with the authoritative gesture of a research worker confident in himself, Mendeleev knocked at one of nature's hitherto closed doors, and from within a voice answered: "Present!" Actually, three voices responded simultaneously, for in the places indicated by Mendeleev there were discovered three new elements, later called gallium, scandium, and germanium.

A marvellous triumph for thought, analytical and synthesizing! In his *The Principles of Chemistry* Mendeleev vividly characterizes scientific creative effort, comparing it with the projection of a bridge across a ravine: For this it is unnecessary to descend into the ravine and to fix supports at the bottom; it is only necessary to erect a foundation on one side and then project an accurately designed

\*The "prophecies of the official social science of the Hohenzollerns, the Romanovs," etc., were that these monarchies and bourgeois society would endure indefinitely.



arc which will then find support on the opposite side. Similarly with scientific thought. It can base itself only on the granite foundation of experience, but its generalizations, like the arc of a bridge, can rise above the world of facts in order later, at another point calculated in advance, to meet the latter. At that moment of scientific thought when a generalization turns into prediction—and prediction is triumphantly verified through experience—at that moment, human thought is invariably supplied with its proudest and most justified satisfaction! Thus it was in chemistry with the discovery of new elements on the basis of the periodic law.

Mendeleyev's prediction, which later produced a profound impression upon Friedrich Engels, was made in the year 1871, the year, that is, of the great tragedy of the Paris Commune in France. The attitude of our great chemist to this event can be gathered from his general hostility towards "Latinism," its violence and revolutions. Like all official thinkers of the ruling classes, not only in Russia and in Europe but throughout the world, Mendeleyev did not ask himself: What is the real driving force behind the Paris Commune? He did not see that the new class growing from the womb of old society was here exercising in its movement as "disturbing" an influence upon the orbit of old society as the unknown planet did upon the orbit of Uranus. But a German exile, Karl Marx, did at that time analyze the causes and inner mechanics of the Paris Commune and the rays of his scientific torch penetrated to the events of our own *October* and shed light upon them.

We have long found it unnecessary to resort to a more mysterious substance, called phlogiston, to explain chemical reactions. As a matter of fact, phlogiston served merely as a generalization for the ignorance of alchemists. In the sphere of physiology, the time has long since passed when a need was felt for a special mystical substance, called the vital force and which was the phlogiston of living matter. *In principle* we now possess sufficient knowledge of physics and chemistry to explain physiological phenomena. In the sphere of the phenomena of consciousness we are no longer in need of a substance labelled the soul, which in reactionary philosophy performs the rôle of the phlogiston of psycho-physical phenomena. Psychology is for us in the *final analysis* reducible to physiology, and the latter—to chemistry, mechanics, and physics. In the sphere of social science

this [i.e. the soul] is far more viable than the theory of phlogiston—this “phlogiston” appears in different costumes, now disguised as “historical mission,” now disguised as changeless “national character,” now as the disembodied idea of “progress,” now as the so-called “critical thought,” and so on *ad infinitum*. In all these cases, an attempt has been made to discover some supersocial substance to explain social phenomena. It is hardly necessary to repeat that these ideal substances are only ingenious disguises for sociological ignorance. Marxism has rejected superhistorical essences, just as physiology has renounced the vital force, or chemistry—phlogiston.

The essence of Marxism consists in this, that it approaches society concretely as a subject for objective research and analyzes human history as one would examine a colossal laboratory record. Marxism appraises ideology as a subordinate integral element of the material social structure. Marxism examines the class structure of society as a historically conditioned form of the development of the productive forces; Marxism deduces from the productive forces of society the interrelations between human society and surrounding nature—these, in turn are seen as determined at each historical stage by man’s technology, his instruments and weapons, his capacities and methods for struggle with nature. Precisely this objective approach arms Marxism with the insuperable power of historical foresight.

Consider the history of Marxism even if only on the national scale of Russia, and follow it not from the standpoint of your own political sympathies or antipathies but from the standpoint of Mendelejev’s definition of science: “To know so that we may foresee and act.” The initial period of the history of Marxism on Russian soil is the history of a struggle for correct socio-historical prognosis (foresight) as against the official governmental and official oppositional viewpoints. In the early eighties official ideology existed as the trinity of absolutism, orthodoxy, and nationalism; liberalism daydreamed about a Zemstvo Assembly [see p. 44], i.e., a semi-constitutional monarchy, while the Narodniki\* combined feeble socialistic fantasies with eco-

\*Narodniki, (from *narod*, meaning people), was a general name for Russian revolutionists with socialist ideals who looked to the peasants rather than to the industrial workers to take the lead in overthrowing Tsarism and transforming Russia.

nomie reaction. At that time Marxist thought predicted not only the inevitable and progressive work of capitalism but also the appearance of the proletariat in an independent historic role—the proletariat assuming leadership in the struggle of the popular masses; the proletarian dictatorship leading the peasantry behind it.

