

# SOVIET POLICY AND ITS CRITICS

By

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## FOREWORD

The ordinary reader of newspapers cannot fail to note a heightened interest in Soviet affairs, together with an increase in the activities of hostile critics of the Soviet Union. Hostile criticism of developments in Russia, since the Bolshevik revolution twenty-one years ago, has served the political aims of the reactionary forces in the world, and has therefore been encouraged and organised by them. In recent years this criticism has developed as an integral part of the offensive of the three great Fascist powers – Germany, Italy and Japan – who have proclaimed their hatred of the Soviet Union, their contempt of democratic States and their intention to secure a new division of the territory and markets of the world. They and their sympathisers and allies in the democratic countries never lose an opportunity of attacking the Socialist great power which is the main bulwark against Fascist aggression.

A considerable part of recent criticism has revolved around the Moscow trials. The accused in these trials were convicted of murders, wrecking, espionage and plots to overthrow the present Soviet Government by an internal *coup* timed to coincide with an invasion by Fascist powers. It is difficult for the uninformed newspaper reader to see these criminals in the light of their political background: to realise that their crimes are only a culminating point in the struggle which Trotsky and his followers have been waging against the Bolshevik Party since 1903; that the real face of Trotskyism during recent years is revealed not in Trotsky's "Left" criticisms of the Soviet Union and its leaders, but in the far from Left activities of himself and his followers; that these "Left" criticisms have become a screen for crimes against the people of the Soviet Union and the peoples of the world.

The author believes that these "Left" criticisms would not have been accepted or purveyed by any sincere person

in the Labour and progressive movement but for the web of lies that reaction, in its various disguises, has woven around both the Soviet Union and the theories of Marx and Lenin. It is therefore fitting that a Communist, a responsible member of the Party which bases its policy and activity on these theories, should describe the struggle for their application in the fight against the Tsardom and in the building of a Socialist society after the Bolshevik revolution of 1917.

In doing so the author believes that he is not only clearing away lies and misunderstanding, but also exposing the real basis and aim of the hostile criticism of the Soviet Union, and in this way serving the cause of peace and democracy as well as helping the Socialist Movement to find its bearings in this extremely critical period.

J. R. CAMPBELL

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## CHAPTER I

### TROTSKY AGAINST THE BOLSHEVIK PARTY

It is difficult for those who have come into politics in post-war years to appreciate what a wonderful change has come over the face of Russia in the last twenty years. In place of a Tsarist Russia, which was a synonym for darkness, ignorance, and corruption, we have a State whose planned economy has eliminated unemployment; whose economic development is studied by economists everywhere; whose State medical service is the admiration of doctors all over the world; whose educational system has evoked the enthusiasm of all who are interested in progressive educational developments. Whatever points of criticism can still be levelled at conditions in the Soviet Union – and no one is likely to be more critical than the Russian Communists themselves – the fact remains that this constitutes the most sweeping transformation ever experienced in the position of a country.

It must never be forgotten that the great majority of pre-war European Socialist leaders, even of the Left, held firmly to the opinion that such a transformation as has taken place in the Soviet Union was impossible. They based this opinion, not on the desperate situation in which Russia found itself as a result of the World War, but on the backward economic development of the country and the fact that it had still to solve these political problems which Western countries had solved a century or so previously.

Their attitude is outlined in a recent book of the well-known Austrian Social Democratic leader, the late Otto Bauer.

“The Russian Revolution, developing out of the World War, had placed the Russian proletariat, the proletariat of an economically, socially and culturally backward country, at the head of the world proletariat, because this circumstance had allowed it to conquer power and to begin the transformation of capitalist society into socialist before the working class in the most advanced capitalist countries.

“The International Social-Democracy resisted the recognition of this truth. Had not Marx in his principal work written the sentence: ‘The most industrially developed countries show the lesser developed the image of their own

future'? Had not Marx himself taught that the development of capitalism itself creates the pre-requisites for the transformation of capitalist property into socialist property; that these pre-requisites will only mature, and the Social Revolution will only become possible, if 'the monopoly of capital becomes a fetter on the mode of production that has blossomed with and under it'? Could one then believe that the Social Revolution could actually begin in a country, in which the development of capitalism was much less advanced than in Western or Central Europe or in the United States; that the less industrially developed country could show the others the image of their own future? The international Social Democracy therefore regarded the attempt to build a Socialist society in backward Russia as a utopian adventure. It believed that this attempt would come to grief in a short time, It believed that the dictatorship of the proletariat would be at the best a transitory phase of a bourgeois revolution, just as the dictatorship of the Paris pre-proletariat in 1792 had only been a transitory phase of a bourgeois revolution. As, in fact, Russian Bolshevism drew back in 1921 in face of the resistance of the peasantry and of hunger in the towns, again allowing capitalist free trade, offering international capital industrial concessions in the Soviet Union, the International Social Democracy believed that the retrogressive movement to capitalism had again commenced and in a few years the Bolshevik dictatorship would be shown to be a transitory phase in a bourgeois revolution.

"All these views have to-day been refuted by history itself. In the Soviet Union a Socialist society is developing, whose powers of growth, exemplified in the tempo of the development of its production and the productivity of labour, have exceeded the boldest expectations. Only those who are not able to learn from new facts, from facts of a world historical significance, can to-day hold on to the mistaken judgments that were comprehensible and understandable in the years from 1917 to 1921" (Otto Bauer, *Between Two World Wars*, Prague, 1936).

How was such a transformation, declared absurd by the major-



ity of Socialist leaders in Europe, made possible? Here was a country where the great majority of the population consisted of the most poverty-stricken famine-infested peasantry outside India and China; where the masses were sunk in the deepest ignorance and superstition; where the most ferocious national antagonisms divided the people – antagonisms deliberately fanned by the ruling class; where the working class with its revolutionary traditions was a tiny island in the midst of the sea of illiterate peasantry. Could such a country, in the teeth of the most frantic hostility of the capitalist States in the world, advance on the basis of its own resources, and build up a civilised Socialist State?

It is beyond all doubt that this advance is now attaining its objective, but how this was possible is a question of the utmost importance. How could the great mass of small property owners, peasants and traders be brought within the framework of socialism in field, factory and mine?

It must never be forgotten that the Russian Communists were tackling something never before attempted in human history. The revolutions of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries had been bourgeois (*i.e.*, capitalist) revolutions, whose aim had been to smash the absolute monarchy and clear away the remnants of feudalism which were impeding the fullest development of capitalist production and commerce, and to make the capitalist class the ruling class. Once these impediments were removed by the bourgeois revolution, the normal forces of capitalist development did the rest. Before the political revolution the capitalist class were already the masters of industry and commerce. Their economic strength was vastly superior to that of the landlords and the bureaucracy who supported the absolute monarchy. The completion of the political revolution which cleared away the obstacles to capitalist development was for them the end of the revolutionary struggle.

Even before the revolutions in England and France the rising capitalist class and the intellectuals associated with it were infinitely more cultured than the reactionary landlords, courtiers and bureaucrats who were upholding the old regime. The newly developing capitalist system had to give the greatest encouragement to natural science. It was enthusiastically supported by intellectuals who saw in the victory of capitalism not only greater opportunities for themselves, but a general extension of human freedom.

How different was the prospect before the revolution in Russia.

The political revolution was not the end of the revolutionary struggle, it was merely the starting point for a great social transformation. The Russian workers and peasants were doing something for which there was no historical precedent. It was not merely a matter of rebuilding industry, it was a matter of creating, on the basis of a socialist industry and agriculture, an entirely new type of civilisation. Such a social change required the creative energy of the great mass of the people in the factories, mines and on the land. Without this activity the best Government, the most efficient officialism, would be helpless. But the revolution had not at its disposal efficient *cadres* of experts. It had to use the experts left over from Tsarism and capitalism, many of whom were bitterly hostile to the new regime.

One can see now that the Soviet State could not have endured and developed in these conditions, if the Russian workers had not been under the influence of a revolutionary Party; a Party which, on the basis of the quality of its political leadership, had won their confidence; a Party that they were prepared to follow at every stage of the ever-changing struggle in the last twenty years.

“Almost everyone now realises,” said Lenin in 1920, “that the Bolsheviks could not have maintained themselves in power for two and a half years, and not even for two and a half months, without the strictest discipline, the truly iron discipline in our Party, and without the fullest and unre-served support rendered it by the whole mass of the working class, that is, by all those belonging to this class who think, who are honest, self-sacrificing, influential and capable of leading and attracting the backward masses” (*Left-Wing Communism*, Lawrence and Wishart, p. 9).

Yet critics of the Soviet Union – friendly and hostile – are continually overlooking this Party and the part it played. They only see leaders and undifferentiated followers – Lenin decided this or Stalin decides that. This is all that they can see. The Party – the unique instrument which was created under the leadership of Lenin, which has led the Russian people through all the difficulties of building Socialism in a backward country – they do not and will not see.

Hence from 1923 onward, they see only a struggle between Trotsky and Stalin, a struggle for personal dominance in the Soviet Government, like a struggle between Lloyd George and Asquith, or

Neville Chamberlain and Churchill, inside a British Cabinet. This we hope to show is entirely mistaken. Trotsky's attack was not directed against Stalin as an individual. It was an attack on the Bolshevik Party as an institution; an attack on its forms of organisation; an attack on the fundamental policies which the Party was pursuing. It was because Stalin in the course of the struggle emerged as the most representative spokesman of the Party that he incurred Trotsky's insensate hatred. Not Trotsky *versus* Stalin, but Trotsky *versus* the Bolshevik Party, even when it was led by Lenin, is a true statement of his relations to the Russian Revolution.

It is no reproach that bourgeois critics of Soviet Russia fail to understand the part played by the Communist Party, for at the beginning of the Russian Revolution most Western European Socialists sympathetic to the Soviet Union were in the same position, a fact which caused Lenin to declare that it would be more useful to praise the Bolsheviks less and study the Bolshevik Party more.

Lenin was at great pains to explain to Socialists who sympathised with the revolution what this new Party was and how it worked. Everyone had heard of the "iron discipline" of the Bolshevik Party, but on what was this famous discipline based?

"How is the discipline of the revolutionary party of the proletariat maintained? How is it tested? How is it reinforced? First, by the class consciousness of the proletarian vanguard and by its devotion to the revolution, by its firmness, self-sacrifice and heroism.

"Secondly, by its ability to link itself with, to keep in close touch with, and, to a certain degree, if you will, merge itself with the broadest masses of the toilers – primarily with the proletariat, *but also with the non-proletarian* toiling masses.

"Thirdly, by the correctness of the political leadership exercised by this vanguard and by the correctness of its political strategy and tactics, provided that the broad masses become convinced of this correctness *by their own experience....*

"Without these conditions all attempts to establish discipline are inevitably transformed into trifling phrasemongering and empty gestures.

"On the other hand, these conditions cannot arise all at

once. They are created only through prolonged effort and hard-won experience. Their creation is facilitated only by correct revolutionary theory, which in its turn is not a dogma but assumes complete shape only in close connection with the practical activity of a truly mass and truly revolutionary movement" (*Left-Wing Communism*, pp. 10-11).

These characteristics of a Bolshevik Party are far from being fully understood by supporters of the Soviet Union to-day. The Communist Party is continually being described as a small disciplined *elite*, ordering the people of the Soviet Union hither and thither for their own good. In short, the Soviet regime is pictured as the dictatorship of a Party.

This is a travesty which is unfortunately accepted by friends, as well as by enemies. In the remarks we have quoted above, Lenin is explaining to the Socialists of Western Europe that the Communist Party could only function on the basis of the confidence of the workers; that this confidence was not created by propaganda, but by people testing from their own experience the quality of the political leadership of the Party; that before any policy could be carried out, the Communist Party had to secure the co-operation of millions of people who were not Party members, who were not under Party discipline, who could not be coerced into co-operation, but who could only be convinced on the basis of their experience; and that further, if in the progress of the struggle a change of direction was necessary, not only the Party, but tens of millions of non-party people had to be convinced of the need for this change of direction and had to understand the methods of carrying it through.

This was one of the things which Trotsky, in his period of membership of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union, was utterly incapable of grasping. His tendency was always to order the non-party masses as if they were his immediate collaborators in the Ministry of War. On the other hand, the need for the Party basing itself on the confidence of the non-party people was repeatedly stressed by Stalin. Dealing with the necessity of promoting workers to the leading positions in Soviet industry', Stalin says:

"It is not our policy to transform the Party into an exclusive caste. It is our policy to achieve, as between workers who are members of the Party, and workers who are not, an atmosphere of 'mutual confidence', of 'mutual con-

trol' (Lenin). Our Party is strong among the working class, it should be stated, just because it pursues such a policy" ("New Conditions – New Tasks", *Leninism*, Vol. II).

In carrying out its activities, the Party rests on the trade unions and on the Soviets. Without the support of the twenty million trade unionists, without the support of the peasantry, organised in the Soviets and in the collective farms, the Party could not last for a week, for it is not the dictatorship of the Party, but a dictatorship of the working class, in alliance with the peasantry.

We will see that Trotsky and Zinoviev did not understand this and were repeatedly guilty of a bureaucratic, domineering attitude towards the masses of the Russian people. This does not prevent Trotsky from posing as an adherent of democracy "battling for freedom" against the "Stalinist bureaucracy".

Of course, after the Bolshevik revolution, Trotsky pretended to approve strongly of a party of a new type.

"Without a party, apart from a party, over the head of a party, or with a substitute for a party, the proletarian revolution cannot conquer. That is the principal lesson of the last decade" (L. Trotsky, *Lessons Of October*, p. 99).

He scoffs at Zinoviev, who had hinted that perhaps in Britain the trade unions could play the part which the Party had performed in Russia. Nevertheless, previous to 1917, during the period when Lenin was developing the Party, Trotsky exhausted his not inconsiderable vocabulary of vituperation in opposing all that Lenin was attempting to do.

The centralised Party which Lenin was striving to build had some resemblance to the Jacobins – the revolutionary party of the petty-bourgeoisie in the French Revolution – though it has also important differences. For the revolutionary party which Lenin was striving to build was the vanguard, not of the petty-bourgeoisie but of the Russian working class, the class that was called upon to lead the struggle of the Russian people against Tsarism. It was impossible in the conditions prevailing under Tsarism to build such a party on the basis of open democracy, because this would simply have exposed the organisation to the police. The city committees were therefore picked by the Central Committee and all committees had the right of co-option. Membership of the Party, Lenin believed,

should only be open to those who accepted the programme of the Party and supported it, both materially and by active participation in one of the Party organisations. Lenin's opponents, of whom Trotsky surpassed all the others in shrill virulence, stood for the proposition that anyone could be a Party member who subscribed to the Party programme, supported it materially and rendered assistance under the guidance of one of its organisations. In short, a member of the Party need not be an active worker in the Party organisation, he could be a dilettante who worked for the Party occasionally, and subscribed to its funds.

It became clear in the course of the dispute that what was at issue was whether a closely knit, revolutionary organisation capable of carrying on its work in defiance of the Tsarist police – an organisation which would be capable of carrying through the revolution – should be built, or whether it should be a more loosely knit party on the model of the Western European Socialist parties – parties whose daily practical activity was open propaganda and the running of elections.

At the second Congress of the Russian Social Democratic Labour Party, held in London in 1903, this conflict came to a head, and Trotsky ranged himself along with the Right Wing of the Congress in violent opposition to the standpoint of Lenin, who was defeated on this issue by a majority of two or three votes.

Following this Congress, Trotsky published a polemic entitled *Our Political Tasks* which attacked the whole policy of Lenin with the wildest vituperation.

Because Lenin, remembering that different branches of revolutionary work require different abilities, had talked about the need for securing division of labour within the Party, Trotsky launched into a long denunciation of division of labour in the modern factory and showed how this reduces the worker to a mere cog in the machine. This, he hinted, was the real object of Lenin – a few dictatorial leaders at the top and the mass of the party workers mere cogs in the machine. This was to be the burden of Trotsky's complaint in later years, directed against Stalin.

In replying to the charge that his policy was similar to that of the Jacobins in the French Revolution, Lenin had said:

“All these ‘dreadful catchwords’ about Jacobinism and the rest express absolutely nothing more than *opportunism*.

A Jacobin who is inseparably linked with the *organisation* of the proletariat which is *conscious* of its class interests, is a *revolutionary Social Democrat*" (Lenin, *Selected Works*, Vol. II, page 433).

Ignoring the fact that Lenin clearly indicates that what he is taking from the Jacobins is the idea of a centralised political organisation, which would represent a different class with a different policy from that pursued by the Jacobins, Trotsky regales his readers with a description of the different theoretical positions of Jacobinism and Marxism (in which both are misrepresented) and concludes:

"This evil-minded and morally repugnant suspicion of Lenin, this shallow caricature of the tragic intolerance of Jacobinism... must be liquidated at the present time at all costs, otherwise the party is threatened by moral and theoretical decay" (Trotsky, *Our Political Tasks*, 1906).

So that Trotsky who, to-day claiming to be Leninist, is out to liquidate Stalinism and to remove Stalin, was, at the period when the Bolshevik Party was being fashioned, out to liquidate Leninism... and to remove Lenin (though not at this stage by terrorist means).

One of the most interesting features of this splenetic outburst is that Trotsky quotes with manifest delight a question of the Right-Wing Socialist leader, Axelrod, who asks:

"Why should not that wagg history endow revolutionary bourgeois democracy with a leader from the school of revolutionary Marxism? Why, was it not 'legal' Marxism that provided a leader for the Liberals?<sup>1</sup> Indeed why not!" (*Our Political Tasks*, 1906).

In short, Lenin was the probable leader of the Russian middle classes.

The same line was later taken against Stalin, who was to be accused of pursuing a policy which aided the rich peasantry to under-

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1 "Legal" Marxism was the "Marxism" of a group of writers who watered down Marxism in order to adapt it to the needs of the bourgeoisie. Struve was one of this group; later he completely deserted the Socialists and became leader of the Russian Liberals.

mine the Soviet State.

One theme runs through Trotsky's whole article – hatred of Party discipline:

“Is it really so difficult to understand that any movement of any serious dimensions and importance, if faced with the alternative of silently destroying itself from a sense of discipline, or of fighting for its existence regardless of all motives of discipline, will undoubtedly choose the latter? There is sense in discipline only so long as it permits you to fight on behalf of that which you regard as right and in the name of which you have undertaken to submit to that discipline” (*Our Political Tasks*, 1906).

History was to show that Trotsky (in his Red Army days) was a rigid and implacable martinet in disciplining others. It was equally to show that his intense personal egotism, his “noble anarchism”, was to render him constitutionally and politically incapable of accepting discipline himself.

The difference between Lenin and Trotsky as to the character of the revolutionary party soon extended itself to a difference on the character of the Russian revolution. That the revolution would be in its first phase a bourgeois revolution was recognised by the adherents of the two trends of Russian Social Democracy which emerged in definite shape after the 1903 Congress. The Mensheviks (reformist Socialists) held that as the revolution was clearly a bourgeois revolution the tactics must be to push the capitalists into power and to maintain pressure upon them in order to keep them to the fulfilment of the basic aims of the revolution, *i.e.*, the abolition of all aspects of feudalism, the setting up of a constitutional and democratic government, and the granting of full rights to the organisations of the working class. It was necessary, the Right-Wing Socialists contended, for the workers to pursue a policy that would secure the co-operation of the capitalist parties. It would be fatal, they argued, for the working class to pursue a policy that could in any way alarm the capitalists or drive them into the arms of the Tsar. On the other hand they argued that, because it was a bourgeois revolution, the working class could not take part in the revolutionary government, but must remain in opposition, mobilising all the necessary pressure on the government to ensure that it did not shrink from carrying through the democratic revolution to the end. To the Mensheviks



the main forces of the revolution were the capitalists, the workers, and the middle class of the towns, and as it was a bourgeois revolution it must, they thought, be under the leadership of the capitalists.

The Bolsheviks – the revolutionary Marxists – held that while the coming revolution was a bourgeois revolution in respect of its aims, it did not follow that it must be under the leadership of the capitalist class. On the contrary, the more the revolutionary tide rose, the more the capitalists would feel the danger of it sweeping away their privileged position, and the more they would be inclined to make a deal with Tsarism. To hold the workers back from militant action in order not to alarm the capitalists would, they contended, be equivalent to holding back the revolution itself. In the situation that was growing up in Russia, the working class was the only consistent revolutionary class. It must not seek a subordinate position to the capitalists in the revolutionary struggle. On the contrary, it must put itself at the very head of the movement, striving to win a commanding influence over all sections of the Russian people, particularly of the peasantry who constituted the overwhelming majority of the population. So far from the working class avoiding governmental responsibility it must take part in the revolutionary provisional government, “the revolutionary democratic dictatorship of workers and peasants”, because only in this was the guarantee of the revolution being carried through to the end. Contrary to the Mensheviks, the Bolsheviks saw that the closest ally of the working class was the peasantry and not the capitalist class. They did not envisage a democratic revolution and then a long period of capitalist development. On the contrary, they emphasised that there was no inseparable barrier between the democratic revolution and the Socialist revolution, and that the class struggle of the workers and the poorest sections of the peasantry could carry the one over into the other.

Trotsky occupied a position that was formally different from both Bolshevism and Menshevism, though in all practical questions closer to the latter. He agreed with the Bolsheviks in their estimate of the Liberal capitalists; he would not have them as an ally. He agreed with the Mensheviks in their estimation of the peasantry; they too were more than doubtful as an ally. Of course, the spontaneous movement of the peasantry might help in the struggle against Tsarism, but Tsarism could only be replaced, not by a revolutionary dictatorship of workers and peasants, but by a Workers’ Govern-

ment. This Government would move forward to attack private property, including the private property of the peasants. In doing so it would rouse the resistance of the peasantry. On the other hand, it would stimulate the workers in the advanced European countries to seize power and establish Socialism, and in turn they would come to the assistance of the Workers' Government in Russia in its difficulties. This theory, known as the theory of "permanent revolution", was long the subject of bitter controversy between Trotsky and Lenin.

"Trotsky," wrote Lenin in 1915, "repeats his 'original' theory of 1905 and refuses to stop to think why, for ten whole years, life passed by this beautiful theory.

"Trotsky's original theory takes from the Bolsheviks their call for a decisive proletarian revolutionary struggle and for the conquest of political power by the proletariat, and from the Mensheviks it takes the 'repudiation' of the role of the peasantry. The peasantry, it says, has become divided into strata, differentiated; its potential revolutionary role has dwindled more and more; in Russia a 'national' revolution is impossible, 'we are living in the era of imperialism,' says Trotsky, and 'imperialism does not oppose the bourgeois nation to the old regime but the proletariat to the bourgeois nation'" ("The Two Lines of the Revolution," *Selected Works*, Vol. V, p. 162).

In short, Trotsky was saying that the first stage of the revolution would not be the majority of the Russian people, particularly the peasantry, against the Tsar, but on the contrary the working class against the Tsar and against "the bourgeois nation" including the peasantry. Lenin's comment on this was:

"The whole decade – the great decade – of 1905-15 proved the existence of two, and only two, class lines of the Russian revolution. The differentiation among the peasantry increased the class struggle within it; it aroused very many hitherto politically dormant elements; it drew the agricultural proletariat nearer to the urban proletariat.... But the antagonism between the peasantry, on the one hand, and the Markovs, the Romanovs and Khvostovs, on the other, has become stronger, has grown, has become more acute.

“This is such an obvious truth that not even the thousands of phrases in scores of Trotsky’s Paris articles will ‘refute’ it. Trotsky is in fact helping the Liberal-Labour politicians in Russia who by the ‘repudiation’ of the role of the peasantry mean *refusal* to rouse the peasantry to revolution!” (“The Two Lines of the Revolution”, *Selected Works*, Vol. V, pp. 162-3).

Two years later Lenin’s estimation of the role of the peasantry was being proved to be correct.

From this conception of Trotsky’s there follows the conclusion enunciated by him in 1906 and repeated by him in 1922:

“In the absence of direct State support on the part of the European proletariat, the Russian working class will not be able to keep itself in power and to transform its temporary rule into a stable Socialist dictatorship. There is no doubt about that” (Trotsky, *Our Revolution*, 1906).

This is a standpoint from which we will see Trotsky never departed. In his view, unless the European Social Revolution came to the assistance of backward Russia not only could Socialism not be built, but the workers’ government could not survive.

The years following the defeat of the Russian Revolution of 1905 were amongst the most difficult in the history of the Bolshevik Party. A number of Right-Wing Socialists came forward, declaring that the period of revolutions was over in Russia; that henceforth there could only be slow development within the framework of the constitution granted by Tsarism; that therefore a centralised party, built up to lead a revolutionary movement, was superfluous and harmful; and that what was necessary was an open, legal Labour Party, which would struggle for reforms within the framework of the Tsarist “constitution”. Trotsky did not openly advocate this policy, but he actively helped the liquidators, as those who openly advocated it came to be called.

“Such people as Trotsky with his puffed up phrases on the Russian Social Democratic Labour Party,” said Lenin, “with his kowtowing to the liquidators who have nothing whatever in common with the Russian Social Democratic Labour Party, are now the disease of the age.... In reality they are the bearers of capitulation to the liquidators, who

are anxious to form a Labour Party on Stolypin lines.”

“The real liquidators conceal themselves behind their phraseology and make every endeavour to frustrate the work being done by the anti-liquidators, that is, the Bolsheviks. Trotsky and tire Trotskyists and opportunists like him are more harmful than all the liquidators, for the convinced liquidators state their views openly and it is easy for the workers to recognise the errors of these views. But Trotsky and those similar to him deceive the workers, conceal the evil and make it impossible to expose and remedy it.”

In 1912 all the signs of a new revolutionary upsurge became visible in Russia and in January of that year the Bolsheviks called in Prague a conference of all the underground Party organisations then working in Russia in order to lay down the lines for the struggle that lay immediately ahead. A policy was adopted for strengthening the underground organisations. All organisations were called upon to strengthen their activity for the socialist education of the workers, in order that they could lead the masses of the Russian people forward in the struggle for the democratic republic, the eight-hours day, and the confiscation of the landlords' estates. The conference adhered to its aim of struggle for the revolutionary democratic dictatorship of the workers and peasants.

Trotsky sought to reply to this conference by assembling in Vienna in August of the same year a conference of all the groups of emigrants who were opposing the policy of the Bolsheviks. These groups were united only by their opposition to the Bolshevik Party. At this conference there assembled representatives of the groups who were in favour of winding up the underground Party; of the Jewish Socialist organisation “The Bund”; of the Lettish Social-Democrats and of the lower middle-class Polish Socialist Party, together with Trotsky and his followers. The resolutions of the conference proposed in effect a watering down of the revolutionary line being pursued by the Bolsheviks. But as it had little or no connection with the growing organisations of the workers inside Russia, the Vienna conference of the “August bloc” (as these groups came to be called) proved abortive.

In summing up the bankruptcy of this conference, in contrast to the results being obtained by the Bolsheviks, Lenin less than two years afterwards gave the following unforgettable sketch of Trotsky:

"The old participants in the Marxian movement in Russia know Trotsky's personality very well, and it is not worth while talking to them about it. But the young generation of workers do not know him and we must speak of him, for he is typical of all the five grouplets abroad, which in fact are also vacillating between the liquidators and the Party.... Trotsky was an ardent *Iskra-ist*<sup>1</sup> in 1901-3, and Ryazanov described the part he played at the Congress of 1903 as that of 'Lenin's truncheon'.<sup>2</sup> At the end of 1903 Trotsky was an ardent Menshevik; *i.e.*, one who deserted the *Iskra-ists* for the 'Economists'; he proclaimed that 'there is a deep gulf between the old and the new *Iskra*'. In 1904-5 he left the Mensheviks and began to vacillate, at one time collaborating with Martynov (the 'Economist'), and at another proclaiming the absurdly 'Left' theory of 'permanent revolution'. In 1906-7 he drew nearer to the Bolsheviks, and in the spring of 1907 he declared his solidarity with Rosa Luxembourg.

"During the period of disintegration, after long 'non-factional' vacillations, he again shifted to the Right, and in August 1912 entered into a *bloc* with the liquidators. Now he is again abandoning them, repeating, however, what *in essence* are their pet ideas.

"Such types are characteristic as fragments of the historical foundations of yesterday, when the mass Labour Movement of Russia was still dormant and every grouplet was 'free' to represent itself as a tendency, group, faction, in a word a 'great power' talking of uniting with others" (Lenin, "Violation of Unity under cover of cries for Unity," *Selected Works*, Vol. IV, pp. 206-8).

This is the perfect picture of the man who prefers to be a general in a two-man band to being a loyal collaborator in a great party.

We are not writing a ten-volume history of Trotsky's historical

1 The old *Iskra* ("the Spark") was the paper in which Lenin expounded his revolutionary policy. The new *Iskra* was in the control of the Mensheviks.

2 Ryazanov's designation was inexact. On the important question of the Party, Trotsky was already against Lenin at this Congress.

antagonism to the Bolshevik Party and will pass on, merely remarking that if Trotsky and the liquidators had succeeded in destroying the Bolshevik Party in the years of reaction following the defeat of the 1905 revolution, there would have been no October Revolution in Russia for anyone to betray. And this we must say of Trotsky and his associates – they did their best, previous to 1917, to destroy the Bolshevik Party.

The war years from 1915 till the summer of 1917 saw no slackening of Trotsky's struggle against the Bolshevik Party. The Bolsheviks issued the slogan of "transform the Imperialist War into a civil war". Trotsky ridiculed this slogan and put forward the slogans of "struggle for peace" and "neither victory nor defeat."

Lenin vigorously exposed the emptiness of Trotsky's resounding phrases:

"A revolutionary class in a reactionary war cannot but 'wish the defeat of its government'.

"This is an axiom. It is disputed only by the conscious partisans or the helpless satellites of the social-chauvinists. To the former, for instance, belongs Sekovsky from the Organisation Committee; to the latter belong Trotsky and Bukvoyed; in Germany, Kautsky. To wish Russia defeat, Trotsky says, is 'an uncalled for and unjustifiable political concession to the methodology of social patriotism which substitutes for the revolutionary struggle against the war and the conditions that cause war, an orientation along the lines of the lesser evil, an orientation which, under given conditions, is perfectly arbitrary'.

"This is an example of the inflated phraseology with which Trotsky always justifies opportunism. 'A revolutionary struggle against the war' is an empty and meaningless exclamation, the like of which the heroes of the Second International are past masters in making, unless it means revolutionary actions against one's own government in time of war. A little reasoning suffices to make this clear. When we say revolutionary action in war time against one's own government, we indisputably mean not only the wish for its defeat, but practical actions leading towards such defeat.... Revolution in war time is civil war. *Transformation* of war between governments into civil war is, on

the one hand, facilitated by military reverses ('defeats') of the governments; on the other hand, it is *impossible* to strive in practice towards such a transformation without at the same time working towards military defeat" ("Defeat of one's Government in the Imperialist War," Volume XVIII of the *Collected Works*, pp. 197-8).

The February revolution in 1917 demonstrated the correctness of the views held by Lenin and the Bolshevik Party as to the character of the first stage of the Revolution. Power did not pass from the Tsar to a workers' government. On the contrary, "the revolutionary-democratic dictatorship of the proletariat and the peasantry has already been realised, but in an extremely original form".

"The Bolshevik slogans and ideas *in general* have been fully corroborated by history; but *concretely*, things have turned out *differently* than could have been anticipated (by anyone): they are more original, more specific, more variegated....

"The revolutionary-democratic dictatorship of the proletariat and peasantry' has *already* become a reality, in a certain form and to a certain extent, in the Russian revolution; for this 'formula' envisages only the *interrelation of classes*, but does not envisage the *concrete political institution which gives effect* to this inter-relation, to this co-operation. 'The Soviet of Workers' and Soldiers' Deputies' – here we have the 'revolutionary-democratic dictatorship of the proletariat and peasantry' already accomplished in reality" ("First Letter on Tactics," *Selected Works*, Volume VI, pp. 33-4).

"The second peculiarity of the Russian revolution, a highly important one, is the circumstance that the Petrograd Soviet of Soldiers' and Workers' Deputies, which, everything goes to show, enjoys the confidence of most of the local Soviets, is *voluntarily* transferring the power of the State, is voluntarily surrendering its own supremacy, to the bourgeoisie and its Provisional Government; and, having entered into an agreement to support the latter, is limiting its own function to that of an observer supervising the convocation of the Constituent Assembly (the date of which has not yet even been announced by the Provisional Government).

“This extremely peculiar circumstance, unparalleled in history in such a form, has led to the *interlocking of two dictatorships*, the dictatorship of the bourgeoisie (for the Provisional Government of Lvov and Co. is a dictatorship, *i.e.*, a power based not on law, nor on the previously expressed will of the people, but on seizure by force, accomplished by a definite class, namely, the bourgeoisie) and the dictatorship of the proletariat and peasantry (the Soviet of Workers’ and Soldiers’ Deputies).

“There is not the slightest doubt that such an ‘interlocking’ cannot last long. Two powers *cannot* exist in a State. One of them is bound to give way; and the entire Russian bourgeoisie is already straining every nerve, is everywhere striving in every possible way to remove and enfeeble the Soviets of Workers’ and Soldiers’ Deputies, to compel them to give way, and to establish the sole power of the bourgeoisie” (“Tasks of the Proletariat in Our Revolution”, *Selected Works*, Vol. VI, pp. 48-9).

Because of the peculiar situation created by the existence of this dual power, because while “the Bolshevik slogans in general have been fully corroborated by history, but concretely things have turned out differently than could have been anticipated (by anyone)”, Lenin insisted that the Bolshevik Party should take into account this concrete situation and shape its policy accordingly. Trotsky was at that time a prisoner in a British concentration camp in Nova Scotia and played no part in these events. This was not to prevent him from later claiming, with his usual modesty, that Lenin had come round to Trotsky’s original standpoint. On the contrary, Lenin in the very documents in which he was making clear his position, took the trouble specifically to differentiate himself from Trotsky.

“But are we not in danger of falling into subjectivism, of wanting to ‘skip’ over the bourgeois-democratic revolution – which has not yet been completed and has not yet freed itself of the peasant movement – directly to the socialist revolution?

“I should be incurring this danger had I said: ‘No Tsar, but a *workers’* government.’ But I did not say *that*; I said something else. I said that there can be no other government (barring a bourgeois government) in Russia but a



government of the Soviets of Workers', Agricultural Labourers', Soldiers' and Peasants' Deputies. I said that power in Russia can now pass from Guchkov and Lvov *only* to the Soviets. And the fact is that in these Soviets the peasants predominate, the soldiers predominate – the petty bourgeoisie predominates, to use a scientific, Marxian term, to give a class designation and not a commonplace, philistine professional designation" ("First letter on Tactics," *Selected Works*, Vol. VI, p. 37).

The slogan "No Tsar, but a workers' government" was that of the German Social Democrat, Parvus, whose theory was later taken over by Trotsky under the high-sounding title of the "permanent revolution". In repudiating this slogan Lenin was drawing a line between his position and Trotsky's.

Trotsky, returning to Russia in the middle of May 1917, first associated with a group standing between the Bolsheviks and the Mensheviks, and later brought this group over to the Bolshevik Party. But he brought it over with reservations. He did not accept the previous position of the Bolshevik Party as being "in general" correct. On the contrary, he convinced himself that Lenin had independently arrived at the position which he (Trotsky) had always held. Naturally he did not mention this conviction when he came over to the Bolshevik Party.

That Trotsky played a role in the October Revolution is undeniable; but he did so always under the leadership of the Party. But in all his reminiscences the Party is nowhere, and the big chief Trotsky is everywhere.

But in relation to the seizure of power there arose certain disagreements between Lenin and Trotsky. Trotsky was in favour of putting off the insurrection until the second Congress of Soviets. Lenin made a strong attack on this standpoint.

"For to miss such a moment and to 'wait' for the Congress of Soviets would be *utter idiocy*, or *sheer treachery*," Lenin declared (*Selected Works*, Vol. VI, p. 230).

Trotsky, in a book on "Lenin" which he wrote immediately after Lenin's death, tried to make out that if the Party had followed Lenin's advice it would have seized power "independently of the Soviet and behind its back"; that this policy was rejected and the

insurrection was postponed from October 17th to October 25th (old Russian calendar) in order to coincide with the Second Soviet Congress. In point of fact, Lenin proposed the seizure of power by the Moscow and Petrograd Soviets before the Congress opened. This was necessary to anticipate the counter-revolutionaries who might at any moment open the front and allow the Germans to seize Petrograd, and because the Petrograd Soviet had made the blunder of announcing the date of the insurrection in advance. In point of fact power was seized before the Congress of Soviets opened.

Almost immediately after the seizure of power there arose the question of the peace negotiations with the German Imperialists. It was agreed to use these negotiations to the utmost for the purpose of stimulating the revolutionary struggle in the imperialist countries. The time came, however, when it was necessary to come to a decision either to accept the German terms or to carry on the war. Lenin held that it was quite impossible to continue the war. The country was exhausted and needed a breathing space. The peace terms, though harsh, ought to be signed immediately. The "Left" Communists, headed by Bukharin, wanted to wage a revolutionary war. Trotsky once again played his role of the man who stands above both groups, while at the same time undertaking activity alongside those opposing Lenin. He won a majority on the Central Committee for the policy of "neither peace nor war". The Germans were informed that the Soviets discontinued the war but were not prepared to sign the peace terms. Trotsky declared that the Germans would not attack. Events were soon to give him the lie. The Germans not only attacked, but insisted on harsher terms than those originally proposed. Those terms had to be signed. The new Soviet State paid dearly in loss of territory for Trotsky's adventurism.

The Trotskyists are never tired of depicting Trotsky, who was People's Commissar for War, as being the chief organiser of victory in the Civil War; yet Trotsky had marked divergences with the Party leadership all through this period. Some of the most important of the questions in dispute were summarised by Stalin in a speech which he delivered to the Communist Section of the Central Trade Union Council on November 19th, 1924.

Referring to the claims of Trotsky as to the part he played in the civil war, Stalin said: "I must, however, declare with all firmness, that the honour of being the organiser of our victories falls to no individual but on the great community of the advanced workers of

our country, the Russian Communist Party. Perhaps it will not be superfluous to quote a few examples. You know that Kolchak and Denikin were regarded as the chief enemies of the Soviet Republic. You know that our country only breathed freely after the victory over these enemies. And history says that our troops defeated these two enemies, Kolchak as well as Denikin, in opposition to Trotsky's plans. Judge for yourselves. I. Re Kolchak. It was in the summer of 1919. Our troops attacked Kolchak and operated before Ufa. Meeting of the Central Committee: Comrade Trotsky proposed to stop the attack on the line of Bjälaja liver (before Ufa), to leave the Urals in Kolchak's hands, to remove part of our troops from the Eastern front and to throw them on to the Southern front. Heated debates took place. The Central Committee did not agree with Trotsky and found that the Urals with their works, with their network of railways, should not be left in Kolchak's hands, because he could there easily bring his troops into order, collect large farmers round him and advance to the Volga, but that first of all Kolchak should be driven back over the ridge of the Urals into the Siberian steppes, and that only then should the transference of troops to the South be proceeded with. The Central Committee declined Trotsky's plan. The latter resigned. The Commander in Chief, Wazetis, a partisan of Trotsky's plan, retired. His place was taken by a new Commander-in-Chief, Comrade Kamenev.<sup>1</sup> From that moment onward Trotsky declined any direct participation in the transactions on the Eastern front.

"2. Re Denikin. The affair took place in Autumn, 1919. The attack against Denikin failed. The "steel ring" round Mamontov (the storming of Mamontov) was an obvious failure. Denikin took Kursk. Denikin approaches Orel. Comrade Trotsky was called from the Southern front to a meeting of the Central Committee. The Central Committee declared the situation to be disquieting and resolved to send new military functionaries to the Southern front and to recall Trotsky. These functionaries demanded 'non-interference' on the part of Trotsky on the Southern front. Trotsky withdrew from immediate participation in the action on the Southern front. The operations on the Southern

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1 No relation to the Kamenev in the Zinoviev-Kamenev treason trial.

front, up to the taking of Rostov on the Don and of Odessa by our troops, proceeded without Comrade Trotsky" (*The Errors of Trotskyism*, 1924, pp. 219-20).

In *My Life* Trotsky fully admits the truth of the first charge and tries without great success to wriggle out of the second.

We will pass to the year 1921. The young Soviet State is living through the crisis caused by the war and the armed intervention of the Allies. Industry is at a low ebb. The difficulties with the peasantry are growing, and within the Bolshevik Party there commences a discussion as to the way forward, which first takes the form of a discussion on the part to be played by the trade unions in the Soviet State.

Trotsky, who to-day appears as the enemy of bureaucracy, came forward with the proposal that the trade unions must become State organs, and that they should be "shaken up" by administrative action on the part of the Communist Party. When this drill sergeant proposal was rejected in the Central Committee of the Party, Trotsky went outside and gathered a group of adherents for the purpose of fighting against the Central Committee.

"Just think!" says Lenin. "After two plenums of the Central Committee (November 9th and December 7th), which were devoted to an unprecedentedly detailed, long, and heated discussion of the original draft of Comrade Trotsky's theses and of the entire trade union policy that he advocates for the Party, a member of the Central Committee (*i.e.*, Trotsky, *J.R.C.*), *one out of nineteen*, chooses a group outside the Central Committee and advances the 'collective' 'work' of this group as a 'platform', advising the Party Congress to 'choose between two trends'!"

"Can it be denied," continues Lenin, "that, even if the 'new tasks and methods' were indicated by Trotsky as correctly as he has in fact indicated them incorrectly, Trotsky's approach to the question alone would have caused harm to himself, to the Party, to the trade union movement, to the work of training millions of trade union members, and to the Republic?" (Lenin, "Once Again on the Trade Unions, the Present Situation and the Mistakes of Comrades Trotsky and Bukharin," *Selected Works*, Vol. IX, pp. 42 and 44-5).

So alarmed was Lenin at the methods pursued by Trotsky that he caused the subsequent 10th Congress of the Communist Party to pass a resolution against the formation of groups in the Party. Lenin held that every member of the Party was entitled to express his point of view on the questions before the country, but what was not permissible was that groups should be formed on the basis of a programme distinct from that of the Party, groups with their own system of connections, their own loyalties, their own leaderships, for such groupings were the germ of a split in the Party, which could very well have entailed a split in the trade unions and the Soviets and the downfall of the Workers' State.

This firm decision against groupings was forever afterwards to arouse Trotsky's furious hatred; and whenever he failed to convince the Party on any point, he immediately rushed to form a Trotskyist organisation within the Party, even to the point of creating a split.

At bottom, Trotsky was profoundly pessimistic as to the possibility of the Soviet Union advancing to Socialism on the basis of its own resources. As the prospects of an immediate revolution in the West began to fade, he fluctuated between a policy of desperate adventure and a policy of surrender to the capitalist world – though the policy of surrender was always cloaked by whirlwind oratory, replete with revolutionary phrases. The older members of the Bolshevik Party, who had been familiar with Trotsky in the past, were always a little wary of him, and their doubts increased in consequence of his continual shifts and changes, each accompanied by a pessimistic appraisal of the condition of the country. The more Trotsky wobbled, the more he encountered the resistance of the Party membership, particularly the responsible Party officials. It was against this section that Trotsky decided to strike his next blow.

During the Civil War, when the whole forces of the Party were intent on victory, when responsible Party officials had to be shifted to the most critical points in the ever-changing struggle, Party democracy had very largely to be dispensed with.

With the restoration of more normal conditions, the Central Committee of the Party decided to pass over to the widest inner-Party democracy, and a resolution to this effect was passed by the full meeting of the Central Committee in September 1923. On October 8th, Trotsky sent a letter to the Central Committee, in which he complained that the country was being led to a catastrophe, and demanded a wider inner-Party democracy, by which he meant the

right to form factional groupings, or, in plain English, parties within the Party. A group of "46", mainly old followers of Trotsky, issued a manifesto to the same effect.

Trotsky followed up with a book entitled *The New Course*, in which he again clamoured for Party democracy – although the essentials of Party democracy were already being re-established by order of the Central Committee. In this brochure, he solemnly warns the party against the danger of the degeneration of the Old Bolsheviks and declares that the barometer of the Party is the youth, particularly the student youth. The choice of the student youth as a barometer of the Party instead of the revolutionary working class as a whole, was not unconnected with the fact that Trotsky (who, to use Lenin's expression in a previous controversy, could always "charm the schoolboys") had a certain influence amongst this section of the population.

The raising of the possibility of the general degeneration of the Bolshevik leadership was Trotsky's method of seeking to discredit the staunch *cadres* of the party who were against the hysterical mixture of swaggering adventure and spineless surrender that he was presenting as a policy. When at a later period a microscopical number of old Bolsheviks of the type of Kamenev and Zinoviev did degenerate, we find Trotskyists all over the world declaring such degeneration to be utterly impossible – a mere invention of Stalin, etc.

The 13th Party Conference completely condemned Trotsky's line and warned him against further opposition to the line of the Party.

On January 21st, 1924, Lenin died. The great leader and organiser of the party had gone, and Trotsky, though a newcomer to the Party, believed that he had a better claim than old and tried Bolsheviks like Stalin to occupy Lenin's place.

His first move was to clear the way for himself by attempting to discredit the Party leadership. In October 1924 he published an introduction to his collected works entitled "Lessons of October". The "Lessons" purported to deal with the reasons for the Bolshevik victory in the October revolution; it is full of general phrases about the necessity for a revolutionary Party as the leadership for a revolution. But when Trotsky gets down to a general description of events, the role of the revolutionary Party disappears and the role of the revolutionary Man, Trotsky, is magnified. It is hinted that Lenin had abruptly changed his previous policy for that of Trotsky, which

alone enabled the revolution to be successful. The policy of armed insurrection had met with the opposition of certain Bolsheviks – here Zinoviev and Kamenev are indicated – and other Communist Parties have to beware of wavering at the decisive moments. Such was the general line of the introduction.

The most serious feature of this attack was the *de facto* belittlement of the role of the Party, particularly in the years before 1917, and the suggestion that Lenin had finally accepted the standpoint of Trotsky. The meaning of this was clear. Trotsky was arguing that the Bolshevik Party had not played the significant part in October that had been imagined; it had only accomplished results, he often contended, because it had abandoned its traditional policy in favour of one which closely resembled Trotsky's, and it must never be forgotten that some of those who were then (in 1924) amongst the leading group of Bolsheviks had wobbled badly in 1917. The unspoken conclusion was: Trotsky may be right and the Party wrong in 1924, as had been the case several times during the struggle in 1917. The "lessons of October" was the theoretical justification for Trotsky coming out in opposition to the Party at any time when he could not get his own way within it.

This platform of Trotsky's was a point of attraction for many elements hostile to the Soviet power. Indeed, Trotsky himself had in later years to admit that "in the wake of this vanguard there dragged the tail end of all sorts of dissatisfied, ill-equipped and even chagrined careerists". He averred that the Trotsky opposition had subsequently liberated itself from "its accidental and uninvited fellow wayfarers". We shall see that it is precisely this type of person who actively participated in the Trotsky opposition in the Soviet Union and continues to follow Trotsky in the countries outside.

The real character of Trotsky's policy was becoming clearer to the working class. He found not an iota of support in the large factories and the trade unions. A decisive majority of the Party pronounced against Trotsky, and he was warned that his propaganda, aimed at undermining the scientific basis of Leninism and at splitting the Party, was incompatible with his Party leadership. Again he retreats and waits his chance.

His chance came when the two old Bolsheviks – Zinoviev and Kamenev – whom Trotsky was seeking to remove from the leadership – went into opposition to the Party.

Zinoviev was an agitator of outstanding brilliance, and Kame-

nev in many respects a skilful politician, but both were abject sceptics and defeatists, easily scared by difficulties.

Curiously enough their first point of disagreement with the Party Central Committee arose on the question of Trotsky. Zinoviev and Kamenev wanted to expel Trotsky from the Party. When this was rejected they returned to the charge and demanded at least his expulsion from the political leadership of the Party. The Trotskyist legend of the implacable hostility of Stalin to the "brilliant" Trotsky notwithstanding, Zinoviev and Kamenev found no stronger opponent amongst the Party leadership than Stalin. "We knew," explained Stalin, "that the policy of lopping off might entail grave dangers for the Party. The method of lopping off, the method of blood-letting (it was bloodletting they wanted) is dangerous and infectious. To-day, you lop off one limb, to-morrow another, the day after to-morrow a third – and what is left of the Party?"

We will see a similar tolerance extended to Zinoviev and Kamenev, and how Zinoviev and Kamenev reciprocated.

The main point of opposition soon emerged. Zinoviev and Kamenev objected to the resolution of the 14th Party Conference which had affirmed the possibility of building Socialism in the Soviet Union. The incorrigible sceptics and defeatists denied this possibility, and here they found a common platform with Trotsky, whom they were seeking to expel from the Party a few months before. The platform was soon to be broadened out to embrace questions as diverse as the Chinese Revolution, and the relations between the Russian Trade Unions and the British Trade Unions – but its fundamental point remained: the impossibility of building Socialism in the Soviet Union.

We deal with this issue in detail in a subsequent chapter. Here we are concerned with the relations of the "new opposition" to the Party.

For two years the "new opposition" waged its struggle inside the Party. Its policy in opposition to that of the Central Committee was discussed in every Party branch in the Soviet Union. Its leaders appeared and spoke at innumerable Party meetings. Never in any political party has there been such a careful and prolonged discussion. The opposition leaders met with the sharpest opposition in the large factories. The whole working class ranged itself decisively against them.

Feeling themselves defeated for the moment, the opposition



leaders made a declaration on October 16th, 1926, that they would cease their group activity against the Party. It was not an abandonment of their position. It was a retreat in order to await a more favourable moment for the resumption of their attack on the line of the Party.

By 1927 they were renewing their attack on the Party, this time in relation to the policy being pursued by the Communist International in relation to the Chinese Revolution,

At the beginning of 1927 they gave out a new platform in opposition to that of the Central Committee. As an example of demagoguery this platform makes Goebbels look like the veriest amateur. All things are promised to all men. Superficial quack remedies abound. The surrender before difficulties, and disbelief in the possibility of building Socialism in the Soviet Union, is masked behind a veritable fireworks display of Left phrases.

Another thing was masked behind the glittering words – the building of a new opposition party with a leading committee, district committees, and its own system of membership dues.

The platform, however, did not stir the workers to enthusiasm but to hostility to its authors, and so a further declaration was handed to the Central Committee – on August 8th, 1927. The opposition (with its own organisation and an illegal press under its control) promised again to refrain from group activity within the Party.

A few months later, however, on the occasion of the 10th Anniversary of the Russian Revolution, there was an opposition attempt to stage counter-demonstrations to the official demonstrations in Moscow and Leningrad – short-lived attempts which were broken up by the workers.

The illegal printing press was discovered, as was also the fact that the opposition had entered into association with elements hostile to the Party, in order to get this press going.

The limit of the Party's patience had been reached. In spite, of warning from the Party, in breach of their most solemn promises, the opposition was seeking to form a new party. They had to be excluded from the Party and their organisation broken up.

But before this step was taken there was a Party referendum on the question of the opposition policy – 724,000 members voted for the line of the Party, 4,000 members voted for the Trotskyists and 2,600 abstained from voting. If the Trotskyists had only wanted a democratic expression they had got it with its hobnailed boots on.

But some impatient readers will exclaim – “We are not Communists. We do not accept your famous Party discipline. A majority is not always right. You must prove that Trotsky was wrong and not that he violated Party discipline or that there was an overwhelming majority against him.”

That is our firm intention. But is it not passing strange that a man who, between 1903 and 1917, was the implacable enemy of the Bolshevik Party as Trotsky was, should now describe himself as a Bolshevik-Leninist and be accepted by all manner of publicists as a man clinging to the principles of Bolshevism, which Stalin is alleged to be deserting? Is there not food for reflection in the fact that Trotsky, who calls himself a Leninist, was for years pouring precisely the same abuse on Lenin as he is now pouring on Stalin; that before there was a “Stalin regime” in the Party arousing his ire there was a “Lenin regime” which he fought in every possible way?

We do not ask anyone on the basis of facts hitherto adduced to say that Trotsky was wrong and that he subsequently degenerated into an ally of Fascism – that is a matter for subsequent demonstration – but we do ask readers to accept the fact that a man could not be in fundamental opposition to the Bolshevik Party from 1903 to 1927 and be a true follower of Lenin. If that is accepted we have demonstrated all we want to demonstrate in this chapter, namely, that with Trotsky we are dealing with a non-Communist whose political line and political evolution has to be evaluated from that standpoint, and not from the standpoint that here is an old Communist who is standing for the old revolutionary policy which the Communists are now alleged to have rejected.

## CHAPTER II

### TROTSKY AND BUKHARIN – ENEMIES OF- SOCIALIST CONSTRUCTION

The revolution has been betrayed but is not yet overthrown: it may yet be saved by a “new” revolution under the leadership of Trotsky – this is the main theme of *The Revolution Betrayed*, which summarises all the public criticisms which Trotsky has been directing against the Soviet Union in the last four years. We say public criticisms because there has also been another kind of “criticism” expressed in actions about which Trotsky does not write.

This criticism in action springs from the fundamental theoretical position of Trotsky, but as it is not for public consumption inside or outside the Soviet Union, it dispenses with those stirring Socialist phrases with which the public criticism is embellished. But of this criticism in action more anon.

The aim of the criticism contained in *The Revolution Betrayed*, which was issued before the discovery of the Trotskyist counter-revolutionary plots, is to present Trotskyism as a current of political thought criticising the Soviet Government from the Left, insisting on a real Socialist policy in contrast to the allegedly non-Socialist policy of the Soviet Government,

“The Soviet State in all its relations is far closer to a backward capitalism than to Communism,” declares Trotsky (p. 244). Industry is dominated by a “corps of slave drivers” (p. 229). “Wage differences in the Soviet Union are not less but greater than in capitalist countries” (p. 228). “Two opposite tendencies are growing up out of the depth of the Soviet regime. To the extent that, in contrast to a decaying capitalism, it develops the productive forces, it is preparing the economic basis of Socialism, To the extent that, for the benefit of an upper stratum, it carries to more and more extreme expression bourgeois norms of distribution, it is preparing a capitalist restoration” (p. 231).

Do not expect to find any proof of these assertions – for there is none. The whole book is littered with sweeping assertions requiring the most unchallengeable proof, but none is forthcoming. That is the merit of *The Revolution Betrayed* to the opponents of the Soviet

Union. They can quote the wildest and most irresponsible assertions of Trotsky as established facts, concealing from their readers the fact that the wilder the assertion that Trotsky makes the less he seems inclined to advance proofs.

But surely, people say, one cannot accuse a man who was a responsible leader in the Soviet Union of making reckless assertions without proof. Why should he do it? The fact is that from the very beginning of the Soviet Government, Trotsky was in the habit of making the wildest assertions about the condition of the country, predicting its imminent doom. It is not in 1936 that he started exaggerating the backwardness of the Soviet Union. Throughout his entire political existence he has stubbornly maintained the thesis that Russia is so backward that without the aid furnished by a successful revolution in the advanced capitalist countries, it is impossible for the Soviet Union to advance to Socialism. It is true that for twenty years the Soviet Union has been stubbornly refuting Trotsky's prophecies by advancing resolutely to Socialism, but after every new step forward, Trotsky emerges with new arguments to show that the country is going away from Socialism. Indeed the very existence of the Soviet Union is a standing reproach to the theoretician Trotsky, who in his writings has repeatedly shown the "absurdity" of the long-continued existence of a Socialist Government in a backward country.

In his preface to his book on the 1905 Revolution, he says:

"The antagonisms which, appear under a workers' government in a backward land where the vast majority of the population is made up of peasants can only be solved in the international arena, the arena of the proletarian world revolution."

In another work called *Our Revolution* (1905) he wrote:

"In the absence of direct state support on the part of the European proletariat, the Russian working class will not be able to keep itself in power and transform its temporary rule into a stable Socialist dictatorship. No doubt as to the truth of this is possible."

In an epilogue, written in 1922, to the reprint of a book of war-time articles, Trotsky asserted:

“The assertion repeated several times in the *Programme of Peace* that the proletarian revolution cannot be carried through to a victorious end within the national framework will perhaps appear to many readers to have been refuted by the experience of our Soviet Republic for almost five years. Any such conclusion would be utterly without foundation. The fact that the workers’ state has been able to maintain itself against the whole world, in a single and furthermore backward country, reveals the colossal strength of the proletariat that will be able to perform real miracles in other more advanced, civilised countries. But if we have been able to maintain ourselves politically and militarily, we have not yet arrived at the establishment of a Socialist society and have not even approached to it. The struggle for the maintenance of our revolutionary State has in this period led to an extraordinary decline in the productive forces. Socialism is only possible on the basis of the growth and development of the productive forces. Our commercial negotiations with the capitalist States, the concessions, the conference at Genoa, is a definite proof of the impossibility of an isolated construction of Socialism within a national state framework. So long as in the other European States the bourgeoisie is in the seats of power, we are compelled in our struggle against economic isolation to seek an agreement with the capitalist world; at the same time it must definitely be said that this agreement will at the best help us to heal one or other economic wounds, to take one or other steps forward, but a steady rise in socialist economy in Russia will not be possible until after the victory of the proletariat in the leading countries of Europe” (Epilogue to *Programme of Peace*, 1922).

The bold revolutionary, who always liked to pose as being more resolute than anyone else, is clearly exaggerating the difficulties.

This was always a characteristic of Trotsky. While he seldom missed an opportunity of adopting a revolutionary pose, of “being more revolutionary than anybody else”, very often the pose concealed the profoundest pessimism; concealed the fact that the poseur had no faith in the Russian masses and was preparing to surrender to capitalism.

Whenever difficulties arose in the Soviet Union – and difficulties were inevitable in a backward country seeking to advance to Socialism – he always saw the advance of the dark peasant counter-revolution, and was ready either for surrender or for a desperate adventure.

In *The Revolution Betrayed*, however, we find him admitting “Socialism has demonstrated its right to victory, not in the pages of *Das Kapital*, but in an industrial arena comprising one-sixth of the earth’s surface – not in the language of dialectics, but in the language of steel, cement and electricity. Even if the Soviet Union, as a result of internal difficulties, external blows, and the mistakes of its leadership, were to collapse – which we firmly hope will not happen – there would remain as an earnest of the future this indestructible fact, that thanks solely to a proletarian revolution a backward country has achieved in less than ten years successes unexampled in history” (p. 16).

Evidently there is a steady rise in economy (we will later discuss its character) without “the victory of the proletariat in the leading countries in Europe”. Surely it is abundantly clear that Trotskyism, when it was still a tendency within the workers’ movement, was a variant of Right-Wing Socialism. The Russian Mensheviks said: “Russia is a backward country, and therefore the sole possibility is a bourgeois revolution which will give an impetus to the development of capitalism in Russia.” Trotsky said; “No. A proletarian revolution is possible, but unless this is speedily followed by a proletarian revolution in Europe, it is doomed to collapse.” The basic agreement in these two standpoints is clear. Russia cannot on the basis of its own resources build up a Socialist order of society.

The legend has been assiduously spread by the Trotskyists that until Stalin raised the question in 1924 no one had ever seriously thought of the possibility of building “Socialism in a single country”, and in this we are told that Stalin was simply expressing the outlook of the young, ignorant and bumptious “bureaucracy” growing up in the Party and the State.

Now it is true that Marx and Engels, the founders of scientific Socialism, held that Socialism would triumph through the workers coming to power in the leading countries of Europe – France, Britain and Germany.

Already in 1915 Lenin referred to the possibility of building Socialism in a single country.

“Uneven economic and political development is an absolute law of capitalism. Hence, the victory of Socialism is possible, first in a few or even in one single capitalist country. The victorious proletariat of that country, having expropriated the capitalists and organised its own socialist production, would *confront* the rest of the capitalist world, attract to itself the oppressed classes of other countries, raise revolts among them against the capitalists, and, in the event of necessity, come out even with armed force against the exploiting classes and their States” (“The United States of Europe,” *Selected Works*, Vol. V, p. 141).

It is clear that long before the controversy broke out on this question in the Soviet Union, Lenin was envisaging the possibility of the victorious working class in a single country “organising its own Socialist production”.

What led Lenin to arrive at this theory? Primarily his studies of the new phase of capitalism – Imperialism – which had developed after the two great leaders of international Socialism had passed away.

In the Imperialist stage of capitalism, the law of accelerated unequal development holds good. True, unequal development of the various countries existed at all stages of capitalism, but in the Imperialist phase of development it takes new and sharper forms. Germany and France were roughly equal in economic and military strength about 1870. Thirty years later the accelerated economic development of Germany placed her far ahead of France. Japan emerged from a status of dependency to that of a world power within a quarter of a century. Great Britain in the same period was caught up and passed by the United States of America. Thus the relations of economic, military and political strength between the various countries undergo extremely rapid changes. These rapid changes in the relative strength of the various countries take place at a time when the world has already been divided up by the various Imperialist powers – a division based on the relation of forces existing at the time when it took place. The new rapidly developing countries – Germany and Japan – find themselves left out in the cold. Hence their drive for a new division of the colonies and markets of the world, the sharpening of all contradictions, internal and external, in the various countries, and the unloosing of world war in

1914. In that world war the Imperialist system snapped at its weakest link – viz. Tsarist Russia.

The accelerated unequal development of capitalism leads therefore to a sharpening of the struggle between the various Imperialist countries, between the Imperialist countries and the colonies, and between the Imperialist rulers and their own working class. Because the revolutionary break-through takes place at a time when the differences between the Imperialist powers have reached the most acute stage, it is possible for the revolutionary government to utilise these differences, to prevent a united intervention and to secure for itself a breathing space to develop Socialist production.

In one of his most important pronouncements, written just before his death, Lenin returned to the question of the possibility of building Socialism in the Soviet Union.

“As a matter of fact, the power of the State over all large-scale means of production, the power of the State in the hands of the proletariat, the alliance of this proletariat with the many millions of small and very small peasants, the assured leadership of the peasantry by the proletariat, etc.; is not this all that is necessary in order from the co-operatives – from the co-operatives alone, which we formerly treated as huckstering, and which, from a certain aspect, we have the right to treat as such now, under the New Economic Policy’ – is not this all that is necessary in order to build complete Socialist society? This is not yet the building of Socialist society, but it is all that is necessary and sufficient for the building” (Lenin, “On Co-operation”, *Selected Works*, Vol. IX, p. 403).

It is true, as Trotsky asserts (*The Revolution Betrayed*, p. 62), that when the programme of the Bolshevik Party was drawn up, the Bolsheviks were banking on the development of the revolution in Europe (as they had every right to, for the revolution actually came in Central Europe – to be betrayed by Right-Wing “Socialism”). But the fact that the Bolsheviks were banking on the revolution in Europe when it was so obviously maturing does not mean that they regarded it as impossible to build Socialism in Soviet Russia even if the revolution elsewhere was not victorious.