There is no less a difference between the Marxist method of social analysis and the theories against which it fought than there is between Mendeleev's periodic law with all its latest modifications on the one side and the mumbo-jumbo of the alchemists on the other.

"The cause of chemical reaction lies in the physical and mechanical properties of compounds." The formula of Mendeleev is completely materialist in character. Chemistry, instead of resorting to some new supermechanical and superphysical force to explain its phenomena, reduces chemical processes to the mechanical and physical properties of its compounds.

Biology and physiology stand in a similar relationship to chemistry. Scientific, that is, materialist physiology does not require a special superchemical vital force (referred to by vitalists and neovitalists) to explain phenomena in its own field. Physiological processes are reducible in the last analysis to chemical ones, just as the latter—to mechanics and physics.

Psychology is similarly related to physiology. It is not for nothing that physiology is called the applied chemistry of living organisms. Just as there exists no special physiological force, so it is equally true that scientific, i.e., materialist psychology has no need of a mystic force—soul—to explain phenomena in its field, but finds them reducible in the final analysis to physiological phenomena. This is the school of the academician Pavlov; it views the so-called soul as a complex system of conditioned reflexes, completely rooted in the elementary physiological reflexes, which in their turn find, through the potent stratum of chemistry, their root in the subsoil of mechanics and physics.

The same can be said of sociology also. To explain social phenomena it is not necessary to adduce some kind of eternal source or to search for origin in another world. Society is a product of the development of primary matter, like the earth's crust or the amoeba. In this manner, scien-

tific thought with its methods cuts like a diamond drill through the complex phenomena of social ideology to the bedrock of matter, its component elements, its atoms with their physical and mechanical properties.

Naturally, this does not mean that every phenomenon of chemistry can be reduced *directly* to mechanics; and even less so, that every social phenomenon is directly reducible to physiology and then—to laws of chemistry and mechanics. It may be said that this is the uppermost aim of science. But the method of gradual and continuous approach toward this aim is entirely different. Chemistry has its special approach to matter, its own methods of research, its own laws. If without the knowledge that chemical reactions are reducible *in the final analysis* to mechanical properties of elementary particles of matter, there is not and cannot be a finished philosophy linking all phenomena into a single system, so, on the other hand, the mere knowledge that chemical phenomena are themselves rooted in mechanics and physics does not provide in itself the key to even one chemical reaction. Chemistry has *its own keys*. One can choose among them only from experience and generalization, through the chemical laboratory, chemical hypothesis and chemical theory.

This applies to all sciences. Chemistry is a powerful pillar of physiology with which it is directly connected through organic and physiological chemistry. But chemistry is no substitute for physiology. Each science rests on the laws of other sciences only in the so-called *final instance*. But at the same time, the separation of the sciences from one another is determined precisely by the fact that each science covers a particular field of phenomena, i.e., a field of such complex combinations of elementary phenomena and laws as requires a special approach, special research technique, special hypotheses and methods.

This idea seems so indisputable in relation to the sciences of mathematics and natural history that to harp on it would be like forcing an open door. It is otherwise with social science. Outstanding trained naturalists, who in the field, say, of physiology would not proceed a step without taking into account rigidly tested experiments, verification, hypothetical generalization, latest verification, and so forth, approach social phenomena far more boldly, with the boldness of ignorance, as if tacitly acknowledging that in this extremely complex sphere of phenomena it is sufficient

merely to have vague propensities, day-to-day observations, family traditions, and even a stock of current social prejudices.