One of the most remarkable of the Trotskyist myths – which has found ready acceptance amongst capitalist and Right-Wing So-



cialist publicists – is that the essence of the controversy between Trotsky and the Bolshevik Party was around the question of whether the world revolution should be abandoned or not – the world revolution being in the estimation of these people a kind of missionary enterprise to which one gives or withholds donations. A reference to the documents of the controversy will show that no such question was ever under discussion. The Russian workers and their Communist Party have always recognised the need for rendering fraternal assistance to the workers of other countries engaged in decisive struggles. It is true that with regard to events in England and China in the years 1927-8, the Trotskyists propounded policies of incredible *naïveté*. Later, they were to propound policies of war-like adventurism, but discussions on international affairs were subordinate to the main controversy, as to the possibility of building Socialism; and even as far as they were concerned, it was two conceptions as to what international policy should be that were in conflict, and not an internationalist conception in conflict with a nationalist conception.

It was fully recognised by the Bolshevik Party that, given the lagging behind of the revolution in other countries, there would be a growing danger of capitalist intervention, and that therefore the victory of Socialism in the Soviet Union would only be fully consolidated by the triumph of the workers in the leading countries of Europe.

“After consolidating its power and leading the peasantry after it, the proletariat of the victorious country can and must build up Socialist society. But does that mean that in this way the proletariat will secure a complete and final victory for Socialism, *i.e.*, does it mean that with the forces of a single country it can finally consolidate Socialism and fully guarantee that country against intervention, which means against restoration?”

Stalin posed this question, only to answer: “Certainly not” (*Foundations of Leninism*, § III).

There was no controversy therefore as to whether the Soviet proletariat should aid the revolutionary struggle of the workers in other countries. There was no controversy as to the danger of capitalist restoration arising from a successful intervention. The controversy was: could the Soviet Union, by its own unaided resources,

establish a fully Socialist society in its own territory? That was the essence of the dispute between Trotsky and the Bolshevik Party, and from this dispute there arose two different policies within the Soviet Union – a Bolshevik policy of Socialist construction, and a Trotsky policy of surrender and fright in face of the capitalist elements – varied from time to time by the advocacy of adventurist leaps in the dark.

What was the essence of the Trotskyist position?

“It implies, first of all, lack of confidence in the fact that, owing to certain conditions of development in our country, the basic masses of the peasantry can be *drawn into* the work of Socialist construction.

“It implies, secondly, lack of confidence in the fact that the proletariat of our country, which holds the key positions in our national economy, is *capable* of drawing the basic masses of the peasantry into the work of Socialist construction” (Stalin, *Problems of Leninism*, § III).

That was the essence of the dispute, and that the whole course of development in the Soviet Union has completely routed Trotsky we will prove in unmistakable fashion. But meantime we must deal with Trotsky’s account in *The Revolution Betrayed* of the controversies between himself and the Party.

In a chapter entitled “Economic Growth and the Zigzags of the Leadership”, Trotsky maintains the following thesis: that during the Civil War a system of war communism was pursued that was in essence “the systematic regimentation of consumption in a besieged fortress”. And that this system of military communism was based not only on the exigencies of war but on the belief that an early victory of the Revolution in the West would enable the Soviet State to pass from military communism to genuine communism.

The effect of military communism, Trotsky continues, was to lead to a catastrophic fall in production and “the country and the Government was brought to the very edge of the abyss”; Lenin, however, introduced the New Economic Policy, in order to restore the connection between the peasantry and socialist industry and give the peasantry a stimulus to produce agricultural goods which could be exchanged for industrial goods. In seeking to maintain the connection with the peasantry, Trotsky asserts, the Soviet Government made the mistake of leaning on the rich peasants – the kulaks – who

were exploiters of labour; Bukharin, who was the “theoretician of the ruling faction” at this time, issued the slogan to the peasantry “get rich” and suggested that the peasant exploiters, the kulaks, might grow into Socialism (p. 32). Stalin, according to Trotsky, even suggested the denationalisation of the land (p. 33). The rich peasants had effective control of the saleable grain and withheld it; consequently the export of grain fell, the country being unable to obtain sufficient grain to export abroad in exchange for manufactured goods. On the industrial field the Trotskyists, who were putting forward the policy of a rapid industrialisation of the country, encountered the sharpest resistance of the Party leadership. “Stalin thundered against the fantastic plans of the opposition.... The 15th Party Congress, meeting in December 1927 for the final smashing of the plans of the ‘super-industrialisers’ gave warning of the danger of too great involvement of State capital in big construction” (p. 37). “Irresoluteness before the individual peasant enterprises, distrust of large plans, defence of a minimum tempo, neglect of international problems – all this, taken together, formed the essence of the theory of Socialism in a single country” (p. 38). But facts were stubborn things, says Trotsky: the rich peasants, whose very existence the Party had denied (p. 41), rose up and threatened the Soviet Government. There was a sharp turn in Government policy in 1929. The slogan of Bukharin “get rich” was repudiated (p. 40) and the Party commenced to drive energetically towards the collectivisation of agriculture which up to now it had been opposing. The first successes of collectivisation in agriculture turned the head of the Party leaders, who rushed into a policy of utterly reckless collectivisation. “They collectivised not only horses, cows, sheep, but even newborn chickens” (p. 44). Because the Party had opposed the building of collective farms (so Trotsky’s argument runs), it was unprepared to carry through the policy effectively with a minimum of losses, and agricultural production suffered a terrific decline; the regime was brought to the verge of collapse.

Fortunately, says Trotsky, the world economic crisis “had created throughout the capitalist world bewildered, watchful, waiting. Nobody was ready for war. Nobody dare attempt it” (p. 47). And so the Soviet Union survived and some of the mistakes being made by the “bureaucracy” (this is Trotsky’s synonym for the Communist Party) were corrected. And so “a historic glance at the economic policy of the Soviet Government and its zigzags has seemed to us

(i.e., Trotsky) necessary to destroy that artificially inculcated individualistic fetishism which finds the sources of success, both real and pretended, in the extraordinary quality of the leadership and not in the conditions of socialised property created by the Revolution” (p. 48).

We will see that there is hardly a word of truth in this sketch of the economic development of the Soviet Union. The reader will not have failed to note, however, that the whole sketch does lead up to the conclusion that in the years between 1922 and 1932, the only “extraordinary quality of leadership” manifested in respect to the Soviet Union was that of Trotsky. It is he who had previously told the world that “a steady rise of Socialist economy in Russia will not be possible until after the victory of the proletariat in the leading countries of Europe”, that a workers’ government in Russia would encounter “hostile collisions, not only with all the bourgeois groups which had helped the revolution in its early stages, but likewise with the peasant masses whose co-operation had raised the proletariat to power”; it is this man, whose whole political life has been shot through with utter scepticism as to the capacity of the Russian workers and peasants, who is now hinting that he is the real author of the Five Year Plan and of the policy of collectivising agriculture – an honour which certain ignoramuses in the bourgeois world have also not been slow to bestow upon him. This myth only passes muster with those who know nothing of the panic-stricken contortions of Trotsky throughout the whole history of the Soviet Union.

We will begin with 1922. The New Economic Policy is in full swing. The State holds in its hands the “commanding heights” of the economic life of the country – the land, the large-scale industries, the banks, the monopoly of foreign trade. But it allows a freedom – within limits carefully defined by the State – for private trade, and in the countryside the farms are cultivated on the basis of individual peasant economy. Thus, under the rule of the Soviet Government, capitalist elements exist alongside Socialist elements in the economy of the country. The question of which will come on top is still undecided. Will the working class, in possession of the State and of large-scale industry, be able to lead the majority of the peasantry along the path to Socialism, or will the capitalist elements in town and country grow to such an extent that they win a commanding influence over the peasantry, economically and politically undermine the rule of the working class, and ultimately overthrow it?

The New Economic Policy was to a certain extent a retreat. The Party for *the time being* had given up the effort to apply Socialist forms, Socialist methods of distribution, all along the line. Trotsky's companion in disbelief in the forces of the Russian workers, Zinoviev, was later to declare that the New Economic Policy was Leninism's "most far-reaching movement of retreat", a retreat imposed by the backward agrarian character of the country, a retreat in order that the working class would establish good relationships with the peasantry, until – as Zinoviev argued – the proletarian revolution in other countries came to the rescue. Neither Zinoviev nor Trotsky saw that the New Economic Policy was a retreat for a quite different purpose – that of reorganising the ranks of the working class in order to proceed to a new offensive against the capitalist elements in the country, with a view to their complete elimination. This, and not a retreat in order to wait for the world revolution, was its essence.

At the introduction of the New Economic Policy, Lenin, while stressing the necessity of a highly developed industry as the basis of Socialism, emphasised that in order to develop industry, it was necessary in the existing condition of the country to begin with the revival of agriculture, so that the necessary raw materials would be available for industry, food would be available for the workers, and the market for the products of industry would be developed. This was the first period of the New Economic Policy.

The Labour Parties of Western Europe regarded the New Economic Policy as the complete confirmation of their view that the Russian revolution was a bourgeois revolution. They held that the Bolsheviks through their New Economic Policy were really preparing the way for an accelerated capitalist development in Russia.

Otto Bauer wrote:

"The rule of the workers and peasants now takes the form of the dictatorship of the proletariat. I describe this second phase in my pamphlet *Bolshevism or Social Democracy* (Vienna, 1920). Also in this brochure I present the dictatorship of the proletariat as a necessary transitional phase that through the agrarian revolution must create the prerequisites for the rise of the peasantry and the development of Russia to a bourgeois democracy....

"The Soviet Government is compelled by economic necessity to fulfil the needs and wishes of this new bour-

geoisie.... It is a capitalist economy that we see rising again; a capitalist economy ruled by the new bourgeoisie, which supports itself upon the millions of peasant economy, and to which the legislation and administration of the State must adapt itself" (Otto Bauer, *The New Course in Soviet Russia*, Vienna, 1921).

The capitalist class in Western Europe were only too willing to believe that the "Socialist experiment" had failed and that Russia was returning to capitalism.

At the world economic conference held in 1922, the two old foxes of European capitalism, David Lloyd George and Aristide Briand, showed a quite understandable eagerness to accelerate the return of the Russian prodigal to the fold. They were prepared to grant credits to the Soviet Union provided the Tsarist debts were recognised to the extent of 14,000,000,000 roubles, the foreign capitalists whose enterprises the Soviet Government had nationalised were compensated, and the monopoly of foreign trade was abolished. On the basis of the acceptance of these demands, which would have made Soviet Russia a colony of European capitalism, bygones would be bygones. The Soviet delegation, acting on the instructions of the Central Committee of the Party, contemptuously rejected these terms, but in the inner-Party discussions it became clear that a number of leading figures had no faith in the capacity of the Russian workers to overcome the difficulties with which they were confronted, let alone build a new order of society.

Sokolnikov, whom we will later encounter as a henchman of Trotsky, wanted to abolish the State Monopoly of Foreign Trade. Zinoviev and Kamenev were prepared to hand back to Leslie Urquhart, the well-known British capitalist, the enterprises which he had formerly owned in Russia, While Trotsky was prepared to allow State enterprises to mortgage themselves to foreign capitalists. All these propositions were decisively rejected. But those elements who were in favour of a surrender policy were by no means convinced, and at the 12th Congress of the Party held in April 1923 Krassin and Ossinsky, on the discussion of the report of the Central Committee, declared that the Party did not fully grasp the complicated character of the economic problems confronting the country and that by wrong directives it was needlessly disturbing the work of the economic organs of the State. They therefore demanded that the influ-

ence of the Party on these organs should be confined within definite limits and that the economic experts be allowed more initiative than was the case at this moment. In effect, this meant that economic specialists of bourgeois origin should be exempt from Party control.

The Central Committee had radically to change a thesis on industrial problems (drawn up by Trotsky for submission to this conference) which maintained the same dangerous standpoint. More power to the non-Party bureaucracy of bourgeois origin was the essence of Trotsky's position. This did not, of course, prevent him coming out in the autumn of the same year with a campaign directed against "bureaucracy" in the Communist Party.

The economic policy which Trotsky and his followers developed in this discussion was of a threefold character.

They were for squeezing the peasantry as a means of obtaining funds for the industrialisation of the country. The working class had to treat the peasantry as a colony, to extract the utmost from them by means of charging high prices for industrial goods. That this risked breaking the alliance with the peasantry was obvious, but then on Trotsky's theory of "permanent revolution" the working class must inevitably come into conflict with the peasantry anyhow.

In industry the Trotskyists supported the closing down of all factories which were not at that moment producing a profit, including the great Pudlov works in Petrograd. (Later, of course, Trotsky was to appear on the scene with a programme of super-industrialisation.)

In the sphere of finance he opposed the stabilisation of the rouble, declaring this to be impossible. In *The Revolution Betrayed* (p. 30) he admits the value of an organised currency in helping the economic recovery of the country, modestly omitting his own attitude to the introduction of this organised currency.

Up to this point, Trotsky in the inner councils of the Party is in the main surrendering in the face of economic difficulties, without seeking to conceal his surrender by revolutionary bluff and swagger. Politically, he still regards Zinoviev and Kamenev as his main enemies, who have got to be smashed at any price. Zinoviev and Kamenev for their part are out to hound Trotsky from all leading positions.

The follower of Trotsky, Max Eastman, was busy at this period writing a book *Since Lenin Died* in which the proud, heroic Trotsky is portrayed as seeking to rescue the Party from the two wicked un-

cles, Kamenev and Zinoviev. In a few short months, the noble heroes and the wicked uncles embraced and united against another enemy – Stalin.

Trotsky was later to claim with a considerable measure of truth that it was not he who embraced the wicked uncles, but the wicked uncles who embraced him.

It happened in the following way. The New Economic Policy involved a certain growth of the capitalist elements in town and country. In the towns new capitalist middlemen began to appear. In the villages the *rich* peasants waxed fat and kicked against the policy of the Soviet Government. They began to penetrate into the village Soviets and to win a certain influence over the middle peasants. In certain areas they passed over to the murder of Soviet officials and village correspondents. On the other hand, certain officials in the villages were adopting a domineering attitude with regard to the *middle* peasants, denying them the right to vote in the local Soviets. In Georgia the Right-Wing Socialists, aided by foreign imperialism and supported by the former landlords and by the rich peasants, organised an insurrection which was crushed in a few days. In other villages up and down the country considerable unrest manifested itself and even some poor peasants came under the influence of the village capitalists.

These were dangerous developments which made it necessary for the Party to discuss ways and means of strengthening the alliance of the working class and poor peasants with the middle peasants. At the 14th Party Conference, which met in April 1925, the poor and the middle peasants were helped by a 40 per cent reduction of the agricultural tax. The employment of wage labour by the middle peasants was allowed, subject to the rigid enforcement of the labour laws of the country.

The principal measure for drawing the poor and middle peasants into closer alliance with the working class was the development of the co-operative movement in the villages, the building up of agricultural distributive and credit cooperatives. This was regarded as the first step to bringing the poor and middle peasants into a higher form of co-operative association – the collective farm.

Alongside these economic measures it was decided to enliven the village Soviets to make them genuinely elective institutions, to build up Soviet democracy throughout the countryside. It was necessary once and for all to abandon domineering methods.



“Communists,” declared Stalin, “should abandon certain outrageous methods of administration. We must not be content with having only one way of dealing with the peasantry. When a peasant does not understand what we are driving at, we should exercise patience and explain the matter to him; we must succeed in convincing him. To achieve this end we must spare neither time nor energy” (*Leninism*, Vol. 1, p. 250).

Such was the policy of strengthening the alliance with the middle peasant.

At a special meeting of the Central Committee of the Communist Party in October the same year, special measures were taken (on the basis of a report by Molotov, the present Soviet premier) to give material assistance to the poor peasants and to organise them into groups, who, under the leadership of the Communist Party, were to carry on special campaigns in the Soviet elections and in the co-operative elections, to win over the middle peasants and to weaken the peasant capitalists. These special measures were taken against the capitalist peasant, be it noted, at the very moment when, according to Trotsky, the Soviet press was denying his existence (*The Revolution Betrayed*, p. 41).

The resolutions of the 14th Party Conference were also notable for the fact that they re-iterated and re-emphasised the Leninist line as to the possibility of the building of Socialism in a single country.

It was against this line that all the faint-hearts and sceptics, with all the capitalist elements of the country striving for the full restoration of capitalism, were soon to assemble and fight. The opening shots in the campaign were fired by Kamenev and Zinoviev. Trotsky, on the eve of his second rapprochement with them in 1932, described them as follows: “Zinoviev was primarily an agitator, exceptionally talented, but almost exclusively an agitator. Kamenev was a ‘wise politician’ in Lenin’s estimation, but lacking great will power and too easily inclined to adapt himself to the intellectual, culturally middle-class and bureaucratic milieu.” Such were the shining lights of what later called itself the “Left Opposition”. At a meeting of the Central Committee before the 14th Party Conference, Kamenev and Zinoviev asserted that it was impossible for the Soviet Union to overcome its internal difficulties on account of its economic and technical backwardness; that unless the European

revolution came to the aid of the Soviet Union, the country would reel impotently from difficulty to difficulty.

Immediately after the 14th Conference they began to prepare for the struggle. Zinoviev wrote a text book on *Leninism*, ostensibly directed against Trotsky, but actually directed against the policy of the 14th Party Conference. The New Economic Policy is described as a "peculiar State capitalism in the proletarian State"; the nationalised industries, banks and the monopoly of foreign trade were described as State capitalist enterprises; the essence of the New Economic Policy was described as a retreat, the granting of serious concessions to the peasantry in order to maintain the alliance with them, was said to be to gain time until the proletarian revolution in other countries came to the rescue. Above all, there was contained in this book a misrepresentation of Lenin's attitude to the middle peasantry which was to serve as the basis for a sharp attack on the whole agrarian policy of the Party.

Lenin had formulated three different attitudes to the peasantry in accordance with the different stages of the Revolution. When it was a question of overthrowing the tsar and the landlords, Lenin defined the attitude of the working class as: "the proletariat, joining to itself the peasantry (*i.e.*, *all* the peasants. *J.R.C.*), will neutralise the liberal bourgeoisie and utterly destroy the monarchy, medievalism and landlordism."

When the Revolution had reached a stage when it was necessary and possible to overthrow the capitalist class, Lenin issued the slogan "an alliance of the proletariat with the *poor* peasantry against all the bourgeoisie, while neutralising the *middle* peasantry".

The reason for this slogan is well described by Stalin.

"The middle peasant is a man whose motto is: 'Wait and see.' He watches out, till he discovers which party is the stronger; he watches out, and not until we have gained the upper hand and have driven out the great landowners and the bourgeois, is he ready to enter into an alliance with us. Such is his nature as a middle peasant. That is why, during the second phase of our revolution, we could no longer have as our slogan an alliance of the workers with the peasantry as a whole, but only an alliance of the workers with the poor peasants" (*Leninism*, Vol. I, p. 403).

At a later stage of the revolution when the power of the workers

was consolidated, Lenin issued a third slogan, "Alliance of the proletariat and the poor peasants with the middle peasants", the purpose of this alliance being the drawing of the middle peasantry into the work of building up Socialism. It was this slogan that lay at the basis of the resolution of the 14th Conference, and yet Zinoviev, in a tedious, pseudo-learned exposition of Lenin's views on the peasantry, purposely omitted this slogan.

This was no academic dispute about texts. If the middle peasant was at best a semi-hostile element, who had to be "neutralised", then it was clearly absurd to expect him to co-operate in building up Socialism. The best that one could hope to do was to keep him out of mischief by preventing him from lining up with the rich peasant in active hostility to the Soviet power.

In challenging the policy of alliance with the middle peasantry, Zinoviev was steering for a break between this powerful section of the peasantry and the working class. If this had been successful, the great success of collectivised agriculture in the Soviet Union would have been impossible. For the collectivisation of agriculture was not something that could be carried through by Government decree. It required the loyal co-operation of millions of middle peasants, a loyal co-operation rendered possible by the fact that the policy of the Soviet Government in the years between 1924 and 1928 had won their confidence. If the Party had accepted Zinoviev's line in 1924, it would have been completely disastrous to attempt to pass to a policy of accelerated collectivisation four years later, for the necessary support in the countryside would have been lacking.

Between the 14th Party Conference in April 1925 and the 14th Party Congress in December of that year, Kamenev and Zinoviev gathered their forces for the struggle. As the leader of the strong Leningrad organisation of the Party, Zinoviev was able, by dint of careful and unscrupulous preparation, by misrepresenting the views of the Central Committee, to ensure that the Leningrad delegation to the Congress would support his point of view.

The main resolution at this Congress dealt with the struggle for the industrialisation of the country, because a new phase had been reached in the development of the New Economic Policy. While in the first period of the New Economic Policy it was necessary above all to stress the revival of agriculture as the source of food for the workers, raw material for the industries, and as a market for industrial goods, it was now necessary to lay stress on the intensive and

extensive development of industry in order to lay the foundations of Socialism. In order to bring agriculture rapidly forward, industry had to be in a position to supply the peasants with agricultural machinery and tractors. For this purpose, not all industry was of equal importance. It was necessary to concentrate in the first place on the coal, iron and steel and engineering industries, the industries constructing machinery for other industries; for it was obvious that until the Soviet Union could construct its own machinery, it was in fact economically dependent on the capitalist world and in war time would be at its mercy – as the experience of the European war had shown.

One of the more impudent legends circulated by the Trotskyists is that Stalin, after having defeated Trotsky, borrowed Trotsky's policy for the rapid industrialisation of the country – hence the Five Year Plan. Trotsky calmly tells us (*The Revolution Betrayed*, p. 40) that at the end of 1928, "Industrialisation was put on the order of the day". But the decision to carry out immediately a policy of rapid industrialisation was decided at the 14th Party Congress in December 1925 – nine months before Trotsky and Zinoviev became reconciled enough even to talk to each other, let alone formulate an opposition programme on the question of industrialisation, and more than three years before the time referred to by Trotsky. Indeed, the only opposition speaker who dealt with the question of industrialisation in detail at the 14th Congress was Sokolnikov, who criticised the Party for laying stress on this aspect of economic life. It was necessary, he argued, for the Party first to render especial assistance to agriculture so that it would build up its exports over a period of years, and on that basis more foreign manufactured goods could be procured for the industrialisation of the country.

This star economist of the Zinoviev opposition was in favour of delaying the commencement of the drive for industrialisation, and he understood by industrialisation the development of industry in general and not what was most vital, the creation of a Soviet Heavy and Engineering Industry, capable of supplying the country's needs. In short, surrender and pessimism in the face of difficulties was still the keynote of the public pronouncements of the opposition.

Zinoviev's speech was in the same strain. Quotations were given to prove that Lenin regarded the State enterprises of the Soviet Union as State capitalist enterprises, that the policy of "Socialism in a single country" was in opposition to all that Lenin had

taught, that it was bad internationalism, "national narrow-mindedness". Of course, Zinoviev did not deny that it was possible to enact certain Socialistic measures in the Soviet Union. He merely denied that, without the aid of international revolution, these measures could lead to the creation of a Socialist society. It was a long, long way to Socialism, he argued, and without aid from outside the Soviet Union would never get there.

On the peasant question, Zinoviev sharply criticised Bukharin, who had given the peasants the slogan "get rich". This slogan (despite Trotsky's statement in *The Revolution Betrayed*, p. 40) had been immediately condemned by the Central Committee, and Bukharin had been forced to write an article withdrawing it. But the fact that it had been uttered was, Zinoviev contended, an indication that the Party was overlooking the danger of the growth of capitalist forces in the countryside; here was a terrible danger, and unless the Party directed heavy fire against those who were concealing the danger all would be lost. The whole speech was a nightmarish exaggeration of the strength of the forces of capitalism and a consequent depreciation of the forces making for Socialism. Panic was the keynote of this speech as it was the keynote of Sokolnikov's. The cloaking of panic in "Left" phrases was still to come when the master phrasemonger, Trotsky, became part of the "new opposition".

In his opening speech at this Congress, Stalin had replied to Zinoviev in advance. He admitted that there were those who underestimated the growth of capitalist elements in the village, who overlooked the need for conducting a struggle against the rich peasant. But these elements were not so dangerous as those who were out immediately to destroy the rich peasants root and branch, and to pursue a policy of breaking the alliance with the middle peasants.

"Both the deviations are dangerous; both of them are bad; we must not waste time discussing whether one of them is worse than the other. But it is a practical necessity to discuss which of them we were best prepared to fight. If you were to ask whether the Party is better prepared to undertake a ruthless struggle against the kulaks, or (ignoring the kulaks for the time being) to enter into an alliance with the middle peasants, I believe that ninety-nine Communists out of a hundred would say that the Party is better prepared

to act on the watchword: 'let's go for the kulaks!' If we were to let those comrades have their way, the kulaks would promptly be stripped to the buff. As regards the rival policy, the policy of those who, instead of trying to destroy the kulaks out of hand, want to pursue the far more complicated plan of isolating the kulaks by entering into an alliance with the middle peasants – this is one which the comrades are by no means ready to accept. That is why I believe that the Party in its struggle against these two deviations, must concentrate its fire upon the second deviation" (*Leninism*) Vol. I, p. 413).

The early years of the first Five Year Plan were to show the correctness of Stalin's estimate. The Party was then ready to go for the kulak, but its success was guaranteed because in the years since 1925 it had built up the alliance with the middle peasants as the basis for the attack on the village exploiters.

The significance of the building of Socialism in a single country for the world revolution was brilliantly outlined in the same speech.

"What do the proletarians of the West need in order to win their way to victory? Above all, they need faith in their own powers; a conviction that the working class can get along without the bourgeoisie; the conviction that the working class is competent, not only to destroy the old, but likewise to build up the new, to build up Socialism. The main endeavour of the social democrats, the reformists, is to instil scepticism into the workers' minds, to make the workers doubt their own powers, doubt their capacity for winning by force a victory over the bourgeoisie. The significance of all our work, of all our constructive work, is that it serves as a demonstration to the working class in capitalist countries that they too will be able to get along without the bourgeoisie, and will be able unaided to build a new society.... Once the workers in capitalist countries have acquired faith in their own powers, you may be certain that this is the beginning of the end of capitalism, and a sure sign that the victory of the proletarian revolution is at hand" (*Leninism*, Vol. I, pp. 424-5).

May those who think that the policy of Socialism in one country is inconsistent with the pursuit of the world revolution ponder on this paragraph again and again.

Incidentally, at this Congress Stalin emphatically denied that he had ever advocated the de-nationalisation of the land, which does not prevent Trotsky from again (*The Revolution Betrayed*, p. 33) asserting this as if it was undisputed historical fact.

The 14th Party Congress administered a decisive blow to Zinoviev, and his influence in Leningrad was soon reduced to zero. In seeking to regain influence he turned to Trotsky.

“Zinoviev and Kamenev came to us,” declared Trotsky. “There is no need to recapitulate the degree to which the coming over to the side of the opposition of 1923 of the sworn enemies of yesterday strengthened the assurance of our ranks and our conviction in our historical correctness” (*Soviet Economy in Danger*, 1932).

From now on the struggle of the opposition against the policy of Socialism in a single country was to be conducted not on the basis of the lachrymose pessimism of Zinoviev, but on the Trotskyist basis of “be more revolutionary than everybody else” – in words of course.

There are two sharply contrasted elements in the programme of the Trotsky-Zinoviev opposition. At one moment they argue, in the most detailed fashion, that it is completely impossible to build a Socialist society in the Soviet Union, and in the next breath they argue that the Party majority which believes that it is possible to build Socialism in the Soviet Union is pursuing a policy that is encouraging the development of tire capitalist elements in the country, and that it is necessary to put forward a programme which will curb these capitalist elements.

Let us examine some of the arguments brought forward against the possibility of building Socialism in a single country. At a meeting of the enlarged Executive Committee of the Communist International, held in December 1926, Zinoviev roundly asserted that in the Soviet Union it was impossible to bring the peasantry into the construction of Socialism because heavy industry could not be developed to a sufficient extent in the Soviet Union to enable the State to direct the peasantry along Socialist paths (*International Press Correspondence*, January 7th, 1927).

Trotsky was even more specific. "The precondition for Socialism is heavy industry and machine-building." He went on to argue that, prior to the war, 63 per cent of the tools and machines in use in Russia were imported. They had just restored industry to its pre-war level, and they would not be able to develop a machine-building industry without greatly increasing their exports of goods to the capitalist countries. This would make the development of the Soviet State more than ever dependent upon capitalist economy.

"In reality our Socialist State is constantly – directly or indirectly – under the equalising control of the world market. The tempo of development is not an arbitrary one. It is determined by world development as a whole, because in the last instance world economy controls each of its sections, even if the section in question is under the dictatorship of the proletariat and is building up a Socialist industry" (*International Press Correspondence*, January 7th, 1927).

There is no glimmering here of the possibility of a Socialist State, using its monopoly of foreign trade, succeeding in insulating itself from the anarchical forces of the world market. Yet life has demonstrated that this is possible.

Trotsky, on pages 14 and 15 of *The Revolution Betrayed*, answers his own case when he is forced to admit the enormous advance of production in Soviet industry in recent years, as compared with decline and stagnation in the capitalist world. Nor does Trotsky's standpoint take into account the enormous forces of growth that a Socialist Government can unloose even in a comparatively economically backward country. After misrepresenting the arguments for the building of Socialism in a single country as arguments for a Socialist State completely isolated from the capitalist world, he says:

"If we attempt to ignore the division of labour in world industry, and jump over our economic past that has made our industry what it is now, in one word, if, according to the famous 'Socialist' Monroe Doctrine, which is now being preached to us, we are to make everything ourselves, this will unavoidably mean an extreme slowing down of the tempo of our economic development" (*International Press Correspondence*, January 7th, 1927).



Here again his own summary of the achievements of the Soviet Union gives the lie to this famous prediction when he says: "The vast scope of industrialisation in the Soviet Union, as against a background of stagnation and decline in almost the whole capitalist world, appears unanswerable in the following cross indices" (*The Revolution Betrayed*, p. 14).

But alongside the accusations that the Party is attempting an impossibility in seeking to build Socialism in a single country there is the directly opposite assertion that the Party by its wrong policy is helping to strengthen the capitalist elements of the country to such an extent that these elements might switch the entire development on to capitalist rails. The platform of the opposition issued in 1927 says:

"Twenty-five million small farms constitute the fundamental source of capitalist tendencies in Russia. The Kulak caste, gradually emerging from this mass, is repeating the process of primitive accumulation of capital, digging a broad mine under the socialist position. The further destiny of this process depends ultimately upon the relation between the growth of the state enterprise and the private. The slow pace of our industries vastly increases the tempo of class differentiation among the peasants and the political dangers arising from it."

"The camp of the bourgeois and the petty bourgeoisie who trail after it are placing all their hopes upon private initiative and the personal interest of the manufacturer. This camp is staking its play on the 'strong peasant', aiming to make the co-operatives, the industries and our foreign trade serve this peasant's interest. This camp believes that the socialist industry ought not to count on a State budget, that its development ought not to be rapid enough to injure the interest of the FARMER capitalist. The struggle for the increased productivity of labour means to the strengthening petty bourgeois a pressure on the muscles and nerves of the workers. The struggle for lower prices means to him a cutting down of the accumulation of the socialist industries in the interest of commercial capital. The struggle with bureaucracy means to him a disorganisation of industry, a weakening of the planning centres. It means a pushing into

the background of all the heavy industries, with the near prospect of an abandonment of the monopoly of foreign trade. That is the course of the Ustrialovs. The name of that course is capitalism on the instalment plan. It is a strong tendency in this country, and exercises an influence on certain circles of our party" (*Platform of the Opposition*, 1927).