Human society has not developed in accordance with a prearranged plan or system, but empirically, in the course of a long, complicated, and contradictory struggle of the human species for existence, and, later, for greater and greater mastery over nature itself. The ideology of human society took shape as a reflection of and an instrument in this process—belated, desultory, piecemeal, in the form, so to speak, of conditioned social reflexes, which are in the final analysis reducible to the necessities of the struggle of collective man against nature. To arrive at judgments upon laws governing the development of human society on the basis of their ideological reflection, on the basis of so-called public opinion, etc., is almost equivalent to forming a judgment upon the anatomical and physiological structure of a lizard on the basis of its sensations as it lies basking in the sun or crawls out of a damp crevice. True enough, there is a very direct bond between the sensations of a lizard and the latter's organic structure. But this bond is a subject for research by means of objective methods. There is, however, a tendency to become most subjective in judging the structure and laws that govern the development of human society in terms of the so-called consciousness of society, that is, its contradictory, disjointed, conservative, unverified ideology. Of course, one can become insulted and raise the objection that social ideology is, after all, at a higher elevation than the sensations of a lizard. It all depends on one's approach to the question. In my opinion there is nothing paradoxical in the statement that from the sensations of a lizard one could, if it were possible to bring them into proper focus, draw much more direct conclusions about the structure and function of its organs than one can draw about the structure of society and its dynamics from such ideological reflections as, for example, religious creeds, which once occupied and still continue to occupy so prominent a place in the life of human society; or from the contradictory and hypocritical codes of official morality; or, finally, from idealistic philosophic conceptions which, in order to explain complex organic processes occurring in man, seek to place responsibility upon a nebulous, subtle essence called the soul and endowed with the qualities of impenetrability and eternity.

Mendeleyev's reaction to attempts at social reorganization was one of hostility and even scorn. He maintained that from time immemorial nothing had yet come from such attempts. Mendeleyev instead expected a happier future to arise through the positive sciences and above all chemistry, which would reveal all of nature's secrets.

It is of interest to juxtapose this point of view to that of our remarkable physiologist Pavlov, who is of the opinion that wars and revolutions are something accidental, arising from people's ignorance, and who conjectures that only a profound knowledge of "human nature" will eliminate both wars and revolutions.

Darwin can be placed in the same category. This highly gifted biologist demonstrated how an accumulation of small *quantitative* variations produces an entirely new biologic "quality" and by that token he explained the origin of species. Without being aware of it, he thus applied the method of dialectic materialism to the sphere of organic life. Darwin, although unenlightened in philosophy, brilliantly applied Hegel's law of transition from quantity into quality. At the same time we very often discover in this same Darwin, not to mention the Darwinians, utterly naive and unscientific attempts at applying the conclusions of biology to society. To interpret competition as a "variety" of the biological struggle for existence is like seeing only mechanics in the physiology of mating.

In each of these cases we observe one and the same fundamental mistake: the methods and achievements of chemistry or physiology, in violation of all scientific boundaries, are transplanted into [the study of] human society. A naturalist would hardly carry over without modification the laws governing the movement of atoms into the movement of molecules, which are governed by other laws. But many naturalists have an entirely different attitude towards sociology. The historically conditioned structure of society is very often disregarded by them in favor of the anatomical structure of things, the physiological structure of reflexes, the biological struggle for existence. Of course, the life of human society, interlaced with material conditions, surrounded on all sides by chemical processes, itself represents in the final analysis a combination of chemical processes. On the other hand society is constituted of human beings, whose psychological mechanism is resolvable into a system of reflexes. But social life is neither a chemical nor a

physiological process but a social process which is shaped according to its own laws, and these in turn are subject to an objective sociological analysis whose aims should be: To acquire the ability to foresee and to master the fate of society. . . .

### *Radioactivity and Materialism*

It is the task of science and technique to make matter subject to man, together with space and time, which are inseparable from matter. True, there are certain idealist books—not of a clerical character, but philosophical ones—wherein you can read that time and space are categories of our minds, that they result from the requirements of our thinking and that nothing actually corresponds to them in reality. But it is difficult to agree with this view. If any idealist philosopher, instead of arriving in time to catch the nine P.M. train, should turn up two minutes late, he would see the back end of the departing train and would be convinced by his own eyes that time and space are inseparable from material reality. The task is to diminish this space, to overcome it, to economize time, to prolong human life, to register past time, to raise life to a higher level and enrich it. This is the reason for the struggle with space and time, at the basis of which lies the struggle to subject matter to man—matter, which constitutes the foundation not only of everything that really exists, but also of all imagination. Our struggle for scientific achievements is itself only a very complex system of reflexes, i.e., of phenomena of a physiological order, which have grown up on an anatomical basis that in its turn has developed from the inorganic world, from chemistry and physics. Every science is an accumulation of knowledge, based on experience relating to matter, to its properties, of generalized understanding of how to subject this matter to the interests and needs of man.

The more science learns about matter, however, the more “unexpected” properties of matter it discovers, the more zealously does the decadent philosophical thought of

from *Radio, Science, Technique & Society* by Leon Trotsky, pp. 6-9

the bourgeoisie try to use the new properties or manifestations of matter to show that matter is not matter. The progress of natural science in the mastering of matter is paralleled by a philosophical struggle against materialism. Certain philosophers and even some scientists have tried to utilize the phenomena of radioactivity for the purpose of struggle against materialism: there used to be atoms, elements, which were the basis of matter and of materialist thinking, but now this atom has come to pieces in our hands, has broken up into electrons, and at the very beginning of the popularity of the electronic theory a struggle has even flared up in our party around the question whether the electrons testify *for* or *against* materialism. Whoever is interested in these questions will read with great profit to himself Vladimir Ilyich's [Lenin's] work on *Materialism and Empiro-Criticism*. In fact neither the "mysterious" phenomena of radioactivity nor the no less "mysterious" phenomena of wireless transmission of electromagnetic waves do the slightest damage to materialism.

The phenomena of *radioactivity*, which have led to the necessity of thinking of the atom as a complex system of still utterly "unimaginable" particles, can be directed against materialism only by a desperate specimen of a vulgar materialist who recognizes as matter only that which he can feel with his bare hands. But this is sensualism, not materialism. Both the molecule, the ultimate chemical particle, and the atom, the ultimate physical particle, are inaccessible to our sight and touch. But our organs of sense, though they are the instruments with which knowledge begins, are not at all, however, the last resort of knowledge. The human eye and the human ear are very primitive pieces of apparatus, inadequate to reach even the basic elements of physical and chemical phenomena. To the extent that in our thinking about reality we are guided merely by the everyday findings of our sense organs it is hard for us to imagine that the atom is a complex system, that it has a nucleus, that around this nucleus electrons move, and that from this there result the phenomena of radioactivity. Our imagination in general accustoms itself only with difficulty to new conquests of cognition. When Copernicus in the sixteenth century discovered that it was not the sun that moved round the earth but the earth round the sun, this seemed fantastic, and conservative imagination still to this day finds it hard to adjust itself to this fact. We observe



this in the case of illiterate people and in each fresh generation of schoolchildren. Yet we, people of some education, despite the fact that it appears to us, too, that the sun moves round the earth, nevertheless do not doubt that in reality things happen the other way round, for this is confirmed by extensive observation of astronomical phenomena. The human brain is a product of the development of matter, and at the same time is an instrument for the cognition of this matter; gradually it adjusts itself to its function, tries to overcome its limitations, creates ever new scientific methods, imagines ever more complex and exact instruments, checks its work again and yet again, step by step penetrates into previously unknown depths, changes our conception of matter, without, though, ever breaking away from this basis of all that exists.

Radioactivity, as we have already mentioned, in no way constitutes a threat to materialism, and it is at the same time a magnificent triumph of dialectics. Until recently scientists supposed that there were in the world about ninety elements, which were beyond analysis and could not be transformed one into another—so to speak, a carpet for the universe woven from ninety threads of different qualities and colors. Such a notion contradicted materialist dialectics, which speaks of the unity of matter and, what is even more important, of the transformability of the elements of matter. Our great chemist, Mendelejev, to the end of his life, was unwilling to reconcile himself to the idea that one element could be transformed into another; he firmly believed in the stability of these "individualities," although the phenomena of radioactivity were already known to him. But nowadays no scientist believes in the unchangeability of the elements. Using the phenomena of radioactivity, chemists have succeeded in carrying out a direct "execution" of eight or nine elements and along with this, the execution of the last remnants of metaphysics in materialism, for now the transformability of one chemical element into another has been proved experimentally. The phenomena of radioactivity have thus led to a supreme triumph of dialectical thought.

The phenomena of radio technique are based on wireless transmission of electromagnetic waves. *Wireless* does not at all mean *non-material* transmission. Light does not come only from lamps but also from the sun, being also transmitted without the aid of wires. We are fully accustomed to the wireless transmission of light over quite re-

spectable distances. We are greatly surprised though, when we begin to transmit sound over a very much shorter distance, with the aid of those very same electromagnetic waves which underlie the phenomena of light. All these are phenomena of matter, material processes—waves and whirlwinds—in space and time. The new discoveries and their technical applications show only that matter is a great deal more heterogeneous and richer in potentialities than we had thought hitherto. But, as before, nothing is made out of nothing.

The most outstanding of our scientists say that science, and physics in particular, has in recent times arrived at a turning point. Not so very long ago, they say, we still approached matter, as it were, "phenomenally," i.e., from the angle of observing its manifestations, but now we are beginning to penetrate ever deeper into the very interior of matter, to learn its structure, and we shall soon be able to regulate it "from within." A good physicist would, of course, be able to talk about this better than I can. The phenomena of radioactivity are leading us to the problem of releasing intra-atomic energy. The atom contains within itself a mighty hidden energy, and the greatest task of physics consists in pumping out this energy, pulling out the cork so that this hidden energy may burst forth in a fountain. Then the possibility will be opened up of replacing coal and oil by atomic energy, which will also become the basic motive power. This is not at all a hopeless task. And what prospects it opens before us! This alone gives us the right to declare that scientific and technical thought is approaching a great turning point, that the revolutionary epoch in the development of human society will be accompanied by a revolutionary epoch in the sphere of the cognition of matter and the mastering of it. . . . Unbounded technical possibilities will open out before liberated mankind.