Such was the picture of the growth of capitalist influences in the Soviet Union, presented by the Trotskyists barely eleven years ago. This policy of capitalist restoration, they alleged, was being assisted by Stalin.

"The Ustrialov course is a development of the productive forces on a capitalist basis by way of a gradual eating away of the conquests of October. The Stalin course leads, in objective reality, to a lowering of the relative weight of the socialist element, and this prepares the way for the final victory of the Ustrialov course" (*Platform of the Opposition*).

There is no ambiguity about the charges here. Stalin was, perhaps unconsciously, preparing for "the final victory of the Ustrialov course", *i.e.*, for the restoration of capitalism. Here is a prophecy of doom if Stalin beats Trotsky. The Party, the Trotskyists asserted, was most obviously being influenced by the forces representing the capitalist peasant and middleman.

"Not only are careerism, bureaucratism and inequality growing in the party in recent years, but muddy streams from alien and class hostile sources are flowing into it – for instance anti-Semitism" (*Platform of the Opposition*).

The Soviets were in a bad way; they were becoming the instrument of the enemy classes:

"Under the continual growth of the new bourgeoisie and the Kulak,<sup>1</sup> and their drawing together with the bureaucracy, under the false course of our leadership in general, the Kulak and the Nepman, even when deprived of

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1 Kulak: rich peasant exploiting hired labour.

elective rights, remain able to influence the administrative staff and the policy, at least of the lower Soviet organs, although remaining behind the scenes" (*Platform of the Opposition*).

Was there ever such a situation in the political life of a country? The ruling party, believing that it is possible to build Socialism in the Soviet Union, is directing the efforts of the Russian people organised in the trade unions, co-operatives and Soviets to this end. And an opposition group, which has come out boldly on the platform that it is utterly absurd and nonsensical to talk about achieving Socialism in the Soviet Union, begins to shout that what the party is doing is facilitating a counter-revolution of capitalist peasants and traders.

The opposition groups do not believe that it is possible to eliminate the rich peasants and traders from the economic life of the Soviet Union. The Party does, and prepares to do so amidst an opposition clamour about "degeneration", going back to capitalism, etc. And then when the rich peasants and traders have been eliminated, we shall find Mr. Trotsky still persisting that the Party is "preparing a capitalist restoration" (*The Revolution Betrayed*, p. 231). As we shall see, the real protagonists of capitalist restoration, the real expression of the capitalist forces inside and outside the Soviet Union, are the believers in the thesis that the achievement of a Socialist society in the Soviet Union is impossible. But we anticipate.

Having decided to conceal their pessimism behind bold "Left" phrases, Trotsky and his allies decided to outshout and outbid the universe. The Party having decided on a policy of industrialisation, the opposition begins to shout about the insufficiency of the measures proposed. In one and the same breath the possibility of achieving Socialism in the Soviet Union was ridiculed, and also it was urged that Socialist industry is not being built rapidly enough, and that more funds had to be obtained for this purpose.

Preobrashenski demanded that the State should take from the peasants, by taxation and high prices of industrial goods, not less than Tsarism had taken before the revolution,

Ossorski declared, in an article in the *Bolshevik*, that the Soviet Government was making a great mistake in reducing taxation on the peasants and in supplying them with wealth.

Trotsky declared that the agricultural tax must be one of the most important levers in the accumulation of funds for the development of industry.

The meaning of all this was clear. The politicians, who had predicted that a workers' government was bound to come into hostile collisions with the peasantry, were prepared to advocate a policy that would have led inevitably to such collisions with the main body of the peasantry, with disastrous results for the economy of the country.

The opposition also managed to combine a loud outcry about the existence of the "scissors" – *i.e.*, the high price of industrial as compared with agricultural goods – with a demand for the raising of the price of State-produced goods, which would, they contended, be paid by the private middlemen. The working class, however, had little doubt that the main burden of the increased prices would fall on them and on the mass of the peasantry. One of the ever-recurring complaints of the opposition was of the high profits being made by the middlemen, yet in the midst of this clamour Pyatakov calmly proposed that the government withdraw from State and co-operative trade much of the State resources invested therein, in order that these resources should be utilised in the development of industry, a measure that would have promoted the growth of private retail trade.

Never was there such a mixture of self-contradictory propositions in a political programme – that is, not until Trotsky was "caught up and surpassed" by Goebbels.

Even if the mutually antagonistic propositions were eliminated and the programme was dealt with as something not designed for window-dressing but for application in real life, the crux became abundantly clear. Its taxation and price policy meant the rupture of the alliance with the middle peasantry and the ruin of everything the Party was seeking to do. There could be no drawing of the main body of the peasants into the path of Socialism if the opposition policy was not completely rejected. This was done at the 15th Congress of the Party in December 1927, and the leading oppositionists were excluded from the Party for repeated breaches of discipline.

During the two years of uninterrupted struggle with the opposition the country had been steadily advancing. New branches of industry – engineering and chemicals particularly – had been created, and great enterprises like Dnieperstroï, Magnitogorsk, the Stalin-

grad Tractor Works, the Turksib Railway, had been commenced. Both industry and agriculture had exceeded the pre-war level, and the Congress was in a position to discuss the guiding lines of the first Five Years Plan and the collectivisation of agriculture. Trotsky tells us that during the preparations for this Congress, Molotov, the present President of the Council of Peoples' Commissars, scouted the possibility of large scale collectivisation of agriculture. Trotsky seldom gives the authority for his allegations, and this one is directly contradicted by the fact that Molotov spoke to the resolution on "Work on the Land," which said:

"At the present time the task of amalgamating and transforming the small individual peasant farms with large collective undertakings must be laid down as the main task of the Party in the rural districts" (15th Party Congress, December 1927).

But this misrepresentation is necessary in order to enable Trotsky to assert that the Party had no serious interest in collective agriculture until difficulties on the grain front arose, and then it borrowed his programme.

But why, it may be asked, was it that the Party which in 1925 and 1926 had refused a direct attack on the kulaks, passed over three years later to the policy of eliminating those rich peasants from Soviet economy altogether?

There is no mystery here. The building of Socialism could only be carried through on the basis of decisively attacking the rich peasant, not by tickling him, or irritating him, but by eliminating him. That could only be done on the basis of ruthless class struggle in the countryside, and for this struggle the working class and the poor peasantry required a firm ally – the middle peasant. To have attacked the capitalist peasant in 1925-6 before this alliance had been strengthened would have been a despairing adventure worthy of a Trotsky.

The alliance could only be strengthened and the middle peasant turned towards collectivisation when industry was able to give active support to the peasantry, by the provision of tractors, fertilisers, etc., and when the State was able to advance credits. Further, the middle peasantry had to be led, on the basis of their own experience in agricultural co-operation, to see the possibility of the collective farms. Here the State farms helped the peasantry in the transfer

from the individual to the collective working of the soil. The State farm "SHEVSHENKO" established the first machine and tractor station, and helped the surrounding peasantry with the loan of machinery. The success of these and similar measures led to a powerful turn of the middle peasants to the collective farms. It was the extent of this turn and not merely the existence of difficulties on the grain front that led the Soviet Government to accelerate the process of collectivisation.

In a letter of Lenin's which Trotsky is never tired of quoting, Trotsky himself is described as possessing "too far-reaching self-confidence, and a disposition to be too much attracted to the purely administrative side of affairs". This classic description of a bureaucrat cannot be better exemplified than in the explanation of the turn of collectivisation which Trotsky gives on page 54 of his book. "The forced character of this new course," he declares, "arose from the necessity of finding some salvation from the consequences of the policy of 1923-8." On the contrary, the policy of collectivisation, and the elimination of the class of rich capitalist peasants, was only possible as a result of the closer alliance with the middle peasantry – which was the direct product of the policy of 1923-8. The sharp turn of the Government towards collectivisation was not an administrative contortion. It was based on the mighty mass movement of the peasantry to the collective farms which in turn was the fruit of that attitude towards the peasantry which Trotsky and his satellites had so unscrupulously condemned.

The real character of Trotskyism, as "Left" phrases covering a disbelief in the forces of the workers and a surrender to capitalism, was never better illustrated than when the rich peasant resistance to collectivisation led to a sharp struggle on the countryside. In March 1930 we find him asserting that "the attempt at complete socialist collectivisation of peasant holdings on the basis of the pre-capitalist inventory" is "a most dangerous adventure which threatens to undermine the very possibility of collaboration between the proletariat and the peasantry" (Preface to *The Permanent Revolution*, p. xxii).

In an open letter to the Communist Party of the Soviet Union, in the same period, he paints the prospects in the blackest possible colours.

"All that was said for long years about the opposition

refusing to recognise the necessity of the Smytschka,<sup>1</sup> about the necessity of a correct policy in relation to the peasantry, is for once forgotten, or, to be more correct, transformed into its opposite. The first principles of Marxism are now being trodden underfoot. This has expressed itself most sharply in the sphere of collectivisation. Collectivisation as a direct effect of the purely administrative measures undertaken in the years 1928-9 in the struggle for bread, has now reached an extent that no one had foreseen, and that finds no support in the existing means of production. From this arises the perspective of the ruin of the majority of the collective farms, accompanied by a deep inner struggle, and a continuing undermining of the already extremely low productive power of agriculture....

“One must not forget for a moment that collectivisation did not arise out of the widest experience on the part of the whole peasantry of the advantages of the collective farm over the individual farm, but out of administrative measures in the struggle for bread” (Trotsky, “Open Letter to Members of Communist Party of Soviet Union”, March 23rd, 1930).

Trotsky, who had previously screamed about the Party letting the rich peasant get away with it, now demanded that the Party should:

“Bring the collective farms into line with their real sources of support.

“To abandon the policy of ‘de-kulakisation’ (*i.e.*, the elimination of the rich peasants).

“To hold the exploiting tendencies of the kulaks in check for a long number of years.

“The guiding principle in relation to the kulaks must be an iron ‘contract system’ (a system by which the rich farmers were to supply the State with a certain quantity of their products at fixed prices. *J.R.C.*)” (“Open Letter”).

Thus, in the middle of the struggle, the revolutionary poseur

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1 The link – in this case between the workers and middle and poor peasants.

comes out in his true colours and pleads to the Communist Party to refrain from too quickly eliminating the peasant exploiters.

In the *Bulletin of the Opposition* in 1932, he repeated:

“Under favourable circumstances, external and internal, the material technical conditions of agriculture can, in the course of some ten or fifteen years, be transformed to the bottom, and provide the productive basis for collectivisation. However, during the intervening years, there would be time to overthrow the Soviet power more than once.”

Again unworthy panic. All and more than all that was declared by Trotsky to be possible in ten or fifteen years from 1930 was in fact accomplished by 1934.

It was in this period that Trotsky let loose “winged words” that had a great vogue amongst the Trotskyists, but which they would now like to forget. You cannot, he said, build a transatlantic liner by assembling hundreds of thousands of fishing smacks, and you cannot create modern large scale agriculture by forcing small farmers to pool together their ploughs, their oxen and their chickens.

As a class war flamed up in the countryside, first with the rich peasants outside the collective farms, and then with the rich peasants or their sympathisers inside the farms and seeking to sabotage them, two things at least became abundantly clear – that if the Party had followed the line suggested by Trotsky and Zinoviev, of attacking the rich peasants, before the political and industrial requisites for success were at hand, before it was possible economically to fill the place which the rich peasant occupied in Soviet economy, by properly organised collective farms, then utter disaster would have resulted; and secondly, that if the destinies of the country had in such an eventuality been in the hand of people so liable to swing from optimistic bravado to pessimistic funk as Messrs. Zinoviev and Trotsky, then oft-repeated prophecies of doom had at least a reasonable chance of coining true. The more one contemplates the dangers avoided, the more one can understand the gratitude of the peoples of the Soviet Union for -what the Stalin leadership has accomplished.

All the talk of the Party being under rich peasant influence, in which Zinoviev and Trotsky had indulged, was shown to be nonsense. When three prominent leaders – Rykov, Bukharin and Tomsky – did favour a line which would have strengthened the influence



of the rich peasants, they were brushed aside without the slightest hesitation, having little or no support in the Party.

Rykov, Bukharin and Tomskey represented that section of the Party and State officialdom which stood under the influence of the ex-Tsarist bureaucrats, ex-capitalist experts, and the rich peasants.

Rykov had opposed the thesis of April 1917 which gave a new direction to the Party, and was included among those denounced by Lenin as “‘Old Bolsheviks’ who have more than once played so sorry a part in the history of our Party, by repeating a formula meaninglessly learned by rote instead of studying the specific and new features of actual reality”. He had wavered at the time of the October Revolution and had resigned his post as People’s Commissar in an endeavour to force the Bolsheviks to take the discredited Right-Wing Socialist groups into a coalition Government.

Bukharin was primarily a populariser of Marxism or rather what he believed to be such. As a theoretician he was enamoured of cut-and-dried schemes into which he tried to fit reality. He appears first as a “Left” Communist, peddling an anarchist theory of the State and a beautiful schematic conception of Imperialism; and of course, he was more “Left” than anyone else. At bottom he accepted Trotsky’s point of view that without the assistance of the world revolution Russia could not survive as a Socialist State. When Lenin was urging the signing of the peace of Brest-Litovsk, Bukharin, proceeding from abstract “principles”, and ignoring the concrete problems of the Soviet State, had opposed what he designated as a shameful compromise with German Imperialism. Under his influence the Moscow Regional Committee of the Communist Party in 1918 adopted a resolution which declared that if the Brest-Litovsk treaty was signed the Soviet Government would become a mere formality, having no value whatever from the standpoint of the international revolution.

During this time he had, on his own admission, negotiated with Left Social-Revolutionaries with a view to arresting the leaders of the Bolshevik Party, Lenin, Stalin and Sverdlov, replacing them in the Government with leaders of the “Left” “Communists” and Left Social-Revolutionaries. In his recent trial his Social-Revolutionary associates of that period declared that the conspirators had discussed the necessity of consolidating their position by killing the arrested leaders. From 1918 till 1922 Bukharin hiding behind “Left” phrases, had resisted every practical measure taken by the Soviet Govern-

ment under Lenin to reorganise the economy of the country.

In 1922 Bukharin formally abandoned his left attitude and came out as a supporter of the Party line without really abandoning his fundamental standpoint as to the impossibility of building Socialism in the Soviet Union. His fundamental attitude now, however, found expression in deviations to the right – to the rich peasants. Bukharin's right attitude was a source of continual embarrassment to his colleagues in the Party majority. His slogan to the peasants: "Enrich yourselves", was exploited to the full by the Trotskyist demagogues, as was his assertion that it was possible for the Soviet Union to advance to Socialism at "a snail's pace", *i.e.*, without economically catching up to and passing the developed capitalist countries. He elaborated a symmetrical scheme of the rich peasants "growing into Socialism" through the influence of agricultural co-operation, a scheme which obscures the necessity of decisive struggle against that section of the exploiting classes.

An avid student of the latest fashions in capitalist economic and political theory, he was greatly impressed by the theories of "organised capitalism" which had such a vogue in capitalist and Labour circles previous to the great crisis of 1929-32, and harmonised those theories with his own schematic conceptions of imperialism. On the very eve of the great world economic crisis, he was writing of the possibility of capitalism solving its internal contradictions within a given country. Thus the weakness of Soviet Russia was contrasted in his mind with the growing strength of world capitalism.

The most dangerous member of this group was Tomsy, an old underground revolutionary, who represented that section of the bureaucratic and self-complacent trade union officials who looked at problems from a narrow, craft point of view.

The Bukharin-Rykov-Tomsy group had no faith in the possibility of building collective farms, representing them as "the music of the future". It stood for the conciliation of the rich peasants, instead of the decisive crushing of their resistance, and was for a "two years plan" instead of the Five Year Plan, a two years plan which, in fact, meant the slowing down of industrialisation and collectivisation.

The open Right Wing did not challenge the Party to a prolonged discussion in the manner of the Trotskyists. But it had in the State apparatus and the trade unions, and, to a lesser extent, in the Communist Party, a volume of support that was more formidable than that of the Trotsky faction, and did not expose itself in open struggle. It was

built up by Tomskey, Rykov and Bukharin, into a solid organisation that later stretched out to co-operate with the Trotskyists.

Just as the policy of collectivisation was based on all the previous policy of the Party, so with the industrial aspects of the Five Years Plan. Here was no sudden bureaucratic zigzag as the Trotskyists contend, but a policy prepared in all its aspects. It was prepared by the introduction of the yearly control figures in 1925-6 – a plan for co-ordinating, checking and controlling the work of the various branches of industry in the course of one year. It was the experience gained in this important experiment that facilitated the preparation of the Five Year Plan. But the Plan was not something carried through by the leaders of the economic organisations of the State and by the administrative apparatus at their disposal. The Five Year Plan required the intelligent co-operation of the millions of organised workers who were to be called upon to carry through a daily struggle for the Plan, to master the new technique that would be put at their disposal, and to assist in the industrial and political education of the newcomers who would be drawn into industry mainly from the countryside. All this was prepared for by the decisions of the 14th Party Conference (October 1926) to ensure the most effective trade union democracy and draw the workers closer into the solution of the burning industrial problems by means of production conferences, by the bringing of the work of all Party, Government and Trade Union organisations under the keen searchlight of working class criticism (Summer 1928), and the decisions of the 8th Trade Union Congress in 1928, which approved a changed trade union policy in accordance with the new tasks of the Five Year Plan. This Congress rejected the standpoint of Tomskey, who would have confined the unions to defending the material interests of the workers (in the narrow sense of collective bargaining, etc.), and who ignored the equally important tasks of the unions in the development of production (which is also, of course, under a Socialist State, a defence and an advancement of the material interests of the workers in the deepest sense of the term). All these measures prepared the workers for carrying through the plans, in the only way they could be carried through – by the waging of intensive class struggle against the capitalist elements in the country. This is what Trotsky overlooks.

The slaughter of cattle, the fall in grain production are all ascribed to administrative errors of the leadership. That there were

administrative errors is undoubted. In 1930 the Central Committee instructed Stalin to call attention to the wrong policy of coercing the peasantry into the collective farms, and of collectivising domestic animals, which was being pursued in some districts.

“Irritating the peasant collective farm member by ‘collectivising’ living premises, all the milch cattle, all the small livestock and the domestic poultry, when the grain problem *is still unsolved*, when the artel form of the collective farm is not yet *consolidated* – is it not obvious that such a ‘policy’ can please and benefit only our sworn enemies?” (Stalin, *Leninism*, Vol. II, p. 220).

It is characteristic of Trotsky’s methods that he should mention the collectivisation of chickens (*The Revolution Betrayed*, p. 44) without revealing the Party’s blistering condemnation of this policy.

But the difficulties of carrying through the first Five Year Plan were not difficulties due to administrative mistakes, they were difficulties created by the resistance of the capitalist elements whom the plan was threatening. The aim of the plan was not merely the reconstruction of the technical basis of the country, but also the transformation of economic and social relations – the progressive elimination of the capitalist elements. To expect the Five Year Plan to proceed without class struggle, without sabotage, as if it was a question of a new housing estate, instead of the revolutionary transformation of a great country, is indeed to adopt a bourgeois administrative point of view, which ignores the class struggle. To ascribe the relative temporary disorganisation caused in certain branches of economy by the fiercely contested class struggle, to the administrative mistakes of the leadership or the lack of foresight, as Trotsky does repeatedly in his book, can hardly be called ignorance. It is calculated misrepresentation.

But because the Communist Party of the Soviet Union had won the confidence of the working class, because it could mobilise the great trade unions and co-operatives, because it had a firm alliance with the middle peasantry, it was able to lead the masses of the Soviet Union in the struggle to break down the class opposition, and to realise the plan. Not by bureaucracy, not by slick administration, but by the struggle of the majority of the Russian people under Communist leadership, were the plans realised.

Trotsky exaggerates the difficulties that the peoples of the So-

viet Union encountered in the carrying through of the plans, and blames them on the mistakes of the leadership and not on the resistance of the class enemy. Then, when those difficulties are overcome, he swings round and declares that their successful overcoming is not due to the quality of the leadership, but to the conditions of socialised property created by the revolution.

But Trotsky has told us elsewhere: "Centralised management implies not only great disadvantages but also the danger of centralising the mistakes, that is, the danger of elevating them to an excessively high degree. Only continuous regulation of the plan, in the process of its fulfilment, its reconstruction in part and as a whole, can guarantee its economic effectiveness." Quite so.

The "Socialised property created by the revolution" could not have triumphed automatically over the capitalist elements. It could only triumph in virtue of planned leadership, carrying through a definite policy, and before that policy could be operated two rival policies had to be brushed aside.

There was the policy of Bukharin, Rykov and Tomskey, which meant the abandonment of Socialist attack on the capitalist elements of the country, the slowing down of the rate of development in industry, reliance on the individual rather than the collective farms. If this policy had been carried out, the grain difficulties would never have been overcome, industry would have been poorly developed and the capitalist elements would have been able to dictate to the Soviet Government.

A still more spectacular fiasco would have resulted had the Party and the Government adopted the proposal of Trotsky and Zinoviev and attacked the rich peasants before the alliance with the middle peasantry had been cemented, and before the grain production of the rich peasant could be replaced by that of the Soviet and collective farms.

If either of those variants had been accepted the "conditions of socialised property" would not have saved the country from disaster.

Before the struggle for collectivisation drove Trotsky to come out publicly as a defeatist, it would appear that the Trotskyist and Bukharinist standpoints were in marked opposition to each other. In point of fact, the standpoints had a common social basis in the expropriated capitalists and landlords, the rich peasants and urban middlemen, the ex-Tsarist bureaucrats and ex-capitalist experts who

would not admit the possibility of the construction of Socialism in the Soviet Union, and who were prepared to support any force to resist the whole-hearted application of this policy. Whether the forces hostile to the construction of Socialism marched under "Left" or "Right" flags did not worry them. They were practical men, and any flag which expressed hostility to the Stalin policy was their flag.

As we shall see in the next chapter, if the Five Year Plans have, on the whole, been carried through, if the rich peasants and the capitalist middlemen, who were the social basis of capitalist restoration ten years ago, have now been eliminated, this is due to the quality of the leadership, no less than to the "conditions of socialised property". This is not only the final refutation of Trotsky's slander that the Party was working, albeit unconsciously, for a capitalist restoration. It is also the crushing condemnation of the theory that Socialism could not be built in the Soviet Union.

## CHAPTER III

### THE VICTORY OF SOCIALISM IN THE SOVIET UNION

That great changes have been brought about in the Soviet Union as a result of the Five Year Plans is admitted by friend and foe alike. Everyone acknowledges that the Soviet Union is now in possession of scores of important industries which it did not previously possess, that a mighty technical revolution has taken place in agriculture. But what do these changes mean with regard to the relations of man and man in society? Is it true that the foundations of Socialism have been well and truly laid and that the rate of advance is without parallel in capitalist society?

The leaders of the Soviet Union claim that it is so.

“Our Soviet society has already, in the main, succeeded in achieving Socialism,” says Stalin. “It has created a socialist system; *i.e.*, it has brought about what Marxists in other words call the first, or lower phase of Communism. Hence, in the main, we have already achieved the first phase of Communism, Socialism” (Stalin, Speech on Soviet Constitution, November 25th, 1936).

This estimation is violently opposed by Trotsky, who declares that what has been achieved is merely a “*preparatory regime transitional from capitalism to socialism*” (*The Revolution Betrayed*, p. 52). He alleges that this preparatory regime is engendering growing inequalities between the members of society and that it is bossed by an uncontrolled bureaucracy. Before this transitional society can develop towards Socialism, Trotsky asserts, it is imperative that there should be “a second supplementary revolution – against bureaucratic absolutism” (p. 272); “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” (p. 271). The victory over the bureaucracy inside the Soviet Union and the advance towards Socialism depends to some extent on the prior victory of the revolution in the rest of Europe (p. 274).

This is the second version of the thesis that Socialism in a single country is impossible, replacing as we will see a previous version which the entire development of the Soviet Union has now completely discredited.

It is this aspect of Trotskyism that is to-day served for public consumption and is a "left" camouflage for the real tactics of Trotsky, which while being based on the same thesis are far from being "Left" either in their content or their aim.

We are compelled to deal with Trotsky's arguments, not because they express his real aims but because those arguments are the source of most of the anti-Soviet propaganda of to-day. They are utilised by the German and Italian Fascists who are preparing a military attack on the Soviet Union. "See, my friends," says Goebbels in effect to the German Socialists and Communists, "what Trotsky is saying about the Soviet State. It is no longer a Socialist State worthy of your support but a State dominated by a parasitic bureaucracy, living on the Russian people." These and similar arguments are broadcast by the Fascists, not only to weaken the faith of the masses in the Soviet Union, but also to weaken the masses' faith in themselves.

They are also seized upon eagerly by the opponents of Communism in the Labour Movement. The Right Wing trade union leaders, in increasing conflict with their own progressive rank and file, are glad to borrow anti-Soviet arguments from the arsenal of Trotsky, because it is necessary to weaken the sympathy of active trade unionists for Communism. The same arguments are served up by middle-class radicals, who, not understanding the revolutionary content of present day Communist policy, imagine that they are criticising Communism from the Left. It is because Trotskyism is the source of all those streams of "criticism" which confuse and weaken the working class, that it is necessary to deal with it at some length.

First let us take the advances in the Soviet Union as admitted by Trotsky.

"The vast scope of industrialisation in the Soviet Union, as against a background of stagnation and decline in almost the whole capitalist world, appears unanswerably in the following gross indices. Industrial production in Germany, thanks solely to feverish war preparations, is now returning to the level of 1929. Production in Great Britain, holding to the apron strings of protectionism, has raised itself three or four per cent during these six years. Industrial production in the United States has declined approximately



25 per cent; in France, more than 30 per cent. First place among capitalist countries is occupied by Japan, who is furiously arming herself and robbing her neighbours. Her production has risen almost 40 per cent! But even this exceptional index fades before the dynamic of development in the Soviet Union. Her industrial production has increased during this same period approximately 31/2 times, or 250 per cent. The heavy industries have increased their production during the last decade (1925 to 1935) more than ten times. In the first year of the first Five Year Plan (1928 to 1929) capital investments amounted to 5.4 billion roubles; for 1936, 32 billions are indicated....

“In December 1913 the Don basin produced 2,275,000 tons of coal; in December 1935, 7,125,000 tons....

“In 1920, when the first plan of industrialisation was drawn up, there were ten district power-stations in the country with a total power production of 253,000 kilowatts. In 1935 there were already 95 of these stations, with a total power of 4,345,000 kilowatts. In 1925 the Soviet Union stood eleventh in the production of electro energy; in 1935 it was second only to Germany and the United States.

“In the production of coal the Soviet Union has moved forward from tenth to fourth place. In steel, from sixth to third place. In the production of tractors, to the first place in the world. This also is true of the production of sugar.

“Gigantic achievements in industry, enormously promising beginnings in agriculture, an extraordinary growth of the old industrial cities and a building of new ones, a rapid increase of the number of workers, a rise in cultural level and cultural demands – such are the indubitable results of the October Revolution...” (*The Revolution Betrayed*, pp. 14-16).

Very good. But before we go on to deal with the qualifications which Trotsky makes of this sketch we must ask not only what technical changes have taken place, but also what class changes, and what bearing those class changes have on the question of whether Socialism can be built in a single country.

We can understand the justifiable shyness shown by Trotsky in answering this question, but as it is crucial we will attempt to deal with it.

We will give our readers a picture of the class position in the Soviet Union ten years ago, as compared with the class position today. We warn them that the picture of ten years ago is by no means unbiased. It exaggerates to some extent the strength of the capitalist elements in the Soviet Union, but as this picture was painted by Trotsky and Zinoviev, the former has obviously no complaint.

“The capitalist element finds its primary expression in a class differentiation in the country and a multiplication of private capitalists in the city.

“A certain growth of the hostile forces, the Kulak, the Nepman,<sup>1</sup> and the bureaucrat, is unavoidable under the New Economic Policy. You cannot destroy those forces by mere administrative order or by simple economic pressure. In introducing the N.E.P. and carrying it through we ourselves created a certain place for capitalist relations in our country and for a prolonged period to come we have to recognise them as inevitable.

“The Stalin group has been powerless to prevent: (1) An immoderate growth of these forces which try to turn the development of our country into capitalistic channels; (2) a weakening of the position of the working class and the poorest peasant against the growing strength of the kulaks, the Nepman and the bureaucrat; (3) a weakening of the general position of the workers’ State in the struggle with world capitalism, a lowering of the international position of the Soviet Union.

“The growing bourgeoisie, by means of trade and gambling on the abnormal disparity of prices, appropriates a part of the surplus value created by our State industry.

“The number of unemployed is growing incomparably faster than the general number of employed workers.

“The representatives of the new bourgeoisie having got into association with certain links of our State apparatus are openly aspiring to switch our policy on to capitalist rails.

“It is necessary to bear in mind that the army of officials has been growing in number these last years. It is con-

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1 Nepman; private capitalist in production or trade. Given certain limited scope by New Economic Policy (N.E.P.), hence term Nepman.

solidating itself, raising itself above the general population, and interweaving itself with the wealthier elements of city and country.

“It is necessary to adopt a firm policy of struggle with officialism – to wage this struggle as Lenin would, to make it a real fight with the exploitative aspirations of the new bourgeoisie and the kulak, by way of a consistent development of workers’ democracy in the Party, the trade unions, and the Soviets” (*Platform of the Opposition*, 1927).

Now where to-day are those class forces which in 1927 were, in the sombre imagination of Trotsky and Zinoviev, advancing insidiously to a capitalist counter revolution?

Where are those “private capitalists” who were “multiplying in the city”? They are no more. As owners of productive industry, as merchants and as retail traders “the new bourgeoisie” of 1927 has been sunk without trace.

“As for trade in the country, the merchants and profiteers have been banished entirely from this sphere. All trade is now in the hands of the State, the co-operative societies and the collective farms. A new, Soviet trade, trade without profiteers, trade without capitalists has arisen and developed” (Stalin, Speech on Soviet Constitution, November 25th, 1936).

What of the rich capitalistic peasants, that other section of the hostile class forces whose existence in the Soviet Union Trotsky in 1927 regarded as inevitable for a “prolonged period to come”. In less than ten years, an exceedingly short period if one is talking in terms of history and not of penal servitude, the rich peasant has disappeared.

“In the sphere of agriculture, instead of the ocean of small individual peasant farms with their poor technical equipment and strong kulak influence, we now have mechanised production, conducted on a scale larger than anywhere else in the world, with up-to-date technical equipment, in the form of an all-embracing system of collective farms and State farms. Everybody knows that the kulak class has been liquidated in agriculture, while the sector of small individual peasant farms, with its backward,

medieval technical equipment, now occupies an insignificant place; and its proportion in agriculture as regards area of cultivation does not amount to more than 2 or 3 per cent. We must not overlook the fact that the collective farms have now at their disposal 316,000 tractors with a total of 5,700,000 horse power, and, together with the State farms, a total of over 400,000 tractors of 7,580,000 horse power" (Stalin, Speech on Soviet Constitution).

So the rich peasant, who in 1927 was pushing the Soviet State on to "capitalist rails", has with his ally, the town capitalist, disappeared from Soviet life. "The Stalin group", if we may borrow Trotsky's designation of the leadership of the workers and peasants in the Soviet Union, has not only succeeded in "preventing an immoderate growth of those forces which desire to turn the development of our country into capitalistic channels" – it has gone further and eliminated them as social classes. Less than ten years earlier, in the Central Committee of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union, Trotsky declared: "The ruling faction is fulfilling the social command of Ustrialov – of the reviving petty and middle bourgeoisie." To-day those classes whose revival Stalin was alleged to be encouraging have been eliminated from Soviet economy. Should that fact alone not make all of us sceptical of Trotskyist or neo-Trotskyist slanders?

Unemployment, which ten years ago was depicted by Trotsky and Zinoviev as one of the blackest scourges of Soviet life, has been completely eliminated. This fact, which to the workers in capitalist countries is the outstanding achievement of Socialist planned economy, is not mentioned in *The Revolution Betrayed*, perhaps because of the difficulty of the average working man in reconciling this with betrayal.

For what has been achieved in the Soviet Union? The capitalist elements have been eliminated and all industry, all trade, and practically all agriculture is controlled by State, co-operative or collective farm organisations.

The production of wealth is subordinated not to the possibilities of profit for the ruling class but to the principle of planned guidance with a view to the raising of the standard of life of the people and the development of culture; and because production is being organised for this purpose, society can be safeguarded from the recurring

economic crises which shake the capitalist system to its foundations.

The following table gives an idea of the changed class composition of the Soviet Union as compared with pre-war Russia:

	Proportion of Population Per cent	
	1913	1937
Workers employed in national economy exclusive of agriculture	16.7	31.5
Workers employed in State farm and machine-tractor stations	—	3.2
Collective peasantry and handicraftsmen in co-operatives	—	55.5
Individual peasant farmers (exclusive of kulaks) and handicraftsmen working on their own account	65.1	5.6
Bourgeoisie and land-owners, upper and petty town bourgeoisie traders	3.6	—
Kulaks (rich peasants)	12.3	—
Other sections of population (students, pensioners, army, etc.)	2.3	4.2
Total	100.0	100.0

In Great Britain £339,000,000 per annum goes to the ground landlords in the form of economic rent. The landlord class has been eliminated in the Soviet Union. In Britain £949,000,000<sup>1</sup> per annum goes in the form of interest and profit. But the capitalist class drawing interest and profit has disappeared from the Soviet Union. 1,800,000 unemployed still existed in Great Britain at the height of a trade boom. But unemployment has disappeared from the Soviet Union. The wealth taken from the Russian people by the exploiters, together with the new wealth created by the expanded Socialist industry and agriculture, is being made available for the Russian people. What can we call a social system where the capitalists and landlord exploiters have been eliminated, where industry and agriculture is collectively owned and is planned to meet social needs?

If we had such a state of society in Britain, would anybody

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1 1935 Estimate from *National Income and Outlay*, by Colin Clark.

doubt that we would be correct in calling this “The first phase of Communism, Socialism”, as Stalin has called the state of society existing in the Soviet Union? What would we think of anyone who declared that the elimination of the last industrial capitalists, the last capitalist merchants, the last capitalist farmers, was a sign that we were moving away from Socialism? Yet that is what the Trotskyists are doing. The very years in which those capitalist elements were being eliminated are for them years of degeneration in the Soviet Union. Ten years ago they were announcing that the growth of those capitalist elements was threatening the Soviet State. When the Soviet State eliminates those capitalist elements, instead of the Trotskyists admitting their mistake, they loudly proclaim the degeneracy of the Soviet State; this cry is repeated by all the reformist and capitalist critics of the Soviet Union.

The well known American Trotskyist Max Eastman – one of the friends of Trotsky – makes the astonishing allegation that “the first phase of Communism” is an invention of the Stalinists. This is typical of what passes for “criticism” amongst the Trotskyists. The fact that Lenin in *State and Revolution*, and in *The Great Initiative* and other works refers to “Socialism, the first phase of Communism” cannot have escaped the notice of Max Eastman; but the developments in the Soviet Union, upsetting their previous theory of the impossibility of building Socialism in a single country, have reduced leading Trotskyists to a condition of complete irresponsibility in word and in deed.

“If we were to ask ourselves in what way Communism differs from Socialism,” said Lenin, “we would have to reply that Socialism is the society which grows directly out of capitalism, that it is the first form of the new society. Communism, on the other hand, is a higher form of society, which can develop only when Socialism has taken firm hold. *Socialism implies the performance of work without the aid of capitalists, it implies social labour accompanied by the strictest accounting, control and supervision on the part of the organised vanguard, the most advanced section of the toilers. Moreover, it implies that standards of labour and the amount of compensation for labour must be determined.*” (*Selected Works*, Vol. VIII, p. 239.)

It will be difficult for the most unscrupulous to deny that what

exists in the Soviet Union at this moment does not differ substantially from the description of Socialism given by Lenin above.

In the first phase of Communism, "Socialism", the exploiting class is abolished and the division of society into exploiters and exploited, possessors and dispossessed, is ended for ever. But the productivity of labour has not yet reached a stage when one can organise distribution "according to need". A large number of the workers who have emerged from capitalism are relatively unskilled and must be given an inducement to improve their technical qualifications. There must be discrimination against those "swinging the lead". Hence the Socialist system must work on the basis of "from each according to his ability, to each according to his work".

What is wrong with this? The Socialist movement promised the workers that it would get rid of the exploiting classes and it has done so. By eliminating exploitation it has immediately increased the income of every worker whether skilled, semi-skilled or unskilled; whether manual or administrative. But the Socialist movement did not promise that immediately industry and agriculture became socially owned and controlled, the unskilled labourer, irrespective of the service he was rendering to society, would get the same wage as the works manager. It promised to rid both labourer and manager of the necessity of carrying an exploiting class on their backs. It did not promise that they would get the same wage in return for the service they were rendering.

Of course the aim of a Socialist order of society is to abolish the unskilled labourer and indeed to abolish the distinction between manual and mental work. But this is not merely a question of improving educational opportunities, but of giving the workers the necessary stimulus to take advantage of them, and this is precisely what differential wage payment is aimed to do. Let us take two workers, both unskilled. *A* improves his technical qualifications and becomes a highly skilled worker. *B*, having the same opportunities as *A*, neglects to take advantage of them and remains on a comparatively unskilled level. Can it be seriously suggested that, if *A* gets a higher wage than *B*, he is exploiting *B*? Surely not. *A* is making a greater contribution to social wealth and is consequently drawing more from society than *B*.

Yet there is a distinct attempt in *The Revolution Betrayed* to suggest that the higher paid workers are privileged and that they are in some way living at the expense of the lower paid.

Differential wage payment is therefore a means of stimulating the working class to raise their level of culture and technical knowledge to the level of managers and administrators.

For Trotsky it is essential to pretend that he is still a Marxist, and it is therefore necessary for him to avoid the polemical fatuities of Eastman. He has to admit that Marx envisaged a “first stage of Communism” in which there is inequality of wages and salaries.

“In its first steps the Workers’ State cannot yet permit everyone to work ‘according to his abilities’ – that is, as much as he can and wishes to – nor can it reward everyone ‘according to his needs’, regardless of the work he does. In order to increase the productive forces it is necessary to resort to the customary norms of wage payment – that is, to the distribution of life’s goods in proportion to the quantity and quality of individual labour. Marx named this first stage of the new society ‘the lowest stage of Communism’, as distinct from the highest, where together with the last phantoms of want material inequality will disappear” (*The Revolution Betrayed*, p. 51).

Well, what is all the bother about? Why does Trotsky’s translator Eastman run around declaring that the “first stage of Communism” is the invention of Stalin? Why do Trotskyists in general rush around talking about the “abandonment of equality” in the Soviet Union as if that country was moving away from a previously attained stage of economic equality?

Trotsky’s overt objections to calling society in the Soviet Union Socialist are of a twofold character: (1) that while Socialist forms of property are predominant in the Soviet Union, those forms are based on a level of technique that is far below that of the leading capitalist countries; (2) that in their efforts to catch up with capitalist countries technically, the leaders of the Soviet Union are imposing not good Socialist but bad capitalist conditions on the workers. This latter contention was eagerly seized upon by the reviewers in the capitalist press.

Now one is entitled to expect a very detailed proof of the latter serious allegation, but it is not even attempted. We are not compelled to refute assertions which are not backed by ascertainable facts, but we feel that it will help to clarify the position if we contrast the unsupported allegations made by Trotsky with a recent



very careful examination of labour conditions in a great Soviet industry, made by a group of British workers.

First the assertions of Trotsky. "The struggle to raise the productivity of labour, together with concern about defence, is the fundamental content of the activity of the Soviet Government." There is no need to emphasise the one-sidedness of a definition that refrains from telling us what the purpose of raising the productivity of labour is. The definition of Soviet activity as it stands could apply to that of any Government in the world. They are all manifestly concerned with keeping industry going and with the perfecting of their defences. But why forget the class structure of the country? The struggle "to raise the productivity of labour" in a capitalist country is a struggle to enrich the capitalists, landlords and bankers. The struggle "to raise the productivity of labour" in the Soviet Union, is a struggle in a country where the exploiting elements have been eliminated. It is a struggle to enrich the toiling masses. There is a basic difference.

Nor is it possible to accept the suggestion that a Socialist Government, in a technically more developed country than the Soviet Union was until recently, could dispense with the struggle "to raise the productivity of labour". Even in the oldest industrial capitalist country. Great Britain, the output per person employed in industry amounts to about £211<sup>1</sup> per annum. It is clear that this is not sufficient to guarantee a good life to all our people and that the question of how to raise the output of wealth is one that would confront a Socialist regime in this country. It is equally true to say that in spite of the high skill of millions of British workers, there are still vast hosts who have never had the opportunity of attaining a high level of technical competence. It would be necessary to provide them with both stimulus and opportunity to do so, for the problem of "raising the productivity of labour" to heights unattainable by capitalism is inseparable from the problem of creating a really human existence for all the workers.

Obviously this is a question of the Socialist organisation of industry and not a question of speeding the individual worker to the limit of his physical endurance. And it is in this sense that the "struggle" for higher productivity is being carried out in the Soviet Union.

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1 1935 Census of Production.

Trotsky disputes this in *The Revolution Betrayed*:

“When the rhythm of labour is determined by the chase after the rouble (*i.e.*, the effort to obtain higher earnings, *J.R.C.*) then people do not expend themselves ‘according to ability’ – that is, according to the condition of their nerves and muscles – but in violation of themselves” (p. 83).

“In the Soviet Union, however, there is now taking place a ruthlessly severe fitting in of backward human material to the technique borrowed from capitalism. In the struggle to achieve European and American standards the classic methods of exploitation, such as piece-work payment, are applied in such naked and crude forms as would not be permitted even by reformist trade unions in bourgeois countries” (pp. 83-4).

“It was not the Soviet administrators who invented the secret of piece-work payment. That system, which strains the nerves without visible external compulsion, Marx considered ‘the most suitable to capitalistic methods of production’” (p. 82).

“It (the Soviet State) finds itself obliged to keep in force the system of piece-work payment, the principle of which may be expressed thus: ‘get out of everybody as much as you can, and give him in exchange as little as possible’... Payment ‘according to work’ – in reality, payment to the advantage of ‘intellectual’ at the expense of physical, and especially unskilled, work – is a source of injustice, oppression, and compulsions for the majority, privileges and a ‘happy life’ for the few” (pp. 244-5).

We will contrast these embittered assertions, advanced without an iota of concrete proof, with the careful investigations of a recent delegation of Durham miners to the Soviet Union. This delegation, composed of younger officials, check-weighers, and working miners is by no means uncritical of the conditions in the Soviet mining industry which they carefully examined. They do not like the idea of women working underground, they criticise some of the housing conditions; and the system of pithead baths, and they examine labour conditions with great care. We will therefore take their description of the Stakhanov system as operated on a piece-work basis in the Donbas coalfield.

They first discuss as to whether the Stakhanov system in the coalfield is a system of relentless speeding up of the individual worker, which is substantially the assertion of Trotsky and of the capitalists who broadcast his arguments.

“Stakhanovitism is not just a method of getting work done irrespective of other factors. It is not just a question of some big strong coalminer setting the pace and forcing his weaker brother to follow his example; or of getting coal where one can and how one can and forgetting that other men have to follow. It is not a question of sacrificing safety to output and doing shoddy work just to get a few extra coals. Neither is it a question of the big ‘coal hewer’ theory. *Stakhanovitism is a method* of accomplishing the job in hand in the most efficient and productive way through the medium of team work.”

Here is a quite categorical denial of all the allegations of Trotsky with regard to the character of the Stakhanov system and it is made not by superficial tourists but by men having a thorough knowledge of the mining industry.

“Take as an example the winning of coal on a long wall face with pneumatic picks on a gradient which rises two in every three yards. The Stakhanovites, if they are coal producers, allocate the work under the instructions of the section manager. It will be recalled that the young woman, N. Litvinenko, was a section manager. If the coal is ‘good’ and the seam conditions conducive to a high productivity, then the Stakhanovite who uses the pneumatic pick will have two or three of the section workers doing all the timbering and other work. He simply gets the coal. There is no filling or casting except in the ease of the pneumatic pick men who are in the low level and in the first heading to the left of the low level. In such cases both fillers or casters are provided (as the conditions may require) as well as a timberer. All other men employed in getting coal with the pneumatic pick simply have to get the coal ‘loose’. Once this is done, it is carried away by its own momentum to the ‘shoots’ on the lower level....

“Imagine this on the inclination mentioned, and you can

easily form some idea of how such huge outputs are got. In many instances the question is simply one of working up on the cleat and working back down to the end of the pillar, and away the coal goes tumbling down to the shoot. The work is made as easy as possible by the remarkable way in which the team works together. We have worked at coal hewing both by hand and with the pneumatic pick. We may modestly claim to know what real hard graft is, and in our opinion no Stakhanovite that we saw worked any harder, if he worked as hard, as the coal hewer in the British coalfields, and further, the Stakhanovite works with practically all his clothes on. The next day the role is changed and the timberer becomes the coal-getter, and so on, alternately. They pool their earnings, and each takes his turn doing the different jobs required in the section.

“They work six hours, or nearly two hours per day less than the miner in Great Britain. They meet and discuss ways and means of increasing the production and pool their ideas. They teach the new entrants into the mine how to master the technique of coal mining, and the proper use of the machine. They teach the value of proper care of the machine and how to manipulate it so as to get the best results. The same is true of the coal cutting operators, the pullers-up, the drillers and stonemen. Each is a separate grade, but none works against the other, and all are out to increase their knowledge of pit work and to master the machine. Hence, the great thing in the Stakhanovite movement is team work, each grade doing its job, but having in mind the final result for the whole of the section.”

Quite a contrast to the picture of sorely driven wage-slaves painted by Trotsky, is it not? On the contrary, the clear and simple description of free men co-operating together to master their job is one which will appeal to, and enthuse, every Socialist.

The above description is however defective in that it fails to contrast the method of team work invented by Stakhanov, with the method in vogue previously. Let Stakhanov himself explain:

“The output of a hewer depends on many factors. I will mention the most important of them. First, the length of the ledge. Under the old system of working, when the length of

the ledge was usually determined on the basis of 'long practice', the short length of the ledge cramped the hewer. The second defect in the old organisation of the work was that it was necessary to spend time on a very laborious, but absolutely unproductive process, namely, the cutting of a small oblong in the face, which we in the mine call a 'nick'. This is the hardest work for a hewer, because he has to lie in a very uncomfortable position to do it; he has no firm support, and in addition he has to hold the drill all the time on the slant. Finally, the third defect in the old system was that a hewer had not only to cut coal but also to prop.... Nobody ever thought of separating those two processes, although it was clear that in passing from cutting to propping, and from propping to cutting, the hewer was obliged to waste a lot of time, and that this way of organising the work does not allow him to make full use of his time and full use of the equipment."

So much for the old methods, now for the new.

"It became clear to everyone that the work in the section could be organised so as to utilise the pneumatic drills 100 per cent, and to exceed the existing output of a hewer many times over. All that is required is strict specialisation in work; a hewer must hew, and a prop-man prop. And the length of the ledge must be increased. The amount of coal I hewed immediately upset all the old ideas and calculations of standard rates of output, and as a result it was decided, first in the section, and then in the whole mine, to cut down the number of ledges to one-half and at the same time increase their length. This is what my method of work on the pneumatic drill consists of in the main" (From *Labour in the Land of Socialism*, The Report of the First Conference of Stakhanovists, pp. 123-5).

This is the very antithesis of capitalist speeding up, for the increased output is here secured by the more rational utilisation of labour and technique.

Now let our Durham miners describe the piece-work system that the Stakhanovite miners work under.

"The movement is based on a progressive piece rate

system which can be simply stated as follows: (The figures are fictitious, but the principle is correct.) A Stakhanovite miner must, first of all, produce his norm, for which he receives a standard daily wage. To make it clear, we put it like this: he must produce four tons for 7s. Then he is paid so much per ton for every ton over four tons, and each extra ton has a slightly higher price. Thus the fifth ton would be 6d., the seventh 6½d., the eighth 7d., and the ninth 7½d., and so on. And if he increased his norm, by four tons (100 per cent) every day of the month, that is, if his production for the month worked out at eight tons per day, he would receive an extra bonus on top of his wages. The more he increased his norm over the 100 per cent, the higher would be his wages.

*“We asked for the norms of the different classes and got them, and, honestly, any average pitman in the British coalfield could fulfil the norm three or four times over. Sometimes the norm is increased, say, for instance, from four tons to six tons, but in every case the daily wage or standard wage for filling the norm is increased pro rata. The worker loses nothing in the mining industry by the norm being increased, but we do not know whether this principle applies to other industries. If he should fail for some reason over which he has no control to fill his norm, then he receives the standard wage. But if the fault is his own, and it is proved by the Conflict Committee (which is composed of his own comrades) to be his own fault, then he gets what he makes. We asked if any such cases had arisen and we were informed that they had not.*

*“The fixing of the daily norm is one for the miner, his Trade Union and the administration. In fact, the collective agreement which governs wages and conditions is subject to the same principle for fixing wages, norms and conditions. The norm is different in every seam and depends upon the nature of the coal, the height of the seam and other matters such as the state of the seam and the inclination. We found on the average that the norm was somewhere between the highest and the lowest proposed, but on the word of the workers themselves it was not difficult to fulfil the norm....*

"We found, owing to this intensive piece system, sometimes a great disparity between the wages of the Stakhanovites and other unskilled labour. We have great disparity in our own counties between the wages of the skilled workers and the so-called unskilled workers (*i.e.*, the piece worker and the datal worker), hut it is nothing like the disparity we came across in the Soviet pits. Often the amount was five to six times higher, and in one case ten times higher than some of the other workers. Then the Stakhanovite has other privileges. He can buy better food and clothing and other household utensils. He is first to be considered for cultural and educative facilities, and all other things being equal, he is given preference in housing accommodation and so on. All this is according to the law 'From each according to his ability. To each according to his labour'.

"Is it right in the present stage of Socialism that this should be? This question often cropped up. We are of the opinion that it is entirely right. The greater the production and the quicker the workers become skilful and efficient, the better for everybody in the country, and the sooner will the general standard of living be increased. *The Stakhanovite gives to the best of his ability, thus making it possible for the unskilled worker to better his position and to become a Stakhanovite too. The system debars none. It is up to the worker.*"<sup>1</sup>

The last point is of great importance in relation to the charge that the Stakhanovites are a new privileged class of workers in the sense that one might describe a foreman or an engine driver as a privileged worker. Obviously not every worker can become a foreman in the factory, nor can every railwayman an engine-driver. But every worker can, if he desires, become a Stakhanovite. When Max Eastman writes that the Stakhanov movement means "the building up of a new privileged caste, an aristocracy of labour," he is simply talking nonsense. An aristocracy that is open to everyone is no aristocracy.

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1 *A Visit to Russia: A Report of the Durham Miners on their visit to the U.S.S.R.* Durham Miners Association, Red Hill, Durham City.

Does this system of piece-work imply neglect of safety conditions? On the contrary. After outlining the elaborate system of mines inspection the British miners say:

“In view of the great attention which was paid to safety matters in the Russian pits, we were surprised to find that explosives were stored down the pit. It was true that these were right back at the shaft, and were well guarded; nevertheless, we felt it was quite unsafe to store explosives underground, particularly in gaseous pits, and we briefly outlined to our Russian friends the provisions of our own Coal Mines Order in this respect.

*“Strange to say, although the explosives were stored underground, the shots were fired under such restrictive conditions that if the same conditions prevailed in England, it would be problematical whether we could secure half our present output.* For example, before a shot can be fired, all the men must be brought out from the levels where the seams are steep, and a written permission must be obtained from the section manager. In the main, most of the shots are fired in the repair shift, and in the flat seams the conditions of shot firing are very much similar to our own. No men are allowed to work in 2 per cent or more of gas, and as soon as this figure is reached, the work in that particular place or section is stopped, and the men are withdrawn.

“ This brief outline of the safety conditions in the Russian pits will give some indication of the efficiency of the system, and we leave our readers who have mining experience to judge whether or not we could profitably learn something on this question from the Russian miners” {A Visit to Russia).

We make no apology for quoting at such length, because although the British miners had not Trotsky in mind, every word they write constitutes a striking refutation of Trotsky's totally unsupported allegations. It is still necessary for the Trotskyists, in order to be able to influence and demoralise sections of the Labour movement, to pretend that they are interested in the defence of the Soviet Union, but a purely formal vow to defend the Soviet Union, accompanied by a broadside of lying and malicious attacks, can only serve to create in the minds of workers outside Russia the impression that



“the Soviet Union is not worth defending”.

We must not leave the question of labour conditions without making some reference to the social services at the disposal of a Soviet worker, for this will enable us to test the value of such assertions as “The Soviet State in all its relations is far closer to a backward capitalism than to Communism” (p. 244), or of the discussion of average wages elsewhere in Trotsky’s book. To discuss the position of the Soviet worker without discussing the value of the social services at his disposal is to be guilty of an incredible omission. But Trotsky finds it fitting to do so.

We cannot go through the whole gamut of social services but will take three which are comparable with social services existing in this country.

“Miners who have been in the mining industry for twenty years are entitled to receive an old age pension on reaching the age of 50 years. The age qualification for other workers is 60 years, and for women 50 years. The pension paid to a miner is 60 per cent of his actual earnings and this is paid irrespective of the earnings should he continue to work.”

Contrast that with Britain where an old age pension of 10s. per week is paid to a worker on attaining 65 years of age, and remember that this British pension is on a contributory basis.

“Dependants are accorded a pension the amount of which is determined by (a) the number of years spent in the industry; (b) the number of dependants left by the breadwinner. The pension is paid irrespective of whether the cause of death is from natural causes or arising from his work. If a breadwinner leaves one dependant, the dependant is entitled to a pension of 24½ per cent of the breadwinner’s wage. That is the minimum. If the breadwinner has been twenty-two years in the industry, the dependant is entitled to a pension amounting to 40 per cent of the breadwinner’s wages. That is the maximum amount. The number of years the breadwinner has spent in industry will determine the amount of the pension, with a minimum of 24½ per cent, and a maximum of 40 per cent. If there are two dependants, the same principle holds good, the mini-

mum being 36.8 per cent, and the maximum (for twenty-two years in industry) 60 per cent. For more than two dependants the scales are: —

Three dependants, 49 per cent, up to 80 per cent.

Four dependants, 61 per cent, up to 100 per cent.

Over four dependants, 100 per cent.

“If, however, the death is from other than natural causes, the amounts are somewhat higher.”

The contrast between that and the widows’ and dependants’ pensions paid in Britain is striking. And all Russian pensions are on a non-contributory basis.

Last, but not least, holidays with pay.

“The collective agreement also fixes the holidays, namely, one month’s annual holiday with pay, three days for the November celebrations, two days for May 1 and 2, one day on March 13, to celebrate the Paris Commune, one day on January 1, New Year’s Day, and a day on January 22, which is the anniversary of Bloody Sunday, and of Lenin’s death. All holidays are paid for, and if it is necessary, owing to urgent repair work, for a worker to work on any of these holidays, then he is entitled to double pay” (*A Visit to Russia*).

“Backward capitalism”, indeed!

It should further be noted that the Stakhanov system was not something invented by the Soviet factory administrators and imposed on the workers, but is being evolved by the workers in the course of their experience and is being imposed in some cases on quite reluctant managements. Most of the workers who have introduced the new methods had a certain amount of training at technical schools and were anxious to apply that training in practice. Their innovations were not always welcomed.

“This movement,” says Stalin, “in a way arose and began to develop in spite of the administrators of our enterprises, even in opposition to them. Comrade Molotov has already told you what torments Comrade Mussinsky, the Archangel saw-mill worker, had to suffer when he worked out new and higher standards of output in secret from the business organisation, in secret from the controllers.

“The lot of Stakhanov himself was no better, for in his progress he had to defend himself not only against certain administrative officials, but also against certain workers, who jeered at him because of his ‘new-fangled ideas’. As to Busygin, we know that he almost paid for his ‘new-fangled ideas’ by losing his job at the factory, and it was only the intervention of the shop superintendent, Comrade Sokolinsky, that helped him to remain at the factory. So you see, if there was any kind of action at all on the part of the administrators of our enterprises, it was not to help the Stakhanov movement but to hinder it” (Stalin at First Stakhanovite Conference, *Labour in the Land of Socialism*, p. 19).

Enough has been said to show the vast difference between piece-work in the Soviet Union and under the capitalist system. In both cases, of course, piece-work registers the difference of the output of the individual worker, and means differential wages. But there is a vast difference when piece-work is a stimulus to workers to improve their technical ability, enhance their wages and increase the amount of wealth at the disposal of the community and when it is used to speed up the worker in order to create more profits for the capitalist class.

The basic objection of the worker to piece-work is not differential wages but the fact that in the absence of firm trade union agreements, the employer is continually cutting piece prices, for in large numbers of industries the union agreement concerning piece-work merely stipulates that piece prices shall be fixed at such rates as will enable a workman of average ability to earn a fixed percentage above his time wages. In times of bad trade the rate fixer who fixes prices for the individual workman is driven by the management to make drastic cuts. The worker, in order to attain his customary earnings, has to speed up to the limit of his capacity. He may have to work 20 per cent harder, but if he is still able to earn a fixed percentage above his time rate, there is no violation of the union agreement.

We will suppose that in a capitalist workshop a worker, by the discovery of a new method of handling his machine, is able to double his output and so attain earnings above the ordinary. Immediately this becomes evident, the management will tell the rate-fixer that he is paying too high prices to the man in question and the

prices will be cut, The workman will possibly be allowed some slight increment on his previous earnings, but it will be meagre when compared with the increased output that he is giving. Now suppose that the new method of operation becomes known throughout the entire workshop and all workers substantially increase their earnings above their previous average. The management will immediately declare that piece prices are too high and must be brought down to a level which will enable the worker to earn what he was doing before the new method was introduced.

Now is that the case with piece-work in the Soviet Union? It is not, because there is a firm trade union agreement fixing not only the norm but what the worker will receive when he exceeds the norm and that can only be changed by collective agreement and not by the arbitrary decision of the management.

When Trotsky screams that “the real earnings of the Stakhanovites often exceed by twenty or thirty times the earnings of the lowest categories of workers” he is presenting an exaggerated picture of the earnings of the general body of Stakhanovites, but he is at the same time proving to every worker who has any experience of piece-work, the enormous difference between piece-work in the Soviet Union and in the capitalist countries, for no piece-worker in a capitalist factory discovering a new method of doing his job could attain earnings three times the average, without the management cutting prices and bringing his earnings into line with the average. Socialist piece-work involves an increased wage for every increase in output. Capitalist piece-work involves a continually rising output for the same customary wage. The diatribes of Trotsky against the high wages earned by the Stakhanovites are the best refutation of his ignorant assertions as to the character of piece-work in the Soviet Union, and show how absurd it is to compare this drive for raising productivity, freely undertaken by workers who have an intense pride in their skill and in the new technique that Socialism has placed at their disposal, with the workers in a capitalist factory responding to the whip of piece-work rates.

If Socialism involves differential wage payments – and he does not venture to deny that it does – what norms can he suggest?

“‘Bourgeois norms of distribution’ (*i.e.*, inequality in wage and salary payments, *J.R.C.*) will be confined within the limits of strict necessity” (*The Revolution Betrayed*,

p. 273).

Not very helpful to Soviet Trade Unionists when they are drawing up a collective agreement.

The reason for inequality in wage payments is now clear. While the first stage of Communism will, by abolishing exploitation, undoubtedly increase the earnings of all sections of the working population, to give equal earnings immediately to people just emerging from capitalism, to pay the director of a factory the same wage as the gatekeeper, could only lead to the destruction of incentive, the reduction of production and a lessening of the amount of wealth available for distribution. It would lead backward and not forward to genuine equality.

But, it will be argued, there have always been differential wage payments; under capitalism there has always been the incentive to improve one's technical qualifications, but millions remain unskilled and overworked, and the gap between the upper and lower strata of capitalist society grows wider.

True, but one must never forget the basic difference between a Socialist society, where "the economic life is determined and directed by the State plan of national economy for the purpose of increasing the public wealth, of steadily raising the material and cultural level of the toilers" (New Soviet Constitution, Article 11) and a capitalist society where production is carried on for the profit of the owners of industry, who are driven by the very law of their existence to extract the maximum output from the labour forces at their disposal, giving in return the lowest possible amount of wages and salaries. If the unskilled worker in capitalism has the stimulus to improve his qualifications, he has seldom the opportunity, for in almost all industries, even at the height of a boom, there is a reserve of unemployed workers. The higher skilled workers seek to protect themselves by making a monopoly of their skill, limiting entrance into their craft wherever possible. The unskilled man may acquire a knowledge of a particular craft, but he has no guarantee that he will be allowed to earn his living at it. No blame attaches to the skilled workers for this, for they are simply seeking to defend their standard of life in a society in which there are more men than jobs. If the skilled monopoly is broken down by an increase of new workers having the necessary qualifications, the result is an all-round lowering of wages in the occupation concerned. Or a worker may acquire

a considerable degree of skill, but remain on the lower rungs of his craft. The fireman may wait years before the opportunity to become an engine driver comes along, because the railway industry is shrinking and one engine of the latest type can do the work of three or four of an older type. In a planned Socialist economy this would be foreseen and the younger workers would be enabled to acquire a qualification for another industry. In capitalism it is nobody's business to foresee this, and in any case the fireman whose advance up the ladder of promotion is being impeded can see a surplus of skilled labour in other undertakings.

Take the position of clerical workers. At one time they occupied a position midway between the skilled workers and the liberal professions. With the spread of popular education there has been an influx of workers in clerical occupations, until to-day 50 per cent of the male clerical workers are receiving incomes below those of the skilled manual workers. One can formulate a law that the more skilled people there are at the disposal of the capitalist class, the lower will be the wages and salaries paid for this skill.

Large salaries are, of course, still paid to the very skilled administrative workers, although unemployment was not unknown amongst this section during the recent crisis. Such salaries are a product of the class monopoly of education which makes it difficult for a worker to acquire a first-rate education. While an enlightened capitalism will give its wage-slaves a modicum of education, it can have no interest in equalising educational opportunities throughout society, when the cost of this is much greater than the scarcity salaries it has to pay to some skilled administrators.

Socialist society on the contrary removes the fetters which the profit system imposes on wealth production. It abolishes economic crises and enables the workers to be fully employed and the industrial equipment at the disposal of society to be fully utilised. As production is undertaken to increase the public wealth, and to raise steadily the level of the whole of the people, human needs develop faster than the power of industry to satisfy them and are a continual stimulus to further industrial production. Mechanisation is extended to spheres where heavy demoralising physical labour is still the rule. The whole interest of the worker lies in improving his qualifications in the knowledge that there is a place for the exercise of his talents. More workers with an all round knowledge of their industry, more administrators, more scientists, more doctors, more educationists,

are required. As it is in the interest of the worker to improve himself, so it is in the interests of society to create the necessary institutions enabling him to do so.