### *The ABC of Materialist Dialectics*

The dialectic is neither fiction nor mysticism, but a science of the forms of our thinking insofar as it is not limited to the daily problems of life but at-

from *In Defense of Marxism* by Leon Trotsky, pp. 49-52

tempts to arrive at an understanding of more complicated and drawn-out processes. The dialectic and formal logic bear a relationship similar to that between higher and lower mathematics.

I will here attempt to sketch the substance of the problem in a very concise form. The Aristotelian logic of the simple syllogism starts from the proposition that "A" is equal to "A." This postulate is accepted as an axiom for a multitude of practical human actions and elementary generalizations. But in reality "A" is not equal to "A." This is easy to prove if we observe these two letters under a lens—they are quite different from each other. But, one can object, the question is not of the size or the form of the letters, since they are only symbols for equal quantities, for instance, a pound of sugar. The objection is beside the point; in reality a pound of sugar is never equal to a pound of sugar—a more delicate scale always discloses a difference. Again one can object: but a pound of sugar is equal to itself. Neither is this true—all bodies change uninterruptedly in size, weight, color, etc. They are never equal to themselves. A sophist will respond that a pound of sugar is equal to itself "at any given moment." Aside from the extremely dubious practical value of this "axiom," it does not withstand theoretical criticism either. How should we really conceive the word "moment"? If it is an infinitesimal interval of time, then a pound of sugar is subjected during the course of that "moment" to inevitable changes. Or is the "moment" a purely mathematical abstraction, that is, a zero of time? But everything exists in time; and existence itself is an uninterrupted process of transformation; time is consequently a fundamental element of existence. Thus the axiom "'A' is equal to 'A'" signifies that a thing is equal to itself if it does not change, that is, if it does not exist.

At first glance it could seem that these "subtleties" are useless. In reality they are of decisive significance. The axiom "'A' is equal to 'A'" appears on one hand to be the point of departure for all our knowledge, on the other hand the point of departure for all the errors in our knowledge. To make use of the axiom "'A' is equal to 'A'" with impunity is possible only within certain *limits*. When quantitative changes in "A" are negligible for the task at hand, then we can presume that "A" is equal to "A." This is, for example, the manner in which a buyer and a seller consider

a pound of sugar. We consider the temperature of the sun likewise. Until recently we considered the buying power of the dollar in the same way. But quantitative changes beyond certain limits become converted into qualitative ones. A pound of sugar subjected to the action of water or kerosene ceases to be a pound of sugar. A dollar in the embrace of a president ceases to be a dollar. To determine at the right moment the critical point where quantity changes into quality is one of the most important and difficult tasks in all the spheres of knowledge, including sociology.

Every worker knows that it is impossible to make two completely equal objects. In the elaboration of bearing brass into cone bearings, a certain deviation is allowed for the cones, which should not, however, go beyond certain limits (this is called "tolerance"). By observing the norms of tolerance, the cones are considered as being equal. ("A" is equal to "A.") When the tolerance is exceeded the quantity goes over into quality; in other words, the cone bearings become inferior or completely worthless.

Our scientific thinking is only a part of our general practice including techniques. For concepts there also exists "tolerance," which is established not by formal logic issuing from the axiom "'A' is equal to 'A,'" but by dialectical logic issuing from the axiom that everything is always changing. "Common sense" is characterized by the fact that it systematically exceeds dialectical "tolerance."

Vulgar thought operates with such concepts as capitalism, morals, freedom, workers' state, etc. as fixed abstractions, presuming that capitalism is equal to capitalism, morals are equal to morals, etc. Dialectical thinking analyzes all things and phenomena in their continuous change, while determining in the material conditions of those changes that critical limit beyond which "A" ceases to be "A," a workers' state ceases to be a workers' state.

The fundamental flaw of vulgar thought lies in the fact that it wishes to content itself with motionless imprints of a reality which consists of eternal motion. Dialectical thinking gives to concepts, by means of closer approximations, corrections, concretizations, a richness of content and flexibility; I would even say a succulence which, to a certain extent, brings them close to living phenomena. Not capitalism in general, but a given capitalism at a given stage of development. Not a workers' state in general, but a given workers' state in a backward country in an imperialist

encirclement, etc.