“The elimination of the distinction between mental labour and manual labour,” said Stalin to the conference of Stakhanovites, “can be achieved only by raising the cultural and technical level of the working class to the level of engineers and technical workers.... It is entirely feasible under the Soviet system, where the productive forces of the country are freed from the fetters of capitalism, where labour is freed from the yoke of exploitation, where the working class is in power, and where the younger generation of the working class has every opportunity of obtaining an adequate technical education. There is no reason to doubt that only such a rise in the cultural and technical level of the working class can undermine the basis of the distinction between mental labour and manual labour, that it alone can ensure the high level of productivity of labour and the abundance of articles of consumption which are necessary in order to begin the transition from Socialism to Communism” (*Labour in the Land of Socialism*, p. 17).

The opportunities before the younger generation of the working class are indeed vast. In 1936, 551,000 studied in universities, and 276,000 in workers' faculties.

As educational opportunities grow, as all members of society approximate to the same level of culture, there will be a growing economic equality between all the members of society, the outlook of the Socialist system will become transformed, the old capitalist habits and prejudices will disappear, and the old incentive will be no longer necessary. Thus society will approach the final stage of Communism as envisaged by Karl Marx.

“In a higher phase of Communist society, after the enslaving subordination of individuals under the division of labour, and therewith ‘also the antithesis between mental and physical labour, has vanished; after labour, from a mere means of life, has itself become the prime necessity of life; after the productive forces have also increased with the all-round development of the individual, and all the springs

of co-operative wealth flow more abundantly – only then can the narrow horizon of bourgeois right be fully left behind and society inscribe on its banners: From each according to his ability, to each according to his needs!” (*Critique of the Gotha Programme*, p. 14).

Unequal wage payment in the first stage of Communism, Socialism, is not a step away from this ideal, it is not one of several possible ways of attaining this ideal. It is the only possible way. The more the successes of Socialism in the Soviet Union pile up, the more reluctant Trotsky is to admit his life-long attachment to a wrong political line. The exploiting class whom he saw advancing in the Soviet Union ten years ago have been eliminated, and Socialist property, in the form of State property or co-operative and collective farm property, embraces 90 per cent of the population. But it could embrace 100 per cent of the population without Trotsky for a moment conceding that Stalin and the Party could possibly be correct.

“The question formulated by Lenin – *Who shall prevail?* – is a question of the correlation of forces between the Soviet Union and the world revolutionary proletariat on the one hand and on the other international capital and the hostile forces within the union” (*The Revolution Betrayed*).

This is a desperate attempt to shift the controversy on to a new field. A reference to Stalin’s remarks in Chapter I will make it evident that no one ever disputed the danger of a united capitalist world, still stronger than the Soviet Union, intervening with a view to the destruction of the Soviet State. That danger was there when the controversy about “Socialism in a single country” flared up in 1925. It is still here to-day, although the defensive capacity of the Soviet Union has in the meantime increased relatively to the attacking strength of the capitalist world. The controversy was whether the Russian working class could, without the aid of the world revolution, eliminate the exploiting classes and proceed to the attainment of Socialism. Not once but a thousand times Trotsky denied that possibility, and yet what he denied to be possible most palpably exists. The question of “who shall prevail” was for Lenin a question of whether, on the basis of the New Economic Policy that Soviet Russia had adopted in 1921, the capitalist or the Socialist elements would acquire a decisive influence over the peasantry.



“From the point of view of strategy, the root question is who will be the first to take advantage of the new situation? The whole question is: whom will the peasantry follow – the proletariat, which is striving to build Socialist society, or the capitalist, who says, ‘Let us turn back, it is safer; we don’t know what this Socialism they have invented is’?” (Speech to Congress of Political Education Departments, *Selected Works*, Vol. IX, p. 261).

Now the capitalists have been eliminated and the peasantry are following the Communists. However much Trotsky may sneer, the “victory of Socialism in the U.S.S.R.” has been won.

But, argues Trotsky, the Soviet Union is still technically backward as compared with some leading capitalist states. The production of sugar beet per hectare is lower than that of Germany and Czechoslovakia, the quality of industrial goods is still low, there is still a housing shortage, the production per head of the population in respect to certain important goods is much lower than in leading capitalist countries. The utmost that a malignant criticism can say is here said.

Bui surely an important question here is the relation of forces between the Soviet Union and the capitalist world. Is this relation of forces changing to the advantage of the Soviet Union, or *vice-versa*?

Let us compare the recent developments in Britain and the Soviet Union as far as heavy industry and electricity supply is concerned.

#### COAL PRODUCTION

	GREAT BRITAIN	RUSSIA
	Tons	Tons
1913	287,430,000	29,100,000
1932	208,733,000	64,664,000
1936	224,454,000	150,150,000

#### PIG IRON PRODUCTION

	Tons	Tons
1913	10,260,000	4,216,100
1932	4,136,000	6,161,100
1936	7,721,000	14,398,000

## STEEL PRODUCTION

	Tons	Tons
1913	7,664,000	4,231,100
1932	5,261,000	6,161,100'
1936	11,785,000	16,325,000

## ELECTRIC ENERGY

	In Kilowatt Hours	
1928	9,324,000	5,007,000
1932	12,324,000	13,540,000
1936	17,971,000	32,000,000

Further, let us see how the relation of forces between the Soviet Union and the capitalist world is changing.

	<i>Place occupied by pre-war Russia in 1913</i>		<i>Place occupied by the U.S.S.R. in 1936</i>	
	<i>In the world</i>	<i>In Europe</i>	<i>In the world</i>	<i>In Europe</i>
Gross output of industry	5	4	2	1
Machine construction	4	3	2	1
Agricultural machinery	5	3	2	1
Tractors	None	None	1	1
Combines	None	None	1	1
Gars and lorries	None	None	b	4
Lorries alone	None	None	2	1
Electricity		7	3	2
Coal	6	5	4	3
Iron ore	5	4	2	1
Steel	5	4	3	2
Aluminium	None	None	3	2
Gold	4	1	2	1
Superphosphates	16	13	3	1
Beet sugar	2	2	1	1

There is no absolute guarantee against intervention in these facts. But they are a clear indication that intervention is a more hazardous business to-day than it was when the Trotskyists first came out against the possibility of building Socialism in a single country.

These facts also make nonsense of Trotsky's oft-repeated assertion that "genuine advance in the construction of Socialist economy in Russia will become possible only after the victory of the proletariat in the most advanced countries of Europe."

In the figures we get a true picture. For while admitting the backwardness of the Soviet Union in some respects, a backwardness which is fully admitted by all Soviet leaders, we can also see the rapidity with which the gap is being closed. If the question of who shall beat whom is already decided inside the Soviet Union by the elimination of the capitalist elements, it is clear that internationally the relation of forces is rapidly changing in favour of the Soviet Union.

All this frenzied argument of Trotsky is designed to prove that although the dominant form of property in the Soviet Union is Socialist, the Soviet Union cannot be designated Socialist because Karl Marx believed that the Socialist transformation would first take place in countries of highly developed capitalist technique.

It is possible, alleges Trotsky, for all industry to be State owned, for most of agriculture to be operating under co-operative forms of ownership, for all economy to operate under a single plan, for a rate of industrial development unprecedented in capitalist countries to be the rule, but the sum total of this is not Socialism because Soviet technique is not in all respects equal to that of the most technically advanced countries.

One can be forgiven for doubting if such an argument would be advanced by Trotsky if he were not tied hand and foot to the sterile dogma that it is impossible to build Socialism in a single country. Whatever the levels of development obtained, whatever the growth of the standard of life of the Soviet workers, the upholders of such a dogma will always find fresh reasons for arguing that the foundations of Socialism have not been laid in the Soviet Union. As development refutes one set of arguments, another is constructed. As the capitalists, whose counter-revolution was envisaged by the Trotskyists, are eliminated, the spectre of bureaucracy is raised and we are warned that we are in the midst of a bureaucratic counter-revolution. When in turn that spectre is laid, other reasons will doubtless be found for asserting that Socialism does not yet exist in the Soviet Union, for no facts can be convincing to an egotistical politician who has taken the wrong turning and landed in the camp of the most despicable reaction.

Another argument of the Trotskyists is that the Soviet Union is not building a Socialist social life on the basis of the nationalised industry and collectivised agriculture, and that Socialist legislation is being drastically modified. For example, the Soviet Union is alleged to be returning to capitalist morality in its treatment of women. Now undoubtedly the way in which a given society treats its women is the acid test of its civilisation. The reactionary treatment of women in the Fascist States is one of the outstanding proofs that Fascism is a reversion to barbarism.

But what is the situation in the Soviet Union? Women are entering industrial and public life in ever greater numbers, and on the basis of equal pay for equal work. They are given eight weeks' leave before and after childbirth, and receive special allowances for the feeding of the new-born infant. The development of public dining-rooms in the factories, collective farms and in the towns, relieves them of much domestic drudgery. So far from there being any diminution, there is a steady growth of the opportunities open to emancipated womanhood.

But the Soviet Union has nevertheless committed a terrible crime against women if Trotsky and his henchman Eastman are to be believed. It has made abortion illegal except for health reasons. This drives Eastman almost frantic.

“Everyone who means business about Socialism in any country, knows that a stoppage of the pressure of population on the means of subsistence is essential to the beginnings of it. In a country like Russia... to come out with a proclamation advocating – or more accurately decreeing – large families and wholesale human breeding, is not only remote from Socialism, but from sane human kindness and sound reason in any of its forms. It is the madness of military nationalism in a power-clique which looks upon the masses of the population as its cattle and its cannon fodder” (*The End of Socialism in Russia*, pp. 13-14).

This is an unsurpassed example of the venom of the Trotskyists. Even if we were to admit that birth control was an essential element in the construction of Socialism, we could quite reasonably doubt whether abortion was a reasonable method of birth control. It was not introduced as such by the Soviet Government. The legalisation of abortion like any other social measure of the Soviet Government

must be judged by its practical consequences. While Soviet legislation with regard to the rights of women, embodying as it does the things for which the most advanced women in all countries have been striving to attain, is the most advanced in the world, it is not divinely inspired and has to be judged by its individual and social consequences. No one can ordain that the legalisation of abortion is an integral part of Socialism. If after years of careful experiment, it is found that abortion has an evil effect on the health of women resorting to it, that it is being used as a substitute for birth control, there is nothing in Socialism which justifies the toleration of such a state of affairs. The abandonment of legalised abortion – except in cases in which it can be justified on health grounds – does not mean the abandonment of rational birth control. Facilities for obtaining birth control information and appliances are as good in the Soviet Union as in any other country in the world, and indeed better than most. But what must we think of the mentality of critics who represent the abolition of abortion as the abolition of birth control and indulge in the usual petty bourgeois twaddle about “cannon fodder”. And what are we to think about sweeping assertions like “everybody who means business about Socialism in any country knows that a stoppage of the pressure of population on the means of subsistence is essential to the beginnings of it”? Marx and Engels and Lenin, who undoubtedly meant business about Socialism, did not regard birth control as an element of socialist construction, and Lenin, whom Mr. Eastman is fond of misquoting, regarded it, if anything, as anti-revolutionary. Mr. Eastman does not stop to explain the workings of this alleged law of pressure on the means of subsistence in the society constructing Socialism. A crude generalisation of Malthus in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth century about “pressure on the means of subsistence”, which was not even correct with regard to the then existing capitalist society, is assumed to hold good for the Soviet Union to-day.

When the legalisation of abortion<sup>1</sup> is described by Eastman as “one of women’s few real guarantees of liberty” we can understand the depths of imbecility to which enemies of the Soviet Union are prepared to sink.

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<sup>1</sup> For other than health reasons. Abortion is still permitted on the grounds of health.

One distinguished American doctor who examined the situation with reference to abortion, came to the following conclusions:

“All doctors, however, agreed that repeated abortions affected the woman’s health in a serious way. Although it is impossible to give accurate statistical data about morbidity following induced abortion, yet there is no doubt that menstrual disturbances, endocrine troubles, sterility, and ectopic pregnancy were frequently observed as a result of repeated abortions.”

“Repeated abortion is harmful to the mother’s health and hence should be forbidden in any society that is able (1) to guarantee a job to all its members, men and women; (2) to provide medical and social institutions to care for mother and child free of charge; (3) to give adequate financial aid to large families; (4) to give contraceptive advice to all who seek it” (H. E. Sigerist, M.D. – *Socialised Medicine in the Soviet Union*, pp. 266 and 271).

Like Eastman, Trotsky seeks to prove that the Soviet Union is going backwards in its attitude to women. The women are going back to the kitchen, the bourgeois family is being re-established, and so on.

Now it is true that Socialist society in its first stages is unable to provide crèches and kindergartens for all children, thus relieving the burden on the mothers. But what it has achieved is enormous as compared with any capitalist country, and further rapid progress is being made from year to year. In 1937 there were five million children between the ages of two months and three years in the crèches of the Soviet Union; 23,500 kindergartens cared for over one million children from 3 to 7½ years. But Trotsky (in agreement with Citrine) declares that this is nothing, because there is not yet a crèche or a kindergarten for every child.

The emergence of women from the kitchen to a life of economic independence is illustrated by the following table.

	<i>Number of women employed</i>		<i>Proportion of total workers per cent 1936</i>
	1929	1936	
National Economy as a whole	3,304,000	3,492,000	34
Large Scale Industry	939,000	2,908,000	39
Building	64,000	402,000	19
Transport	104,000	446,000	18
Education	439,000	1,076,000	56
Health (including Medical Profession)	283,000	643,000	72
Other Institutions	239,000	540,000	31

And in striking contrast to capitalist society, no trade or profession is barred to women in the Soviet Union (except such as are clearly injurious to the female organism) and the principle of equal pay for equal work is rigidly enforced.

The percentage of women in various types of educational institutions will give us a clear picture of the positive liberty of women as distinct from the liberty to prefer abortion to birth control.

	1929	1936
Universities and Engineering Colleges	28.1	36.5
Industrial (including building construction and transportation)	13.4	22.4
Agricultural	17.4	32.1
Social-Economic	21.1	36.0
Pedagogical	48.7	50.2
Medical	52.0	75.1
	1928	1934
Technicians		
Industrial (including building construction and transportation)	9.5	30.1
Agricultural	15.4	30.1
Social-Economic	36.3	54.5
Pedagogical	53.5	54.6
Medical	89.3	80.7
Workers' Faculties	15.6	36.9

This gives the real picture of advancing womanhood in a Socialist society.

Next to the alleged reaction against women, there is the alleged reaction against youth, with regard not only to education but to the opportunities being given to it to participate fully in the development of Socialist society.

In the sphere of education the October Revolution engaged in many new educational experiments, some of which have stood the test of time, while there are others which have not. The deficiencies of the educational system established by the revolution became manifest when the development of the Five Year Plans called for an increase in the technical and administrative personnel. The higher educational institutions had occasion to complain bitterly of the fact that they had to give their pupils an education on some questions that they ought to have mastered in the elementary schools; that the pupils from the elementary schools were well informed on some questions was undeniable, but they had not been getting the education that could fit them to participate fully in the great technical, educational and social developments of a growing Socialist society. Obviously the school system had to serve the needs of Socialist society. If the Dalton plan was not working, then the Dalton plan had got to go. If the October Revolution had swung from harsh discipline to a too loose discipline in school, that had got to be remedied. As in the case of birth control, the revision of an experiment in the light of experience provokes the Eastmans to hysterical indignation. The pre-conceived theories of educational reformers are rated as more important than the experience of the Soviet Union.

Undoubtedly, if there was reaction in the Soviet Union it would show itself not so much in method as in the content of education. Now the text-books in use in the Soviet Union can be got by anyone. If education is ceasing to have a Socialist content here is a simple way of demonstrating it. But people like Eastman prefer to indulge in vague talk about "a back-jump to the complete temper of education under tsarism" rather than deal with the content of education. Until critics of the Soviet Union show that there has been the slightest change in the Socialist content of education we can afford to smile at Eastman's nonsense describing school uniforms as "spiritual prison uniforms". The basic objection to the old school was not what the pupils wore, but the content of the education provided.



“The old school,” said Lenin, “being thoroughly imbued with the class spirit, imparted knowledge only to the children of the bourgeoisie. Every word was adapted to the interests of the bourgeoisie. In these schools the young generation of workers and peasants were not educated; their minds were stuffed with things that were to the interest of that bourgeoisie. They were trained to become their obedient servants who could create profits for them and not disturb their peace and idleness.”

It was that which was objectionable to Socialists in the old school, and that has gone for ever from the Soviet Union. But is it necessary to argue with people like Eastman, who seem to imagine that because there were uniforms in the pre-revolutionary schools and because the decree on Academic Reform prescribed “a single form of dress for pupils of the primary, semi-secondary and secondary schools”, there is therefore a return to the reactionary content of pre-revolutionary education?

Trotsky goes far beyond educational questions in his criticism of the position of Soviet Youth. He declares that the youth is being hampered by the policy adopted by the Young Communist League at its conference in April 1936.

He quotes the remark of the General Secretary of Communist Youth.:

“We must... end the chatter about industrial and financial planning, about the lowering of production costs, economic accounting, crop sowing, and other important State problems as though we were going to decide them.”

On this Trotsky waxes indignant about the youth being cut off from participating in the discussion and decision of important questions of State policy. A reference to the speech shows however that what the General Secretary of the Communist Youth said was “as though it is we who accomplish them”. He is protesting against the committees of the Young Communist League behaving as if they were actually administering Government departments, occupying themselves with a discussion of exactly the same types of question as the Government and the Party were doing, and therefore neglecting the specific work of the Young Communist League. For the speaker went on to say:

“What is demanded of us comrades, is that we should earnestly occupy ourselves with the education of our young people, with their training, that we should strive to make every young man and woman an educated, intelligent and cultured person.

“Culture and education are to-day becoming the most important qualities of the young people of this country.

“At the Third Congress of the Young Communist League Lenin said:

“‘Such is the task that confronts every sincere Communist, every young person who regards himself as a Communist, and who clearly realises that by joining the Young Communist League he undertook to help the Party to build Communism, and to help the younger generation to create a Communist society. He must realise that he can bring this about only with the help of a modern education, and that if he does not acquire this education. Communism will be nothing but a pious wish.’

“And the whole crux of the matter is contained in this statement and warning of Lenin’s. If our young people do not acquire a modern education, Communism will be nothing but a pious wish.”

What the Young Communist League was being told was “do not behave as if you are administrators in a Government department. Do not behave as if you were the Communist Party, for the Young Communist League is a broader organisation than the Party. Concentrate on what should be the main task of a Communist Youth Movement, the education of the Youth in the spirit of Communism.” Surely, it is more than evident if there was a “bureaucratic counter-revolution” being directed against the youth, the least likely advice to give to the young would be “educate yourself and educate others in the spirit of Communism”. So far from the youth being forbidden to discuss political questions, in the very speech quoted by Trotsky the General Secretary of the Communist Youth emphasises the fact that “the instruction in many of the political schools and courses is tedious and uninteresting; it is formal and dry and does not deal with the burning questions of the day”.

“Many comrades,” continues the speaker, “do not realise that we are an organisation for self education and this

means that our members learn in the process of discussing questions and in the process of carrying out these decisions.... It must not be forgotten that our young people are in the period of political, social and cultural formation. They are seeking replies to many questions, they have many perplexities which demand careful and patient explanation on our part. We must not think that when a young man or woman seeks an answer to difficult political questions or does not rightly understand a given incident or event, that he or she is, therefore, guilty of some kind of deviation. He who comes down with all his weight on those who, because of lack of training or education, sometimes formulate their ideas wrongly, does not understand the purposes of education."

Here is the very opposite of damping down political discussion among the young, of preventing them from taking part in the discussion of the great issues of the day.

It is precisely to the extent that the Young Communist League fulfils its function of educating the youth in the spirit of Communism that it kills for ever the possibility of a retreat from Socialism in the Soviet Union.

Indeed, the facilities given to the youth in the Soviet Union are the guarantee that the victorious march will be pressed ahead to the victory of Communism.

With industrial legislation protecting the youth in a way impossible in any capitalist country, with universities housing ten times as many students as Great Britain – 551,000 as compared with 54,000 – with over 1,000,000 students in the universities, technical colleges, and technical schools in receipt of State maintenance grants, besides receiving their tuition free of charge, with a Socialist content carried right through every educational institution – that is the guarantee of the victory of Socialism in the U.S.S.R.

The Soviet Union has already many more crèches, many more kindergartens, much greater education facilities, much greater opportunities of rising to the most responsible posts in the country, than is possible under capitalism, but the Trotskyists screaming that there is not a crèche for every baby, a kindergarten for every child, a place in the university for every youth and maiden, declare that this is not Socialism. But the Soviet Union is rapidly advancing to this

goal and at each stage is refuting the contemptible pessimism of the defeatist intellectuals of the Trotsky type, who have now completed their evolution from being sceptics as to the forces of the Russian workers, to being vicious agents of the class enemy.

## CHAPTER IV

### THE TROTSKYISTS AND THE SOVIET STATE

In September 1933, the London *Times* published an article on the situation in Russia, in which the author, drawing generously on the criticisms which had appeared in the Soviet Press, painted a picture of the country as if “all ahead seemed dark as night”. “The march of events in Soviet Russia has not merely proved stronger than the application of theories, but the two combined have reduced Russia to a vestige of its former self in the days of the Tsars.” The Five-Year Plan is failing on all fronts. The great hydro-electric plant at Dnieperstroï is “a white elephant eating its head off”.

Three years pass and the London *Times* in a leading article has to chronicle the undoubted economic successes in the Soviet Union.

“Russia’s blasts on her own trumpet no longer echo ironically across a hungry, chaotic and ill-provided land; out of the froth and the false starts, and out of the boasts and the blunders there has emerged in an astonishingly short space of time a first-class power.... Her natural resources are commensurate with her territorial bulk and her Siberian and Asiatic dominions are for the first time being developed scientifically in the interests of the State. She is believed to possess one-third of the untapped gold resources of the world. On the material plane she lacks nothing, depends upon nobody. Her population numbers some 170,000,000 and is beginning – by an ideological *volte face* on the question of family life which is characteristic of the Bolshevik regime – to increase...

“Everything at present points to a steady accretion of internal strength which may soon give Russia a place of dominance in a divided Europe, and in the Far East, a position which will ultimately overshadow Japan” (July 9th, 1936).

In July 1937 *The Times* devotes three articles to the situation after twenty years of Soviet Power. Gone are the assertions of the country being a vestige of its former self, of the impending collapse of industry. The new economic machine is obviously beginning to “deliver the goods”, and so the note of criticism is transferred from

the economic to the political sphere. Stalin, it is said, is no longer carrying out Lenin's programme but one of his own. The State is not "withering away" as Lenin had proposed that it should, but is actually being strengthened in every possible way. The writer is distinctly reproachful about the refusal of Stalin to allow the State to "wither away". Who would ever have imagined that we would live to see this complaint in that ponderous middle page of *The Times*?

This is typical of the general shift of criticism in relation to the Soviet Union. A few years ago the critics, with Trotsky in the van, were shouting that the Soviet Five-Year Plan would not produce the expected economic results. To-day, when the economic results aimed at have in the main been achieved, they shout in chorus: "But it is not yet Socialism. There is no equality of income. The State has not yet disappeared, etc."

In all these criticisms the Soviet State appears as a vast, soulless, bureaucratic machine. It has been the custom of the British capitalist class to classify the Soviet Union with Germany and Italy as a totalitarian State. This type of criticism is enthusiastically relayed by Trotsky. "The regime," he thunders, "had become 'totalitarian' in character several years before the word arrived from Germany." Unfortunately this type of criticism influences many who are not in other respects unsympathetic to the Soviet Union. The comments of some sympathisers of the Soviet Union on the recent trials show that while they are immune from the current capitalist misrepresentations as to the economic position of the Soviet Union, they are not yet proof against still grosser misrepresentations with respect to its political institutions.

The Soviet Union is aiming at complete Communism, which means the disappearance of coercion from human society, the withering away of the State. For we Communists are not State worshippers. We do not glorify coercion. At the present stage coercion is necessary, but its purpose is to enable humanity to clear away the obstacles which lie in its path and to attain a system of society where coercion will be unnecessary. We are not for the suppression of individuality but on the contrary seek to create the conditions for its realisation.

"You say," said Stalin to the American newspaper correspondent, Roy Howard, "that in order to build our Socialist society we sacrificed personal liberty and suffered priva-

tions. Your question suggests that Socialist society denies personal liberty. That is not true. Of course, in order to build something new one must economise, accumulate resources, reduce one's consumption for a time and borrow from others. If you want to build a new house, you save money and temporarily limit your requirements, otherwise you will not build your house. This is all the more true when the building up of a whole human society is concerned. It was necessary temporarily to limit certain requirements, to accumulate the necessary means, to strain our forces. We acted precisely in this way, and built a Socialist society. But we built this Society not for curbing personal liberty, but in order that the human personality might feel really free. We built it for the sake of real personal liberty, liberty without inverted commas.

"It is difficult for me to imagine what 'personal liberty' can be had by an unemployed man who goes hungry and cannot find a means of using his labour. Real liberty exists only there where exploitation has been annihilated, where no oppression of some people by others exists, where there is no unemployment, no poverty, where a person does not tremble because to-morrow he may lose his job, his home, his food. Only in such a society is a real, not illusory liberty in the personal and in every other sense, a possibility." Stalin – Interview with Roy Howard – *International Press Correspondence*, 1936, p. 365.

There is nothing in common between a capitalist State worship and the utilisation of a Workers' State – a State of an entirely different type from the capitalist State – during the transition between capitalism and communism. In all capitalist countries the State is being glorified over the individual. In the most democratic capitalist countries there is a steady undermining of the political liberty achieved in the hey-day of the capitalist system. In Britain a steady stream of Emergency Powers Acts, Sedition Acts, Public Order Acts, infringe on the most cherished political rights of the individual. In the Fascist States the individual has been stripped of all rights whatsoever, and is driven hither and thither by a small Fascist oligarchy which is the chosen tool of the most reactionary section of the capitalist class. The more the crisis of capitalism develops, the

more the powers of every capitalist State tend to increase, the greater is the restriction on individual liberty. 'The defence of the capitalist system is impelling the capitalist class in every country to destroy that limited liberty of which they once boasted. This is not a passing phase, but one closely linked to the development of capitalism in the period of its permanent crisis.

The aim of the Soviet State, on the other hand, is the creation of a classless, and Stateless, Communist society. To Communists, the State is no semi-divine body representing the "General Will" or the "Moral Idea", or the "National Soul". It is an institution that appears in human society with the emergence of class divisions. It is developed as an instrument of the numerically small ruling class, enabling it to hold down and exploit the much more numerous exploited classes. Few historical students would to-day seriously dispute that the State in Greece and Rome was essentially a State of the slave-holders; that in the Middle Ages it was the State of the feudal lords, and that in the eighteenth century in Britain it was the State of a landed and commercial oligarchy. But it will be argued that to-day the situation is different: "We have democracy and the people rule." Without in any way depreciating the value of the democratic rights won by the people – the right of free speech and association, and of a press uncensored by the State – these things are no guarantee that the people rule. An examination of the antecedents and present-day connections of our generals, admirals, judges, diplomats, bishops, higher civil servants, would show that all the key positions in the modern British State are held by the chosen men of the capitalist class, and that the reality of a class State is concealed behind a facade of democratic rights.

The Soviet State, based on a revolution which smashed the Tsarist State machine, has from the first proclaimed itself to be a class State, whose main object is to hold down the former exploiting classes, until such times as the development of Society renders the existence of a State coercive apparatus unnecessary. It is, therefore, not the embodiment of the "divine idea", or the "national soul", but an instrument in the hands of the working class, fulfilling a definite purpose in a definite historical period and destined to disappear when that purpose has been fulfilled.

The Trotskyists, however, seek to discover reasons for organising a rebellion against this State and for organising the assassination of those who are directing it in the creation of those social condi-



tions which will enable the State to “wither away”. In all their recent diatribes the Trotskyists depict the Soviet State as a bureaucratic excrescence meriting destruction.

As usual, they seek to prove their case by the unscrupulous manipulation of quotations from Marx and Lenin.

“The Seventh Congress of the Communist International,” says Trotsky, “in a resolution of 20th August, 1935, solemnly affirmed that in the sum total of the successes of the nationalised industries, the achievement of collectivisation, the crowding out of capitalist elements, and the liquidation of the kulaks as a class, ‘the final and irrevocable triumph of Socialism and the all-sided reinforcement of the State of the proletarian dictatorship is achieved in the Soviet Union’.... If Socialism has ‘finally and irrevocably’ triumphed, not as a principle but as a living social regime, then a renewed reinforcement of the dictatorship is obvious nonsense. And on the contrary, if the reinforcement of the dictatorship is evoked by the real demands of the regime, that means that the triumph of Socialism is still remote. Not only a Marxist but any realistic political thinker ought to understand that the very necessity of ‘reinforcing’ the dictatorship – that is, governmental repression – testifies not to the triumph of a classless harmony, but to the growth of new social antagonisms” (*The Revolution Betrayed*, pp. 65-6).

If the reader wants any further proof of the insane hatred which Trotsky cherishes with regard to the Soviet Union, he cannot do better than examine the misrepresentation contained in the above quotation. There is not a word in the resolution quoted by Trotsky as to the reinforcement of the State of the proletarian dictatorship in the sense of reinforcing governmental repression. Indeed, it is doubtful if the word reinforcement is a correct translation at all. In the authorised English translation the words used are: “the all-round consolidation of the State of the proletarian dictatorship.”

We will, however, waive the not inconsiderable difference between “all-sided reinforcement” and “all-round consolidation”, and ask the reader to look again at the passage partly quoted and partly paraphrased by Trotsky.

There is nothing in this passage which prescribes a reinforcement of governmental repression. All that is said is that the eco-

conomic changes which have taken place in the Soviet Union have consolidated (or reinforced, if you will) the Soviet State, *i.e.*, “the State of the proletarian dictatorship”.

The resolution referred to by Trotsky returns to this aspect of the question and deals with it in great detail.

“A great political consolidation of the State of the proletarian dictatorship has been achieved. The Land of the Soviets has the most stable and most impregnable political order. It is a State of developed democracy, not divorced from the masses of the people nor placed in opposition to them, but organically connected with them, defending their interests, expressing their will and carrying it into effect.

“The profound, radical changes which have taken place in the social structure of the U.S.S.R. as a result of the Socialist reconstruction of national economy, the elimination of the exploiting classes and the victory of the collective farm system, have brought about a further expansion and strengthening of the social foundation of the Soviet Power.

“In accordance with these changes and relying on the increased confidence of the broad masses in the dictatorship of the proletariat, the Soviet Government has carried out new measures of great historical significance in introducing a further democratisation of its system; the substitution of equal suffrage for the previously not entirely equal suffrage, direct for indirect elections, the secret for the open ballot; the extension of electoral rights to include new sections of the adult population, re-enfranchisement of those of the former kulaks who have been deprived of the vote, but who have since shown in actual fact, by honest labour, that they have ceased to fight against the Soviet order.

“The dictatorship of the proletariat is steadily developing along the path of constantly strengthening and widening the direct connections of the Soviet State with the masses of the people, with the overwhelming majority of the population, the path of enhancing the all-round and active direct participation of the masses of the people in the administration of the State and the direction of Socialist construction. The development of proletarian democracy which has been attained as a consequence of the liquidation of the exploit-

ing classes, the consolidation of Socialist ownership as the basis of Soviet society and the realisation of the unity of interests of the vast majority of the population in all the Republics of the Soviet Union, enormously strengthens the State of the proletarian dictatorship” (Seventh Congress of the Communist International, 1935. Resolution on the Victory of Socialism in the U.S.S.R., §4).

There is no call for increased governmental repression here. On the contrary, there is an indication of the measures being taken for the strengthening of Soviet democracy, “of widening the direct connections of the Soviet State with the masses of the people” and “enhancing the all-round and active participation of the masses of the people in the administration of the State and the direction of Socialist construction”. Yet a whole chapter of Trotsky’s book is built around this flagrant misquotation.

In the remarks of Trotsky which we have quoted above there is contained an argument that he considers to be so powerful and irrefutable that he repeats it gleefully, again and again, throughout the book. If Socialism has been achieved in the Soviet Union, then the dictatorship ought to have disappeared, the State should have “withered away”. Obviously the Soviet State has not done so, as Trotsky and his friends inside the U.S.S.R. know to their cost. Therefore, it is argued, the very presence of a State in the Soviet Union proves that there is no Socialism in that country.

It seems that there is no limit to the absurdities arising from stubborn persistence in a wrong political line.

“Socialism,” said Lenin, “implies the performance of work without the aid of capitalists, it implies social labour, accompanied by the strictest accounting, control and supervision on the part of the organised vanguard, the most advanced section of the toilers. Moreover, it implies that standards of labour and the amount of compensation for labour must be determined. They must be determined because capitalist society has left us such relics and habits as unco-ordinated labour, lack of confidence in social economy, the old habits of the small producer, which prevail in all peasant countries” (*Selected Works*, Vol. VIII, p. 239).

In *The State and Revolution*, from which Trotsky extracts a

number of quotations apart from their context, Lenin says: –

“Marx not only takes into account the inevitable inequality of men; he also takes into account the fact that the mere conversion of the means of production into the common property of the whole of society (generally called ‘Socialism’) *does not remove* the defects of distribution and the inequality of “bourgeois right’ which *continue to prevail* as long as the products are divided ‘according to the amount of work performed’” (The State and Revolution, Ch. V, §3).

In the same section of the book, Lenin goes on to say: –

“There is as yet no other standard than that of ‘bourgeois right’. To this extent, therefore, there is still need for a State....”

The difference between Lenin and Trotsky is palpable. Lenin states that in Socialism (*i.e.*, the first stage of Communism) there is still need of a State. Trotsky argues that as a State exists in the Soviet Union that country cannot have yet reached the first stage of Communism. All this misrepresentation on the part of Trotsky is necessary in order to lead up to the thesis that the Soviet State is a parasitic excrescence which merits only destruction.

A still more striking example of Trotsky’s method of unscrupulous misquotation is found on page 108 of *The Revolution Betrayed*;

“In a speech at a session of the Central Executive Committee in January 1936 Molotov, the President of the Council of People’s Commissars, declared: ‘The national economy of the country’ has become socialistic. (Applause.) In that sense [?] we have solved the problem of the liquidation of classes. (Applause.) However, there still remain, from the past ‘elements in their nature hostile to us’, fragments of the former ruling classes.

“Moreover, among the collectivised farmers, State employees, and sometimes also the workers, ‘petty speculators’ are discovered, ‘grafters in relation to the collective and State wealth, anti-Soviet gossips, etc.’ And hence results the necessity of a further reinforcement of the dictatorship. In opposition to Engels, the Workers’ State must

not 'fall asleep', but on the contrary become more and more vigilant.

"The picture drawn by the head of the Soviet Government would be reassuring in the highest degree were it not murderously self-contradictory. Socialism completely reigns in the country. 'In that sense' classes are abolished. (If they are abolished in that sense, then they are in every other.)

"To be sure, the social harmony is broken here and there by fragments and remnants of the past, but it is impossible to think that scattered dreamers of a restoration of capitalism, deprived of power and property, together with 'petty speculators' (not even *speculators!*) and 'gossips' are capable of overthrowing the classless society. Everything is getting along, it seems, the very best you can imagine. But what is the use then of the iron dictatorship of the bureaucracy?"

An examination of Molotov's actual speech will show that Trotsky is scoring crude points by deliberate misquotation, relying on the fact that only a tiny minority will have the time or the opportunity of checking the quotation.

Here is what Molotov actually did say:

"The plan for this year provides a programme of new and great economic progress. The national economy can undertake so vast a programme because it has now become a Socialist economy in every respect.

"There are now no capitalists, or even petty capitalists, in any branch of our national economy. We are successfully accomplishing the principal political aim of the second Five-Year Plan, namely to liquidate capitalist elements and classes in general.

"This does not mean that elements which are hostile to us because of their class nature have entirely disappeared in our country. Quite a number of them still remain. And they take advantage of every, even the slightest, relaxation of revolutionary vigilance to do us injury and to put a spoke in our wheel.

"Nor must we forget that the petty-bourgeois mentality is very tenacious, and that it easily finds expression even among the toiling collective farm peasants, among our State

employees, and sometimes even among the workers, whether it be in the shape of profiteers, pilferers of collective farm and State property, anti-Soviet slanderers, and so on.

“But if we take the present social basis of our State, we will find that it fully corresponds with the fact that the whole national economy of the country has become Socialist. (Applause.) In this sense we have accomplished the task of liquidating classes. (Applause.)

“It is the liquidation of capitalist elements, that is, the abolition of parasites that live at the expense of the people, that has made it possible to place the whole income of the country at the disposal of the toilers themselves and of their State. (Applause.) This is the basis for the rapid rise in the standard of living of the working class and the collective farm peasantry which we are now witnessing.”<sup>1</sup>

In a subsequent part of his speech Molotov adds:

“We are successfully accomplishing the task of liquidating classes and are steadily advancing towards the elimination of the survivals of capitalism in economy and in the minds of the people, but we must remember what Lenin said about the complete annihilation of classes.

“Lenin said:

“‘The complete annihilation of classes requires not only the overthrow of the exploiters, landlords and capitalists, not only the abolition of *their* property, but also the abolition of *all* private property in the means of production, the obliteration of the difference between town and country and between manual workers and mental workers’ (*The Great Initiative*).

“Lenin pointed out that this would be a long and difficult matter. This statement of Lenin’s is especially clear to us now. But it should also be clear to us that the accomplishment of the tasks indicated by Lenin depends primarily on our ability to bring about a rise in the cultural and technical level of the working class and in the cultural level of

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1 Molotov, “The Plan and Our Tasks,” *International Press Correspondence*, 1936, p. 161.

the collective farm population.”<sup>1</sup>

Now there is nothing contradictory in all this. Molotov in the part of his speech quoted by Trotsky, is telling his audience that (1) the exploiting classes have been abolished as exploiting classes, although the members of the former exploiting classes still exist as individuals; (2) the whole national economy has become Socialist and in this sense we have accomplished the task of liquidating classes, because there are no longer parasitic capitalist elements living at the expense of the people. He subsequently goes on to impress upon his audience that classes have not yet been annihilated in the full Marxist sense, for as Lenin said: “The complete annihilation of classes requires not only the overthrow of the exploiters, landlords and capitalists, not only the abolition of *their* property, but also the abolition of *all* private property in the means of production, the obliteration of the difference between town and country, and between manual workers and mental workers.” Now note Trotsky’s procedure in relation to the two related propositions of Molotov. He quotes the first proposition that classes have been liquidated in the sense that the capitalist parasites have been eliminated, and omits the important qualification that this does not mean the complete annihilation of classes because differences still exist between the worker and the peasant, and between the menial worker and the manual worker. On the basis of that omission he entirely distorts Molotov’s statement and then proceeds to engage in a lively polemic to the effect that if classes were already completely annihilated (which Molotov does not say), then there is not on Marxist grounds any good reason for the existence of the State.

Molotov asserts that the members of the former employing and exploiting classes are still numerous, a fact that is indisputable when we remember that there were millions of rich peasants exploiting hired labour in the Soviet Union in 1928, in addition to millions of merchants and shopkeepers. Trotsky reduces this still considerable body of people, just recently deprived of their exploiting functions, to “fragments and remnants of the past”; this is in order to lead up to an argument in which not only Molotov but Lenin is grossly misrepresented.

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1 Molotov, “The Plan and Our Tasks,” *International Press Correspondence*, 1936, p. 162.

“Those reactionary dreamers, we must believe, will gradually die out. The ‘petty speculators’ and ‘gossips’ might be disposed of with a laugh by the super-democratic Soviets. ‘We are not Utopians’, responded Lenin in 1917 to the bourgeois and reformist theoreticians of the bureaucratic State, and ‘by no means deny the possibility and inevitability of excesses on the part of *individual persons*, and likewise the necessity for suppressing *such* excesses. But... for this there is no need of a special machine, a special apparatus of repression. This will be done by the armed people themselves, with the same simplicity and ease with which any crowd of civilised people even in contemporary society separate a couple of fighters or stop an act of violence against a woman,’

“Those words sound as though the author had especially foreseen the remarks of one of his successors at the head of the Government. Lenin is taught in the public schools of the Soviet Union, but apparently not in the Council of People’s Commissars. Otherwise it would be impossible to explain Molotov’s daring to resort without reflection to the very construction against which Lenin directed his well-sharpened weapons. The flagrant contradiction between the founder and his epigone is before us! Whereas Lenin judged that even the liquidation of the exploiting classes might be accomplished without a bureaucratic apparatus, Molotov, in explaining why *after* the liquidation of classes the bureaucratic machine has strangled the independence of the people, finds no better pretext than a reference to the ‘remnants’ of the liquidated classes” (Trotsky, *The Revolution Betrayed*, pp. 108-9).

If the English reader will turn to page 83 of Volume VII of Lenin’s *Selected Works*, he will see the context is as follows:

“Finally, only Communism makes the State absolutely unnecessary, for there is *no one* to be suppressed – ‘no one’ in the sense of a *class*, in the sense of a systematic struggle against a definite section of the population. We are not Utopians, and we do not in the least deny the possibility and inevitability of excesses on the part of *individual persons*, or the need to suppress *such* excesses. But in the first



place, no special machine, no special apparatus of repression is needed for this; this will be done by the armed people itself, as simply and as readily as any crowd of civilised people, even in modern society, parts two people who are fighting, or interferes to prevent a woman from being assaulted. And, secondly, we know that the fundamental social cause of excesses, which consist in violating the rules of social life, is the exploitation of the masses, their want and their poverty. With the removal of this chief cause, excesses will inevitably begin to *'wither away'*. We do not know how quickly and in what order, but we know that they will wither away. With their withering away, the State will also *wither away*."

Lenin is quite clearly referring to the higher stage of Communism "in which the antithesis between mental and physical labour has disappeared" (p. 88), when "The State will be able to wither away completely, when society can apply the rule: 'From each according to his ability, to each according to his needs,' *i.e.*, when people have become so accustomed to observing the fundamental rule of social life and when their labour is so productive that they will voluntarily work *according to their ability*" (p. 88). "Until the 'higher' phase of Communism arrives, the Socialists demand the *strictest* control, by society *and by the State*, of the amount of labour and the amount of consumption" (p. 89).

Trotsky's manipulation of quotations is so crude that it can hardly be described as a trick. He takes a quotation from Lenin referring to the suppression of a few backward and anti-social individuals in the highest stage of Communist society and handles it as if Lenin was referring to the numbers of former exploiters who still exist in the "lower state of Communism – Socialism," and indulges in a few irrelevant sneers about Leninism not being taught in the Council of People's Commissars. These sneers recoil on an ex-Commissar who, because obsessed with his own egoism, never gave Leninism the courtesy of even serious study, and has now degenerated into an embittered enemy of the great Revolution.

It is clear that under Socialism there is "the strictest control by society and by the State of the amount of labour and the amount of consumption", and that this is necessary precisely in order to attain that higher productivity and that accustoming of people to "observe

the fundamental rules of social life" so that they will "voluntarily work according to their ability".

It is hardly likely that millions of people who have grown up to manhood and womanhood as members of an exploiting class and who were exploiters five or six years ago, are yet accustomed to "observe the fundamental rules of social life".

Many of them are more likely to seize every opportunity to malingering in the workshop, to seek to obtain as much as possible in return for as little as possible. They will not merely "dream" about capitalist restoration, they will not merely seek to carry on propaganda for capitalist restoration, but when they hear that powerful States are seeking to intervene in the Soviet Union, they will seek connections with these States in order more effectively to work for capitalist restoration. They are obviously unable to come out and develop a mass movement against the Soviet State, but they can add to the method of sabotage of Soviet industry the policy of espionage on behalf of their friends, the foreign States who are the declared enemies of the Soviet Union. Lenin declares that it is not necessary to have a State for suppressing weak-minded, anti-social people, who steal in a system of society where there is plenty for all, who quarrel with their neighbours and attack them. These people can be restrained by their neighbours without a special coercive apparatus. But people who are out to sabotage industry, to put great industrial plants out of action, to discover and disclose to the enemy important secrets of military defence, cannot be treated like the man next door who drinks a little too much and has to be quietened. To detect and to punish these former exploiters and their degenerate Trotskyist allies, a special apparatus is necessary.

We are not arguing that members of the former exploiting classes are incorrigible, and that there is nothing for them but coercion. The Workers' State aims also to re-educate this section of the population. Again and again Lenin stresses the point (too often forgotten by critics of Communism) that the dictatorship of the workers is not only force but the regeneration and re-training of the former exploiters and the mass of small producers, and that this requires long, gradual, careful organisation. The method of compulsion and the method of re-education go together. The latter is facilitated when the Workers' State, by the resolute exercise of its authority, convinces the former exploiters that not only is the restoration of the former social order quite impossible, but that all attempts

to impede the development of Socialist industry will he sternly put down.

The more Socialist industry and agriculture develop, the more desperate, however, becomes the resistance of the remnants of former exploiting classes. When the Workers' State was tolerating their existence as rich peasants and traders, they hoped for the gradual undermining of the Socialist elements in economy by means of the development of private trade and agriculture. As these were eliminated, their hatred intensified to an extreme degree. The development of Socialism means that those elements now find employment in some of the branches of Soviet industry and trade. They find employment at a time when whole branches of industry that never previously existed are being established in the country, when millions of backward and individualistic peasants are being absorbed into industry and are bringing many of their old peasant habits with them. Even without the activity of class enemies in Soviet industry, this would be a period of considerable strain and difficulty. If one can remember the muddles which occurred in England in 1914-15 in the shift from peace to war production, despite all the great technical ability at the disposal of the British bourgeoisie, one can understand that a certain amount of honest mistakes and muddle could occur in Soviet industry in the course of the great change through which it is passing. There is the opportunity of the class enemies. They can take advantage of the muddle and disorganisation that exist, and work deliberately to intensify it; they can deliberately sabotage and try to represent the result as a product of honest muddle; they can take advantage of the difficulties of the ex-peasant in fitting himself into the new industrial life.

Formerly those elements – as rich peasants and traders – fought Socialist industry from without. Now they seek to undermine it from within, and because they are now part and parcel of the personnel of industry, it is not always easy to detect them. The utmost vigilance is necessary on the part of the factory committees, of the unions, and of all the organs of the Workers' State, in order to meet and defeat the sabotage. Only thus can the struggle of the remnants of the exploiters be overcome, and socialist labour discipline spread throughout all society.

“But this ‘factory’ discipline, which the proletariat will extend to the whole of society after the defeat of the capi-

talists and the overthrow of the exploiters, is by no means our ideal, or our ultimate goal. It is but a necessary *step* for the purpose of thoroughly purging society of all this hideousness and foulness of capitalist exploitation, *and for the purpose of advancing further*" (Lenin, *State and Revolution*, Ch. V, §4).

Industry and agriculture in the Soviet Union are Socialist, but this does not exclude the existence within this Socialist structure of virulent enemies of the new Socialist order. Leaving aside the recent Trotskyist activities for subsequent examination, we can illustrate this proposition by a reference to the wholesale sabotage carried out in the collective farms in the years 1931-3. In the North Caucasus, for example, it was found that amongst the leaders of collective farms were ex-officers who had served with Kolchak and Denikin, and a number of sons of rich peasants.<sup>1</sup> These elements had not only penetrated the collective farms but also occupied important posts in the Communist Party in that area. A similar state of affairs was discovered in the Ukraine. Now obviously these people were utterly incapable of developing a successful movement for the overthrow of the Soviet Government, but they were capable of disorganising the work of the collectives and, on this foundation, rousing intense opposition amongst the peasantry to the whole policy of co-operation. In the first phase of Communism, Socialism, it is necessary to maintain the State in the struggle to suppress the remnants of the former exploiters, to inculcate Socialist labour discipline and to uproot the "remnants of capitalism in the minds of men". The maintenance of a strong State, in order to create the appropriate social conditions for the withering away of the State, is the formula of this period.

Throughout Trotsky's entire work there is a deliberate attempt to obliterate the difference between Socialism (as the first phase of Communism) and a fully developed Communist society. This he does in order to maintain his central thesis that what exists in the Soviet Union cannot be Socialism because there is still need of the State and under Socialism there is no need for a State. As the State undoubtedly exists, Trotsky argues that it is based on the necessity

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1 Some of these were disclosed in the Bukharin-Rykov-Yagoda trial, as being in touch with and influenced by the Bukharin group.

of a bureaucracy to dominate and control the people of the Soviet Union. A striking example of this method of confusing the issue is found in the references to the army. Because a standing army still exists in the Soviet Union, he argues, there is no Socialism.

“The army is only a copy of the social relations. The struggle against foreign danger necessitates, of course, in the Workers’ State as in others, a specialised military technical organisation, but in no case a privileged officer caste. The Party programme demands the replacement of the standing army by an armed people” (*The Revolution Betrayed*, p. 55).

There is no ambiguity here. Trotsky is arguing that the programme of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union demands that the standing army shall be abolished in a Workers’ State. As the standing army is not abolished in the Soviet Union, then it is because Stalin and the “bureaucracy” are throwing the Party programme on the scrap-heap. But on page 205 Trotsky quotes the Party programme which says that the Red Army must have “an openly class character – that is, it must be made up exclusively of the proletariat and the semi-proletarian strata of peasantry which are akin to it. Only when classes are abolished will this class army be transformed into a national Socialist militia”. So while on page 55 of *The Revolution Betrayed* we are told that the Workers’ State replaces the standing army with the armed people, on page 205 we are told that this cannot happen until classes are completely abolished, *i.e.*, until the higher stage of Communism, when the State is dying out.

All this confusion on the role of the State under Socialism is designed to lead up to a grand attack on the bureaucracy in the Soviet Union. Against this “terrible bureaucracy a regular barrage of verbal fireworks is put up.

“The bureaucracy not only has not disappeared, yielding its place to the masses, but has turned into an uncontrolled force dominating the masses” (p. 56).

“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” (p. 112).

In short, according to Trotsky, the Soviet State is not a Workers' State in which there are certain tendencies to bureaucratic methods, but is, on the contrary, a State of the bureaucracy, run in the interests of the bureaucracy. This is the pet theme of all Trotskyists although it is devilish difficult to discover precisely what they mean by a bureaucrat. There are indications that almost anyone occupying an administrative position in the Soviet Union is a bureaucrat for Trotsky.

We take Lenin's view that it would be wrong to describe every official of a trade union, political party or in the State as a bureaucrat. A bureaucrat is a privileged official, divorced from the masses, superior to the masses and uncontrolled by the masses. It is the contention of Trotsky that it is a caste of such persons ruling in the Soviet Union at the present day.

Now we have clearly to distinguish between this assertion and the criticism often made by Communists that there are bureaucratic tendencies existing in the institutions of the Soviet Union. It is one thing to suggest that certain officials are divorced from the masses and are attempting to rise superior to them; that these officials are seeking to break loose from popular control; and quite another thing to suggest that the Communist Party of the Soviet Union, the Soviet Trade Unions and the Soviet State itself are dominated by a caste of irremovable and privileged officials who have emancipated themselves from popular control.

It is wrong to suggest, for example, that a growth in the number of State officials is a growth of a bureaucracy. The number of State officials is bound to increase in a society where the State has taken over a vast network of functions formerly conducted by private enterprise. The essence of the question is – have these officials special privileges as compared with the ordinary citizen; are they under a special legal protection; have they special economic privileges; are they removed from popular control? Or to look at the problem from another angle, are the masses of the people being drawn into the work of State administration in greater numbers, or are they being excluded by a privileged group? To read Trotsky one would imagine that in the past the popular masses were participating in administration to a greater degree than is the case now, and that they have gradually been excluded by the bureaucracy.

This brings us to Lenin's exposition of the problem of bureaucracy in the Soviet State.

“We can fight bureaucracy to the bitter end, to a complete victory, only when the whole population participates in the work of government.... The best of the bourgeois republics, no matter how democratic they may be, have thousands of legislative hindrances which prevent the toilers from participating in the work of government. We have removed these hindrances, but so far we have not managed to get the toiling masses to participate in the work of government. Apart from the law, there is still the level of culture, which you cannot subject to any law. The result of this low cultural level is that the Soviets, which by virtue of their programme are organs of Government *by the toilers*, are in fact organs of Government *for the toilers*, by means of the advanced stratum of the proletariat, but not by means of the toiling masses.

“Here we are confronted by a problem which cannot be solved except by prolonged education. At present this task is an inordinately difficult one for us, because, as I have had frequent occasion to say, the stratum of workers who are governing is an inordinately, incredibly *thin* one” (*Selected Works*, Vol. VIII, p. 353).

Thus spoke Lenin in 1919.

The October Revolution had smashed the bureaucratic apparatus of the capitalist State, but because of the “thin stratum of workers” available, a considerable number of the old State bureaucrats had to be brought back into the service of the Soviets.

“The Tsarist bureaucrats began to enter the Soviet institutions and practice their bureaucratic methods. They began to assume the colouring of Communists and, for greater success in their careers, to procure membership cards of the Russian Communist Party. And so, having been thrown out of the door they fly in through the window!” (*Selected Works*, Vol. VIII, p. 353).

The programme of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union adopted in March 1919 gave special consideration to this question and outlined (Section 8) the following policy for dealing with it:

“Resolving to wage determined struggle on bureaucracy, the Communist Party of the Soviet Union advocates

the following measures for the complete suppression of the evil.

“1. The obligation for every member of the Soviet to do a definite job in the administration of the State.

“2. Systematic variation of work so that it progressively embraces all branches of administration.

“3. The progressive participation of all the working population without exception in the work of administering the State.

“The complete carrying through of all these measures in all their aspects, a progress in the path opened up by the Paris Commune, and the simplification of administrative functions with the raising of the cultural level of the toilers, will lead to the suppression of State power.”

With regard to the development of bureaucracy in industry, the programme (Section 15) states;

“The participation of the trade unions in economic policy, and the access of the mass of the workers to that policy which the unions prepare, is at the same time the principal means of combating bureaucracy in the economic apparatus of the Soviet Power, and gives the possibility of establishing a real control of the people over the results of production.”

Have those measures remained dead letter, or has there been a noticeable progress (1) in enlarging the “incredibly thin stratum of workers” who are governing; (2) in pulling the workers into the administration of the State? Let us remember, of course, that the workers are not merely confronted with the job of administering the State in respect to its political activities, but also of finding the technical and administrative personnel for a Socialist industry and agriculture supplying the needs of 180,000,000 people.

First, let us take the “raising of the cultural level of the toilers”. In 1913 there were 7,800,000 pupils in elementary and secondary schools. In 1927-8 there were 11.2 millions, and in 1936 – 27,900,000. While 78 out of 100 people were illiterate in 1913, this had fallen to 8 per cent in 1936. Trotsky will have it that illiteracy is far from being abolished. Again we ask our readers to remember that the Soviet Union includes the backward peoples suppressed and



exploited by the former Tsarist Empire, and that the proper comparison; therefore, is with the British Empire, and not merely with the metropolis. An honest survey of the British Empire would show that at least 50 per cent of the people are illiterate.

Let us now take higher education. In the universities in 1915 there were 124,700 students. In the universities in 1933 there were 469,800; in 1936 – 551,000. In the full-time technical schools there were 48,000 pupils in 1915; 503,700 in 1931; and 769,000 in 1936. The problem of giving the masses access to higher education is being tackled in the Soviet Union on a scale which is without parallel in any capitalist country.

But are the workers being drawn into administering the State, or is this being done by a privileged officialdom drawn from the ranks of the workers?

Let us take the evidence of Beatrice and Sidney Webb. It is true that Trotsky affects to despise these two highly trained social scientists. They do not agree with Trotsky, and therefore they are under suspicion, if they are not actually agents of the G.P.U.<sup>1</sup> Still, their evidence will have some weight with a British audience.

“On the other hand, again in contrast with western municipalities, much less use is made in the cities of the U.S.S.R. of that trained, permanent and salaried staff by whom in most other countries the actual work of municipal administration is conducted. In the absence of such a staff, which is only now beginning to appear in the U.S.S.R., the city Soviets have made the most of that principle of the widest possible participation of the whole people in the work of government which is so characteristic of Soviet Communism.

“The City Soviet appoints an ever-increasing number of sections or committees, each consisting of a small proportion of the elected members or candidates, to whom are

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<sup>1</sup> Trotsky has the following to say about D. N. Pritt, the well-known Labour K.C.: “It (*i.e.*, the Soviet Government) is cheerfully willing to make the ‘King’s Counsellor’ Pritt a counsellor of the G.P.U.” (p. 293). From the zest with which Trotsky repeats the phrase “The King’s Counsellor”, it is clear that he thinks Mr. Pritt is called upon to give counsel to His Majesty, George VI.

joined an indefinite number of volunteers drawn from outstanding and 'activist' citizens of either sex and of the most varied positions and occupations. Each section consists of several scores of members; occasionally even of hundreds, and in Moscow and Leningrad sometimes running up to a thousand or so; all of whom undertake to spend hours every week in their own localities in gratuitously doing detailed administrative work, much of which would in England and America be carried out by a salaried staff of inspectors, relieving officers, investigators, school attendance officers, collectors and what not."

Here we have an example of the ordinary citizen participating in the work of administering the State to a degree impossible in capitalist countries.

It is true that there have been some bureaucrats who have attempted to free themselves from the control of the sections of the city and town Soviets. At the recently held 4th session of the 7th Convention of the Central Executive Committee of the U.S.S.R. certain measures were outlined with regard to combating this practice. The sections are to be combined with Commissions elected by the Soviets. These will have the right of supervising the work of all departments, of calling upon the departmental chiefs in any branch of town and city administration to answer for any deficiencies of the work of their departments, and if necessary to take steps to summon a full meeting of the city Soviet, in order to secure their removal.

"All responsible workers," it was declared, "should understand that there are no people who could claim to be released from control in their work, that the liability of any worker to control follows from the principle of Soviet power, that only with the aid of control from below, supplementary control and leadership from above, can the work of the Soviets be improved."

Then we have "the participation of trade unions in economic policy" from the yearly discussions of the collective agreements governing industry, in which the overwhelming masses of trade unionists participate, down to the day-to-day adjustment of questions arising in the workshops. The yearly discussion of collective agreements covering all sections of industry and all categories of

manual and mental workers in State employment are nothing less than nation-wide discussions as to how the wealth which industry will produce in the ensuing year is to be distributed. How much of the product of industry is to be distributed in personal wages and salaries, how much in developing the great social services of the country, and how much for the extension of Socialist industry. These are the questions hammered out in hundreds of thousands of factory meetings. The question of the wages of the workers, whether one category is getting less or more than is necessary, is open for discussion and determination in a manner impossible in any capitalist country. The discussions on the collective agreements and on the plan that the factory is expected to fulfil during the year give the workers an opportunity of raising all those managerial questions which collective agreements in capitalist countries specifically exclude from being the subject of negotiations at all. Workers in the engineering industry in Britain know of the categorical refusal of the employers to discuss with the workers any question trenching on what is described as “managerial functions”. That workers should be allowed to criticise the management of a factory, and to make suggestions for its improvement on the ground that the efficiency of management is one of the vital aspects of factory life in which every worker should be interested, would appear to the most enlightened managers in a capitalist factory as a staggering utopia.

And what a variety of questions other than wages the collective agreement deals with! The question of housing for the workers; nursery schools and kindergartens for the children; the technical educational facilities of the factory; the workers’ annual holiday and the question of access to the union rest homes; the factories’ contribution to the various social services – this is but a tiny fraction of the subjects discussed.

When Trotsky writes that Russia is dominated by a bureaucracy who are “specialists in distribution” – in their own favour, who “take from ten and give to one” – in short, that this alleged bureaucracy arbitrarily distributes the social wealth without consulting the masses, not only is that assertion in direct contradiction with all the known facts as to the part played by the unions in the Soviet Union – but Trotsky does not even recognise the intelligence of his readers, by attempting to prove it. The crucial point of Trotsky’s argument is never proved. It is merely asserted.

However, Trotsky does deign to say a few words about the “social physiognomy of the ruling stratum” which will give us an insight as to who he considers to be the enemies of the Soviet people.

After informing the world that the Webbs wrote under the dictation of the ruling stratum, Trotsky tells the world what this ruling stratum is.

In the first place there is the directing personnel of the Central State apparatus, of the army and navy departments, of the governing apparatus in each of the national republics, the trade union and co-operative leaderships, the leadership in great voluntary organisations like the Osoviakhim (League for Aviation and Chemical Warfare), and last, but not least, “the powerful staff of the Party”. These Trotsky estimates are about 500,000 people.

Below this half-million come the Executive Committees of District Soviets, together with the parallel organs of the Party, the commanding staffs of the army and fleet, and the G.P.U. These amount to 2,000,000.

Then there is the administrative personnel of industry, from 17,000 directors and vice-directors down to the shop-foremen. Add the representatives of the Party and trade unions in the factories, and you have another half-million.

Then you have 860,000 administrators and specialists in Soviet economy; 480,000 in industry; 100,000 in transport; 93,000 in agriculture, and 25,000 in commerce.

Continuing his sum in arithmetic, he suggests that there are 500,000 administrators in the collective farms. Add those in Soviet farms and machine and tractor stations, and the total is 1,000,000.

If finally you add the administrators in State and co-operative trading, you get a ruling stratum of from five to six million.

But we have to add to the ruling stratum a further five or six million Stakhanovites, skilled workers, collective farm aristocrats. These two sections of the population, “the ruling stratum” and their allies, we are told, constitute with their families as many as from “20 to 25 million of the population” – an upper 25 million in fact!

Now what does this tedious and wholly unenlightening arithmetic prove? Nothing at all. What Trotsky set out to prove was that there was a bureaucracy separated from the mass of the people, lording it over them – a bureaucracy that was irremovable, that had deprived the masses of the people of political power and that arbitrarily distributed the wealth of Socialist industry. And his proof of

this assertion amounts to no more than a catalogue of people in certain employments in the Soviet Union.

But let us look at the people who Trotsky classified as the bureaucracy and its “interpenetrating stratum”.

In this cross section of Russian society there is included almost everyone at or above the technical level of a highly skilled worker.

There is included almost everyone at or above the technical level of a skilled collective farmer.

There is included all the members of the working class who have been trained since the October Revolution and who occupy responsible posts in the State, in industry and commerce, in science or in the army and navy.

In short, the enemy, according to Trotsky, is nothing more nor less than the *cadres* of the October Revolution, the people who bore the main organising responsibility for carrying through the great Five-Year Plans which have more than trebled the annual production of wealth in the Soviet Union. This is the body which Trotsky describes as the “Bonapartist bureaucracy”, which “can be removed only be revolutionary force”. This is what all the fine talk to the effect that the State has not withered away, the bureaucracy is raising itself above society, leads up to – the need for the destruction of the *cadres* of the revolution. Of course Trotsky is by no means the only person in the world who regards this as a most laudable aim. There is obviously a basis for an agreement with other forces here. But we anticipate.