Dialectical thinking is related to vulgar thinking in the same way that a motion picture is related to a still photograph. The motion picture does not outlaw the still photograph but combines a series of them according to the laws of motion. Dialectics does not deny the syllogism, but teaches us to combine syllogisms in such a way as to bring our understanding closer to the eternally changing reality. Hegel in his [*Science of*] *Logic* [1812-16] established a series of laws: change of quantity into quality, development through contradictions, conflict of content and form, interruption of continuity, change of possibility into inevitability, etc., which are just as important for theoretical thought as is the simple syllogism for more elementary tasks.

Hegel wrote before Darwin and before Marx. Thanks to the powerful impulse given to thought by the French Revolution, Hegel anticipated the general movement of science. But because it was only an *anticipation*, although by a genius, it received from Hegel an idealistic character. Hegel operated with ideological shadows as the ultimate reality. Marx demonstrated that the movement of these ideological shadows reflected nothing but the movement of material bodies.

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

Darwinism, which explained the evolution of species through quantitative transformations passing into qualitative, was the highest triumph of the dialectic in the whole field of organic matter. Another great triumph was the discovery of the table of atomic weights of chemical elements and, further, the transformation of one element into another.

With these transformations (species, elements, etc.) is closely linked the question of classification, equally important in the natural as in the social sciences. [The Swedish naturalist Carolus] Linnaeus' system (eighteenth century), utilizing as its starting point the immutability of species, was limited to the description and classification of plants according to their external characteristics. The infantile period of botany is analogous to the infantile period of logic, since the forms of our thought develop like everything that lives. Only decisive repudiation of the idea of fixed species, only the study of the history of the evolution of plants and their anatomy prepared the basis for a really scientific classification.

Marx, who in distinction from Darwin was a conscious dialectician, discovered a basis for the scientific classification of human societies in the development of their productive forces and the structure of the relations of ownership which constitute the anatomy of society. Marxism substituted for the vulgar descriptive classification of societies and states, which even up to now still flourishes in the universities, a materialistic dialectical classification. Only through using the method of Marx is it possible correctly to determine both the concept of a workers' state and the moment of its downfall.

All this, as we see, contains nothing "metaphysical" or "scholastic," as conceited ignorance affirms. Dialectic logic expresses the laws of motion in contemporary scientific thought. The struggle against materialist dialectics on the contrary expresses a distant past, conservatism of the petty bourgeoisie, the self-conceit of university routinists and ... a spark of hope for an afterlife.

## TROTSKY'S TESTAMENT

*Trotsky wrote his Testament in February-March, 1940, near the close of his life. Natalya Ivanovna, his wife, who had for almost forty years shared his triumphs and sufferings, was to survive him by over twenty-one years; she died in January, 1962. Just before her death she sent a telegram to the Soviet Government demanding the full and unequivocal rehabilitation of Trotsky and all the other victims of Stalin's slanders. The following is Trotsky's Testament.*

My high (and still rising) blood pressure is deceiving those near me about my actual condition. I am active and able to work but the outcome is evidently near. These lines will be made public after my death.

I have no need to refute here once again the stupid and vile slander of Stalin and his agents: there is not a single spot on my revolutionary honor. I have never entered, either directly or indirectly, into any behind-the-scenes agreements or even negotiations with the enemies of the working class. Thousands of Stalin's opponents have fallen victims of similar false accusations. The new revolutionary generations will rehabilitate their political honor and deal with the Kremlin executioners according to their deserts.

I thank warmly the friends who remained loyal to me through the most difficult hours of my life. I do not name anyone in particular because I cannot name them all.

However, I consider myself justified in making an exception in the case of my companion, Natalia Ivanovna Sedova. In addition to the happiness of being a fighter for the cause of socialism, fate gave me the happiness of being her husband. During the almost forty years of our life together she remained an inexhaustible source of love, magnanimity, and tenderness. She underwent great sufferings,

from *Trotsky's Diary in Exile* by Leon Trotsky, pp. 165-167

especially in the last period of our lives. But I find some comfort in the fact that she also knew days of happiness.

For forty-three years of my conscious life I have remained a revolutionist; for forty-two of them I have fought under the banner of Marxism. If I had to begin all over again I would of course try to avoid this or that mistake, but the main course of my life would remain unchanged. I shall die a proletarian revolutionist, a Marxist, a dialectical materialist, and, consequently, an irreconcilable atheist. My faith in the communist future of mankind is not less ardent, indeed it is firmer today than it was in the days of my youth.

Natasha has just come up to the window from the courtyard and opened it wider so that the air may enter more freely into my room. I can see the bright green strip of grass beneath the wall, and the clear blue sky above the wall, and sunlight everywhere. Life is beautiful. Let the future generations cleanse it of all evil, oppression, and violence, and enjoy it to the full.

L. TROTSKY

February 27, 1940  
Coyoacán.

### TESTAMENT

All the possessions remaining after my death, all my literary rights (income from my books, articles, etc.) are to be placed at the disposal of my wife, Natalia Ivanovna Sedova. February 27, 1940. L. Trotsky.

In case we both die [*The rest of the page is blank.*]

March 3, 1940

The nature of my illness (high and rising blood pressure) is such—as I understand it—that the end must come suddenly, most likely—again, this is my personal hypothesis—through a brain hemorrhage. This is the best possible end I can wish for. It is possible, however, that I am mistaken (I have no desire to read special books on this subject and the physicians naturally will not tell the truth). If the sclerosis should assume a protracted character and I should be threatened with a long drawn-out invalidism (at present I feel, on the contrary, rather a surge of spiritual energy because of the high blood pressure, but this will not last



long), then I reserve the right to determine for myself the time of my death. The "suicide" (if such a term is appropriate in this connection) will not in any respect be an expression of an outburst of despair or hopelessness. Natasha and I said more than once that one may arrive at such a physical condition that it would be better to cut short one's own life or, more correctly, the too slow process of dying. . . . But whatever may be the circumstances of my death I shall die with unshaken faith in the Communist future. The faith in man and in his future gives me even now such power of resistance as cannot be given by any religion.

L. TR

## HIS VISION OF THE FUTURE

*It was on a note of deep confidence in "man and his future" that Trotsky ended the Testament. It seems fitting to conclude this anthology of his writings with an image of man's future that Trotsky drew in 1932, in the fourth year of his last exile, when he was allowed to go to Denmark for a few days in order to deliver a lecture on the Russian Revolution. This image of man's future contains the quintessence of the hope that led Trotsky through his life, struggle, and martyrdom.*

Capitalism has outlived itself as a world system. It has ceased to fulfill its essential function, the raising of the level of human power and human wealth. Humanity cannot remain stagnant at the level which it has reached. Only a powerful increase in productive force and a sound, planned, that is, socialist organisation of production and distribution can assure humanity—all humanity—of a decent standard of life and at the same time give it the precious feeling of freedom with respect to its own economy. Freedom in two senses—first of all, man will no longer be compelled to devote the greater part of his life to physical toil. Second, he will no longer be dependent on the laws of the market, that is, on the blind and obscure forces which work behind his back. He will build his economy freely, according to plan, with compass in hand. This time it is a question of subjecting the anatomy of society to the X ray through and through, of disclosing all its secrets and subjecting all its functions to the reason and the will of collective humanity. In this sense, Socialism must become a new step in the historical advance of mankind. Before our ancestor, who first armed himself with a stone axe, the whole of *nature* represented a conspiracy of secret and hostile forces. Since then, the natural sciences hand

from *The Russian Revolution* by Leon Trotsky, pp. 15-16

in hand with practical technology have illuminated nature down to its most secret depths. By means of electrical energy, the physicist passes judgment on the nucleus of the atom. The hour is not far when science will easily solve the task of the alchemists, and turn manure into gold and gold into manure. Where the demons and furies of nature once raged, now reigns ever more courageously the industrious will of man.

But while he wrestled victoriously with nature, man built up his relations to other men blindly, almost like the bee or the ant. Slowly and very haltingly he approached the problems of human society. The Reformation represented the first victory of bourgeois individualism and rationalism in a domain which had been ruled by dead tradition. From the Church, critical thought went on to the State. Born in the struggle with absolutism and the Medieval estates, the doctrine of the sovereignty of the people and of the rights of man and the citizen grew stronger. Thus arose the system of parliamentarism. Critical thought penetrated into the domain of government administration. The political rationalism of democracy was the highest achievement of the revolutionary bourgeoisie.

But between nature and the State stands economic life. Technical science liberated man from the tyranny of the old elements—earth, water, fire, and air—only to subject him to its own tyranny. Men ceased to be a slave to nature only to become a slave to the machine, and, still worse, a slave to supply and demand. The present world crisis testifies in especially tragic fashion how man, who dives to the bottom of the ocean, who rises up to the stratosphere, who converses on invisible waves with the Antipodes, how this proud and daring ruler of nature remains a slave to the blind forces of his own economy. The historical task of our epoch consists in replacing the uncontrolled play of the market by rational planning, in disciplining the forces of production, compelling them to work together in harmony and obediently serve the needs of mankind. Only on this new social basis will man be able to stretch his weary limbs and—every man and every woman, not only a selected few—become a citizen with full power in the realm of thought.

But this is not yet the end of the road. No, it is only the beginning. Man calls himself the crown of creation. He has a certain right to that claim. But who has asserted

that present-day man is the last and highest representative of the species *Homo sapiens*? No, physically as well as spiritually he is very far from perfection, prematurely born biologically, with feeble thought, and has not produced any new organic equilibrium.

It is true that humanity has more than once brought forth giants of thought and action who tower over their contemporaries like summits in a chain of mountains. The human race has a right to be proud of its Aristotle, Shakespeare, Darwin, Beethoven, Goethe, Marx, Edison, and Lenin. But why are they so rare? Above all, because almost without exception, they came out of the upper and middle classes. Apart from rare exceptions, the sparks of genius in the suppressed depths of the people are choked before they can burst into flame. But also because the processes of creating, developing, and educating a human being have been and remain essentially a matter of chance, not illuminated by theory and practice, not subjected to consciousness and will.

Anthropology, biology, physiology, and psychology have accumulated mountains of material to raise up before mankind in their full scope the tasks of perfecting and developing body and spirit. Psychoanalysis, with the inspired hand of Sigmund Freud, has lifted the cover of the well which is poetically called the "soul." And what has been revealed? Our conscious thought is only a small part of the work of the dark psychic forces. Learned divers descend to the bottom of the ocean and there take photographs of mysterious fishes. Human thought, descending to the bottom of its own psychic sources, must shed light on the most mysterious driving forces of the soul and subject them to reason and to will.

Once he has done with the anarchic forces of his own society man will set to work on himself, in the pestle and the retort of the chemist. For the first time mankind will regard itself as raw material, or at best as a physical and psychic semi-finished product. Socialism will mean a leap from the realm of necessity into the realm of freedom in this sense also, that the man of today, with all his contradictions and lack of harmony, will open the road for a new and happier race.

## FOR FURTHER READINGS OF TROTSKY'S WORKS

*(p) following a title indicates that the book is available as a paperback.*

**THE HISTORY OF THE RUSSIAN REVOLUTION.** Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1957. Trotsky's masterwork narrates and explains the triumph of the Bolsheviks in 1917.

**MY LIFE.** New York: Grosset & Dunlap, 1960. (p) Memoirs, written in 1929.

**THE REVOLUTION BETRAYED.** New York: Pioneer Publishers, 1957. (p) Analysis of the developments in the Soviet Union after Lenin's death and the causes of Stalinism.

**THE THIRD INTERNATIONAL AFTER LENIN.** New York: Pioneer Publishers, 1957. (p) Trotsky's principal polemic against Stalin's conception of "socialism in one country."

**STALIN.** New York: Grosset & Dunlap, 1958. (p) Trotsky's last literary work, the unfinished biography of his mortal enemy.

**THE PERMANENT REVOLUTION.** New York: Pioneer Publishers, 1962. (p) Exposition of Trotsky's most important contribution to revolutionary theory.

**LITERATURE AND REVOLUTION.** New York: Russell & Russell, 1957. (p) In examining the effects of the revolutionary upheaval on Russian literature, Trotsky illuminates the problem of the relations between art and politics in our epoch.

**LEON TROTSKY PRESENTS THE LIVING THOUGHTS OF KARL MARX.** Greenwich (Conn.): Fawcett Publications, 1963. (p) This essay summarizes the fundamentals of Marx's

economic teachings and applies them to the crisis-torn capitalist America of the 1930's.

**IN DEFENSE OF MARXISM.** New York: Pioneer Publishers, 1963. (p) In these articles, written at the beginning of the Second World War, Trotsky explained why he still considered the Soviet Union as a workers' state that should be defended against imperialist attack.

**THE CASE OF LEON TROTSKY.** New York: Harper & Bros., 1937. The record of Trotsky's testimony before the Dewey Commission of Inquiry in 1937 where he discussed many issues of Soviet history in connection with the Moscow Trial frameups.

The only full-scale Life of Trotsky available is the trilogy by Isaac Deutscher: **THE PROPHET ARMED, THE PROPHET UNARMED** and **THE PROPHET OUTCAST**, published by Oxford University Press, New York.

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**This collection of writings by one of the towering political figures of the twentieth century is designed to give the reader a penetrating insight into the mind and activities of Leon Trotsky—as a man, philosopher, theorist, master of insurrection, writer, thinker, visionary, and inspirer of international communism.**

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