Now on what basis can we describe the categories of people mentioned by Trotsky as being privileged and irremovable? Let us start with the Communist leadership. It can hardly be pretended that this leadership is irremovable. Indeed in another context, Trotsky will tell you that a considerable number of leaders have been removed – including himself. Nor can it be seriously contended that Trotsky was removed bureaucratically. On the contrary, he was removed for violating Party discipline after debates which lasted from 1923 to 1927, and after the Party had declared against the line taken by him, by 724,000 votes to 4,000. But perhaps the present Party officials are irremovable? On the contrary, the present Party officials are elected by secret ballots of the Party members. Do those Party members occupy a privileged position with regard to the workers? On the contrary, at the periodical cleansings of the Party, the non-Party workers are given the fullest opportunity of criticising

Party members and demanding their expulsion from the Party. Listen to the shocked remarks of Sir Walter Citrine with regard to Communist Party cleansing:

“The Commission is sent to the factory. The members of the Party are called up before them in front of the workers, both Party and non-Party. He is required to tell his life’s history, especially what he has done and is doing for the Revolution. Anyone can question him regarding both private and public matters, and after he has been turned inside out, the Commission then makes its decision” (*I Search for Truth in Russia*, p. 17).

Sir Walter has good reason to tremble at the mere thought of a similar system being introduced in this country – for he at least does not appear to see in it any protection for bureaucracy, or special privileges.

Perhaps it is the chiefs of industry who are irremovable? Well, a goodly number who were settling down to a quiet bureaucratic existence have been removed in recent months and have been replaced by technically qualified workers. Smetanin, who improved methods of production in the boot and shoe industry, is now assistant director of the Skorokhod Boot and Shoe Factory. Ryalov, an oil borer, has just been appointed the chief of the Malgobekneft Oil Trust. One could give a list as long as Trotsky’s book.

Perhaps the administrators of industry are protected from criticism by the cowed masses? Heaven knows what Trotskyists and other critics of the Soviet Union would do if they were. For many hostile criticisms are based on the open public criticism directed against the organs of government and industry in the U.S.S.R., by the workers of the Soviet Union, both in the wall newspapers and the trade union press. In what other country of the world is it possible for the workers to establish in every department of a factory a wall newspaper exposing the shortcomings of the management on a whole variety of technical and social questions? Sir Walter Citrine, for example, makes a very strong criticism of the slums in one of the oil districts of the Soviet Union. Did he require to go to the Soviet Union to find this out? An intelligent study of the Russian trade union press would have revealed the most drastic criticisms of the housing conditions in a number of industrial districts.

Indeed nothing would be more interesting than for some of the

people who talk about lack of freedom of criticism in the Soviet Union to make a six months' comparison of the British and Soviet press.

They would find in the Soviet press many criticisms of the poor functioning of certain factories in the Soviet Union. Are there factories which function poorly in Britain? There are, but even if the proprietors of the British press had any inclination or interest in criticising these factories, there is one all-sufficient deterrent – the law of libel. They would find factories in the Soviet Union criticised for neglecting to improve the working conditions. There are many such factories in Britain, but again the law of libel prevents any possibility of pillorying the owners of such factories.

The fact is that not only are the officials in the State, the Party and industry, removable, but they are subjected to a floodlight of criticism that is without parallel in any capitalist State.

No, the talk about a bureaucracy ruling in the Soviet Union is a lie and a delusion. The great social transformation of the Five-Year Plan was not carried through by an oppressive bureaucracy, but by the 20 million members of the working class and by the masses of middle and poor peasants, led by a political Party which has won and retained their confidence. They are continuing to carry through the policy laid down under the guidance of Lenin in 1919, of combating bureaucratic tendencies, of fitting every worker to play a part in the administration of the State, of advancing society to the stage when an organ of coercion will no longer be necessary – when the State will “wither away”.

## CHAPTER V

### THE NEW CONSTITUTION AND THE STRUGGLE AGAINST BUREAUCRACY

The “inordinately, incredibly thin stratum” of workers who were governing in Russia in 1919 when Lenin unfolded the Party policy for the struggle against bureaucracy, has increased immeasurably since that date.

Millions of new administrators, new technicians, new specialists have risen out of the ranks of the working class. But every new advance creates a further need for more trained people, and the demand runs continually ahead of supply.

There is still a shortage of trained people, and from that there grows recurring tendencies to bureaucracy, for certain administrators and officials to adopt an aloof attitude to the mass of the people whose servants they are, to seek to free themselves from popular control, and to attain a privileged position when they will be beyond criticism or control and will be a “law unto themselves”.

From the first moment of its existence as a ruling party, the Communist Party of the Soviet Union has regarded such tendencies as a deadly menace to the building of Socialism and has waged unceasing war against them in the Party, the trade unions, the co-operatives and the Soviets.

The workers promoted to leading positions were from the first subjected to capitalist influences – the influences of the Tsarist bureaucrats who had found a place in the State machine; of the managers and technicians of the old regime who had been retained in industry; and above all, of the capitalist elements in the economy of the country, who played a still significant economic role up till the realisation of the first Five Year Plan. There is also the influence of the outside capitalist environment with which Soviet officials, as diplomats, heads of trading institutions, industrial managers, were from time to time in direct contact.

It is clear, therefore, that the capitalist elements in the country could not be overcome without a continued struggle of the Party against bureaucracy, and at the head of that struggle has stood and still stands the great organiser of Socialist victory in the Soviet Union – Joseph Stalin.

Let us examine some of the phases of this prolonged struggle in



order to show to those who are always talking about bureaucracy in the Soviet Union, that not only is the Communist Party fully aware of this danger, but is fighting it unrelentingly. A complete survey of this aspect of building Socialism would be a work in itself. We must content ourselves with a few of the outstanding struggles.

We will start with the great discussion of 1920-1 on the question of the role of the trade unions in the Soviet State. In this discussion Trotsky stood for the merging of the unions with the Soviet State, for their reduction to the role of a mere appendage to the State, for the rigid selection of officials from above, and for the establishment of a military regime of compulsion within the unions. Had this policy been accepted the unions would have been as popular with the working class of Russia as are the Fascist unions with the workers of Italy, as was the Spencer Union in the Notts coalfield with the class-conscious workers in that area.

Lenin strongly opposed this policy, declaring that the unions had a special role to fulfil in the system of workers' dictatorship. They were the link between the more advanced and the comparatively backward sections of the workers. In them the great mass of industrial workers were linked up with the Communist vanguard. Lenin said: "The trade unions are a school; a school of unity, a school of solidarity, a school of the defence of their own interests, a school of Communism." Lenin was strongly supported by Stalin who described the differences between Lenin and Trotsky in the following terms:

"There are two methods. The method of compulsion and the method of persuasion. A group of Party workers with Trotsky at the head (enthused by the success of military methods in army circles), believed that one must transfer these methods to working class circles. The mistake of Trotsky consists in the fact that he underestimates the difference of the Army and the working class,"

Trotsky was defeated and a great victory was registered in the struggle against bureaucracy.

In September 1923 the Central Committee of the Party directed its attention to the need for the widest development of inner-Party democracy in the Party and outlined a series of measures with this end in view. A month later, Trotsky emerged as a super-democrat, criticising the internal regime in the Party, attacking not only the

Central Committee, but the trusted leadership of the Party in the districts and localities. No measures of real inner-Party democracy were suggested by Trotsky that did not already form part of the policy of the Central Committee. Where Trotsky differed from the Central Committee was in his advocacy of the right to form factional groups (the embryo of parties within the Party) which would have destroyed Party discipline and cleared the way for the break-up of the workers' dictatorship. A few months later Lenin died. As a token of their love and affection for their dead leader, hundreds of thousands of the best workers in the Soviet Union applied to join the Communist Party. Factories and trade unions selected their most tried and respected members and presented them for admission to the Party, and the Party opened its doors to them. Here was a spectacle which ought to have roused the enthusiasm of every partisan of democracy inside the Party,

This was not the effect on Trotsky. He still regards the admission of those workers into the Party as being one of Stalin's major crimes – his aversion to them being largely based on the fact that in the main the new members were deeply hostile to Trotsky's line.

“The gates of the Party, always carefully guarded, were now thrown wide open. Workers, clerks, petty officials, flocked through in crowds. The political aim of this manoeuvre was to dissolve the revolutionary vanguard in raw human material, without experience, without independence, and yet with the old habit of submitting to the authorities. The scheme was successful. By freeing the bureaucracy from the control of the proletarian vanguard, the ‘Leninist levy’ dealt a deathblow to the party of Lenin” (*The Revolution Betrayed*, pp. 97-8).

Here we have a spectacle that reminds us of an old-time aristocrat shuddering at the upsurge of “the dark people”. Here we have the most undisguised hatred of the cream of the non-Party working class selected by their fellows as suitable candidates for the Communist Party, “Raw human material without experience, without independence, and yet with the old habit of submitting to the authorities.” This is written about the most active non-party sections of a working class that had emerged successfully from a civil war in which its “old habits of submitting to the authorities” had expressed itself in chasing the aforesaid authorities for ever from its country.

All the malignancy of a thwarted bureaucrat is expressed in these lines of Trotsky.

This did not prevent him, a year later, from supporting Zinoviev in the demand that 90 per cent of the Party should be industrial workers, a proposal that would have meant not the admission of a hundred thousand selected workers, as was the case with the Lenin levy, but the admission of virtually all the industrial workers, advanced and backward alike, into the ranks of the leading party, thereby weakening it in its role of the vanguard which guides the great mass organisations of the workers in the struggle to build Socialism,

In 1924 the Party had to devote a great deal of attention to enlivening the Soviets, particularly in the rural areas, seeking to draw large numbers of poor and middle peasants into the work of those bodies. At the same time the Party had to emphasise the need for the scrupulous respect for revolutionary law and to take sharp steps in all state institutions against bureaucratic elements who were showing scant respect for Soviet law by infringing on the rights of the peasantry.

In its task of enlivening the Soviets as mass organisations, the Party had to struggle against the theory of Zinoviev and some of his supporters at Leningrad (a theory later supported by Trotsky) that the dictatorship of the workers was equivalent to the dictatorship of the Party. This was no academic theory but one capable, if put into practice, of encouraging bureaucratic contempt for the workers and peasants organised in trade unions, co-operatives and Soviets. It was necessary for Stalin to point out in the clearest possible manner that the dictatorship of the workers was exercised through the mass organisations, the trade unions, the Soviets, the co-operatives and the League of Youth, and could only be so exercised if the Party had the confidence of the working class,

“Anyone who identifies the ‘dictatorship of the Party’ with the dictatorship of the proletariat is tacitly assuming that the authority of the Party can be grounded on force – which is absurd, and utterly incompatible with Leninism. The authority of the Party is maintained by the confidence of the working class. The confidence of the working class is not to be won by force; for the use of force would kill confidence. It can only be won if Party theory is sound, if

Party policy is correct, if the Party is devoted to the cause of the working class, if the Party is closely linked with the masses of the working class, and if the Party is ready and able to *convince* the masses that its slogans are the right ones” (Stalin, *Leninism*, Vol. I. p. 37).

The Zinoviev-Trotsky theory of the dictatorship of the Party was one which would have led to the bureaucratic short-circuiting of the Soviets and the undermining of Soviet democracy. That the men who sponsored such a theory should have later posed as the champions of Party democracy against bureaucracy, argues much for their effrontery and lack of principle.

“It is hardly necessary,” said Stalin, “to say that the phrase ‘dictatorship of the Party’... may involve us in serious dangers and give rise to a number of mistakes in our practical political work. When employed without qualification, the expression implies that we are saying: (1) *To the non-Party masses* – ‘Don’t dare to contradict, or to discuss matters; the Party is supreme; the dictatorship of the Party has been established’. (2) *To the members of the Party* – ‘Act more resolutely; tighten up the screw; pay no heed to what the non-Party masses say; the dictatorship of the Party is in force’. (3) *To the Party leaders* – ‘You can enjoy the luxury of self-satisfaction; you can have a touch of swelled-head if you like; a Party dictatorship has been set up, and of course that really means the dictatorship of the leaders’” (*Leninism*, Vol. I, pp. 50-1).

Stalin warned the Party against the acceptance of a bureaucratic theory which would lead to these results. “Now, more than ever, will the Party leadership of the masses be imperilled if Communists should suffer from swelled head.”

In the period following the adoption of the New Economic Policy in 1921, many former landlords, capitalists and capitalist-minded technicians entered the service of the Soviet State, believing that it was now bound to drift in the direction of capitalist restoration. The first Five Year Plan disillusioned them in no uncertain manner, and they began a more active policy of sabotage. In the year 1928 a sabotage organisation of former landlords and of specialists in the service of the State was discovered in the Shakty re-

gion of the Donetz basin. This group organised sabotage by impeding the carrying out of proper drainage measures, thus allowing the pits to become water-logged; by exploiting unproductive seams; by hindering mechanisation, and so on. It was clear that the activities of this group had been allowed to attain such dimensions because the State, trade union and Party organisations were tending to drift aimlessly along and were above all failing to give adequate attention to the complaints of the workers. The complacency of these organisations had to be rudely disturbed by the sharp voice of working class criticism.

“It is impossible to advance the cause of socialist construction,” declared Stalin, “and check the wrecking activities of the bourgeoisie, without giving full scope to criticism and self-criticism, without placing the work of our organisation under the control of the masses.”

And in preparing for the carrying out of the Plan, the sharpest self-criticism was directed by the workers with regard to the working of all State, co-operative, trade union and Party organisations. Never did a Government or a ruling party work under such a fierce searchlight of publicity and criticism.

The Five Year Plan could not be carried through, however, without an extensive mobilisation of active Party and trade union workers, who moved from sector to sector, strengthening the weak points in the industrial front. Intent on achieving results, spurred on by unprecedented and often unexpected successes, there was a tendency on the part of industrial managers, of local and district Party leaders, to treat the active men in the Party and trade union ranks as mere pawns to be moved hither and thither. It was a spectacle such as Trotsky had envisaged when he suggested the transformation of the unions into appendages of the State, but it found no favour with Stalin and the leadership of the Party, who regarded it as an unmitigated evil.

“The slogan ‘Cadres decide everything’,” said Stalin, “demands that our leaders should display the most solicitous attitude towards our workers, ‘little’ and ‘big’, no matter in what sphere they are engaged, cultivating them assiduously, assisting them when they need support, encouraging them when they display their first successes, advanc-

ing them, and so forth. Yet in practice we meet in a number of cases with a soulless bureaucratic and positively outrageous attitude towards workers. This, indeed, explains why instead of being studied, and placed at their posts only after being studied, people are frequently flung about like pawns.... We must first of all learn to value people, to value cadres, to value every worker capable of benefiting our common cause" (Address to Red Army Graduates, May 14th, 1935. *Handbook of Marxism*, pp. 961-2).

Another side of the tendency to treat people as cogs in the machine was the tendency of leading Party and State officials to utilise the preoccupation of the masses with the struggle to carry through the plan in order to free themselves from control and to act as a law unto themselves. The Party showed no hesitation in dealing with these people.

"Apart from incorrigible bureaucrats and office rats, about the removal of whom there are no differences of opinion amongst us, there are two other types of workers who retard our work, hinder our work, and prevent us from advancing.

"One of these types of workers is those who have rendered certain services in the past, people who have become 'aristocrats', as it were, who consider that the laws of the Party and the Soviets were not written for them but for fools. These are the people who do not think it is their duty to fulfil the decisions of the Party and of the Government, and who thus destroy the foundations of Party and State discipline. What do they base their calculations on when they violate Party and Soviet laws? They hope that the Soviet Government will not dare to touch them because of the services they have rendered in the past. These swelled-headed aristocrats think they are irreplaceable, and that they can flaunt the decisions of the leading bodies with impunity. What is to be done with workers like that? They must without hesitation be removed from their leading posts, irrespective of the services they have rendered in the past" (Stalin, 17th Party Congress, C.P.S.U., *Handbook of Marxism*, p. 951).

When in 1937, in addition to the removal of Trotskyist wreckers, the Soviet Government undertook the removal of numbers of such “swelled-headed aristocrats”, foolish persons who imagine that progress towards a Communist order of society can take place without a struggle against bureaucratic tendencies bewailed the degeneration of the Soviet Union. The *Daily Herald* – which has rivalled the *Daily Mail* as the leading anti-Soviet newspaper in England – collected every case of this kind from White Russia to Vladivostok as a horrible example of the wickedness of dictatorship, when on the contrary it was a powerful expression of the will of the Soviet workers to eliminate from the living body of Socialism every type of Bumbledom, every bureaucratic ulcer.

The history of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union is the history of unceasing fight against bureaucratic tendencies. A study of the decisions of the Communist Party and of the Soviet Government for a single year – nay, the study of the Soviet press for a single month – is the best answer to the ludicrous calumny that the Party of Lenin and Stalin is the expression of a complacent bureaucracy lording it over the Soviet people.

The new Stalin Constitution is the expression of the will of the working class of the Soviet Union to rid itself of all bureaucracy. We ask all honest doubters – who are overlooking the fact that their doubts emanate sometimes from sources that are far from honest – to examine this Constitution as it really is and contrast that reality with the misrepresentations – identical in form and content – of it made by the Fascists and the Trotskyists.

The Constitution is the embodiment of the great social transformation that has taken place in the country. In 1925, for example, the Socialist section of economy had 48.8 per cent of the fixed capital of the country, capitalist concerns had 6.5 per cent, and small private enterprise had 44.7 per cent. By 1934 capitalist producers only owned 0.09 per cent of the fixed capital and small enterprises only 4.1 per cent. Private trade has been almost completely eliminated, and the great mass of the peasantry organised in the collective farms has, under the leadership of the workers, entered upon the socialist path.

Because the definitive victory of Socialism has been achieved it is possible to abolish those restrictions of the franchise that were imposed at a time when the influence of the exploiting classes and their allies, the priests, was still strong.

Because the peasantry is on the way to Socialism, it is possible to abolish the privileges which the towns enjoyed over the rural districts in respect to the election of deputies to the Soviets. Instead of an indirect system of election, under which the village Soviets elected delegates to the district congresses of Soviets, and the district congresses in turn to the territorial and regional congresses, the election is now direct – from the masses direct to the territorial, regional, city, district and village Soviets every two years, and to the highest organs of power in the Union, Republics, Autonomous Republics and the Supreme Council of the U.S.S.R. every four years.

It would be wrong to see in the New Constitution merely an alteration in the method of voting; for its essence is to guarantee to all Soviet citizens rights which are only obtainable in a Socialist society. Foremost amongst those is the right to work, secured through the abolition of unemployment by means of Socialist planning, a right which constitutes a mighty advance in security and freedom. The right to work is not sufficient. “Too long,” cried the French Socialist, Paul Lafargue, “have we demanded the right to work; it is time to demand the right to leisure.” The New Soviet Constitution balances the right to work with the right to leisure, embodied in the seven-hours day (with six hours for workers in dangerous occupations), and a fortnight’s holiday with pay. It guarantees the right to a higher education, a right not dependent on the financial standing of one’s parents as in capitalist society. It guarantees national freedom to the 60 different national groups in the Soviet Union.

The New Constitution was adopted after a political discussion of an unprecedented character. In Eastern Siberia there were 5,000 meetings, in which more than 600,000 people took part to discuss the Constitution, and more than 6,000 amendments were suggested. In Soviet Ukraine, 11,500,000 people participated in the meetings and 27,000 amendments were put forward. In the entire Soviet Union more than 25,000,000 people took part in the meetings and 95,000 amendments were adopted.

These meetings led up to animated discussions in all the local, district and provincial Soviets in preparation for the 8th Soviet Congress which passed the Constitution. Yet at this very moment Trotsky was writing; “To be sure, in June the draft was submitted to the ‘consideration’ of the people of the Soviet Union. It would be vain, however, to seek in this whole sixth part of the globe one Communist who would dare to criticise a creation of the Central



Committee, or one non-Party citizen who would reject a proposal from the ruling party. The discussion reduced itself to sending resolutions of gratitude to Stalin for the 'happy life'" (*The Revolution Betrayed*, p. 243). The 95,000 amendments put forward from the meetings is sufficient answer to this astounding lie.

In the preparation for the elections under the new Constitution there were wide discussions in the Communist Party and all of the mass organisations in the country, and a re-election of all the leading officials. The trade unions re-elected their entire apparatus of officials – both paid and voluntary.

Great reporting meetings were held in every factory and institution throughout the country, at which trade union officials and delegates of all categories reported on their work. The reports were submitted to a prolonged and in some cases ruthless criticism, and on that basis the elections of officials by secret ballot took place. One-third of the new officials have been elected for the first time. Many officials, both locally and nationally, who had got into a rut and were failing to attend to the requirements of the members were removed. In these assemblies the Communist Party members had no special privileges. The workers judged them – as they judged other officials – on the basis of their work.

The same process took place in the Communist Party. In preparing for the elections under the new Constitution, the Party members exercised their rights of criticism in no uncertain manner. In the course of the recent election of all Party committees, from the primary committees in the factories to the territorial and regional committees and the Central Committees of the national republics, there was in every Party organisation a prolonged and careful discussion of the recent work of the leading members and leading committees. The Party members showed their impatience with slipshod methods of work and with the high and mighty attitudes adopted by some Party officials towards the rank and file. Party members in important positions in the Soviets and in the factories had their work thoroughly examined and, where necessary, subjected to merciless criticism. In the Moscow City discussions, for example, the Chairman of the Moscow District Soviet was continually interrupted when he tried to gloss over failures in his work. In a number of cases directors of factories who were members of Party committees and who were unpopular with the workers were voted out of Party office, after their work had been sharply commented on

by the workers.

The method of electing Party Committees was organised in such a way as to enable the qualifications of everyone nominated for Party office to be thoroughly examined and freely voted upon. First nominations were made in the meetings without restriction and the political qualifications of each candidate was discussed, his past record, devotion to the Party, attitude to other Party members and to non-party workers. When this was done thoroughly, and in a number of cases more than one meeting was devoted to the job, then the Party members voted on each nominee by secret ballot. The result was the clearing out of incompetent, self-satisfied and inefficient people and the renewal of the Party committees by new and vigorous workers. In Moscow, 23.9 per cent of new officials and members of Committees were elected for the first time; in Leningrad 2.17 per cent, in the Donetz area 27.3 per cent, and in Kiev 27.3 per cent.

Then in every constituency in the Soviet Union great meetings were held in the factories, offices, collective farms, and Red Army units, in which the qualifications of possible candidates for the soviet of the union and the soviet of nationalities, to be put before the constituency election conference, were discussed. Here the masses were in action, seeking to choose the most distinguished candidates. And by most distinguished candidates they did not mean only Party leaders and well-known political orators, but workers who had distinguished themselves in all aspects of the construction of Socialist society. Contrary to Trotsky's allegation that "the Soviet people will have the right to choose their 'representatives' only from among candidates whom the central and local leaders present to them under the flag of the Party" (*The Revolution Betrayed*, p. 251), 108 non-Party people were adopted as candidates for the Soviet of the Union and 165 for the Soviet of Nationalities, and contrary to his assertion that "the right to occupy themselves with political questions has even been withdrawn from the Communist Youth" (*ibid.*), there were 39 candidates for the Soviet of the Union and 58 for the Soviet of Nationalities who were under 25 years of age.

The electoral conferences took place after the most careful discussion of the qualifications of the candidates. There was a general withdrawal of candidates other than those adopted by the electoral conferences, and the country gave a straight vote for or against the policy outlined in manifestos issued by the Communist Party, the

League of Youth and the Trade Unions.

This withdrawal of candidates has been completely misrepresented by the enemies of the Soviet Union – and because of this misrepresentation it has been misunderstood by many friends. An American who was in the Soviet Union for three months before the elections gives the following account:

“To start with it must be remembered that while the final elections took place on only one day, December 12th, the election campaign, as such, occupied two to three months of intense discussion and activity. Why was this necessary if most of the candidates were unopposed? Because the very process of selection of the candidates was a most important aspect of the election.

“In the United States candidates are proposed by political parties. The average citizen has darn little to say about who these candidates shall be. This is all left to the ward heelers and the city, State and national bosses of the major political parties.

“Not so in the Soviet Union. According to the Soviet Constitution the right to nominate candidates resides in every public organisation, in every society of toilers. Trade unions, co-operatives, youth organisations, cultural and sport clubs and all other organisations of the people not only have the right but actually did nominate their candidates for the Supreme Council.

“Let us see how this worked in practice. In one election district a number of local organisations of that type nominated their own candidates. This took place many weeks before the final elections. Hence, as a result of such nominations by a number of organisations in this district, a handful of candidates were left in the running. Immediately a widespread discussion developed around these proposed individuals. One organisation would send spokesmen to others to convince them to support their nominee. As the whole discussion was based on finding the person best suited for the post, some candidates were withdrawn, others declined, until finally, just before election, one candidate was left in the field, the unanimous choice of all the organisations of the people in that election district.

“Thus, if only one candidate was on the final ballot in this election district it was not because no others were nominated and discussed, but because prior to election day it had already become clear that this one person was the logical candidate and would emerge the victor”... (Gil Green, *The Truth About Soviet Russia*, pp. 12-13).

Those readers who are familiar with the process of selecting Labour candidates in Britain will see the parallel. Trade Union branches and other organisations affiliated to the Divisional Labour Party, after more or less careful consideration, send in their nominations, and the nominations received are then submitted to a Selection Conference, composed of delegates from all affiliated organisations. This Selection Conference decides on one of the nominated candidates, and that candidate goes forward for election. The other nominated candidates withdraw; they do not go forward to the election even if there is no other Party putting forward a rival candidate – the candidate approved by the Selection Committee is the one candidate of the Labour movement, and is unopposed.

At the time of the elections in the Soviet Union, the belief was current in capitalist countries that the plots of the Trotskyists, the Bukharinists and the traitor generals mirrored a widespread discontent among the masses in the Soviet Union. The general character of elections in capitalist countries is that competing parties with conflicting class interests put forward their candidates. Rival candidates in the Soviet Union elections would therefore have given the impression throughout the capitalist world that they represented conflicting class interests, or at least sections for and against the Government. In view of the critical situation in the world, and the imminent danger of war, such an impression would have represented a real danger to the peace of the world.

Therefore the election conferences in the Soviet Union, after an examination and comparison of candidates of a far more exhaustive character than is ever made in other countries, decided, in agreement with the nominated candidates and the nominating organisations, to put forward a single candidate in the actual election – that is, to make the first elections under the new Soviet Constitution a vote for or against the policy of the Soviet Government and of the Communist Party.

The essence of this policy is expressed in these extracts from

the Election Manifesto of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union:

“The Victory of Socialism in the Soviet Union has insured the flourishing of industry. In the years of the first two Five Year Plans a first-class industry equipped with modern technique has been created. The volume of output of our Socialist factories and plants exceeds the volume of output of pre-war industry more than eight times....

“He who wants our industry to continue to develop, overtaking capitalist countries, will vote for the Party of the Bolsheviks, he will vote for the candidates of the bloc of Communists and non-Party people.

“He who wants the toilers of our country to continue to be free of any unemployment whatever, and uncertainty as to the morrow, he who desires a further improvement in the material and living conditions of the workers and office employees will vote for the Party of the Bolsheviks, he will vote for the candidates of the bloc of Communists and non-Party people....

“He who wants the further development of education in our country, he who wishes the further flourishing of the sciences, literature and art of the peoples of the Soviet Union, will vote for the Party of Bolsheviks, he will vote for the candidates of the bloc of Communists and non-Party people.”

96.8 per cent of the electorate voted. 89,844,271 voted for the candidates for the Soviet of the Union. There were 636,808 spoiled papers and 632,074 voted against.

89,063,169 voted for the candidates for the Soviet of Nationalities. There were 1,487,582 spoiled papers, while 562,402 voted against.

One thing emerges clearly from an analysis of the people elected, and that is their overwhelming youthfulness.

In the Soviet of the Union, 246 out of 569 delegates are at or below 35 years of age, that is to say, they were children of 15 years or under at the time of the October Revolution. 386 out of the 569 delegates were forty years of age or under; that is to say the overwhelming majority of the delegates were children or young men and women of under twenty at October 1917.

In the Soviet of Nationalities there is an actual majority of dele-

gates, 330 out of 574, who are below 35 years of age. 445 delegates in this Soviet are below 40 years of age. Thus in the Supreme Soviet of the U.S.S.R. – the Soviet of the Union and the Soviet of Nationalities – taken together 576 out of 1,143 delegates – a clear majority – are at or below 35 years of age.

The national composition of the Soviets is worthy of comment.

The following table shows the national composition of the Soviet of Nationalities:

Russians	146	Chechens	5
Ukrainians	34	Mordvinians	5
Belorussians	15	Cherkess	5
Azerbaijanians	34	Kabardinians	4
Georgians	33	Kirghizians	17
Armenians	30	Tartars	15
Turkmenians	17	Jews	15
Uzbeks	26	Germans	9
Tajiks	16	Kalmucks	9
Kazaks	24	Osetians	9
Udmurts	7	Chuvash	4
Komi	8	Nentsi	4
Buryats	8	Moldavians	5
Marii	6	Kara-Kalpakians	4
Bashkirs.	6	Abkhazians	5
Yakuts	6	Karelians	4

There are also individual deputies from peoples like the Oriots, Karachais, Balkarians, Kumyks, Ingushetians, Evenki, Khakass, Tats, Czechs, Kurds, Nogai, Avars, Laks, Lezghians, Letts, Veps, Bulgarians, Agars, Native Jews, Iranians and others.

The deputies to the Soviet of the Union are from the following nationalities: Russians, Ukrainians, Jews, Belorussians, Georgians, Uzbeks, Tartars, Kazaks, Armenians, Azerbaijanians, Letts, Chuvash, Poles, Germans, Mordvinians, Greeks, Tajiks, Kirghizians, Turkmenians, Udmurts, Bashkirs, Bulgarians, Kara-Kalpakians, Kabardinians, Yakuts, Chechens, Marii, Nentsi and Esthonians.

Out of the 1,152 deputies to the Supreme Soviet 187 are women. Out of the 1,152 deputies, 465 are workers, 260 peasants, and 325 office employees and intelligentsia.

These figures illustrate of the advance of the generation nurtured by the October Revolution to the control and direction of the

country. The inordinately thin stratum referred to by Lenin has received tremendous reinforcements.

Immediately before the election, Stalin, in a speech before the electors in Moscow, emphasised the rights of the citizens over the deputies who were about to be elected.

“I should like to give you advice, the advice of a candidate for deputy to his electors. If we take the capitalist countries there exist between the deputies and the electors, singular, I would say rather curious relations. While the elections are in progress the deputies flirt with the voters, fawn upon them, vow their loyalty, hand out a batch of all kinds of promises. It would appear that the dependence of the deputies on the voters is complete. As soon as the elections have been held and the candidates have become deputies, the relations alter radically. Instead of the dependence of the deputies on the voters, their complete independence obtains. For the duration of four or five years, *i.e.*, right up to the new elections, the deputy feels perfectly free, independent of the people, of his electors. He may pass over from one camp to another; he may swerve from the right path to the wrong path, he may even involve himself in certain machinations of a rather dubious character, he may turn somersaults as much as he pleases – he is independent.

“Can such relations be considered normal? By no means, comrades. This circumstance was taken into account by our Constitution, and it introduced a law under which the electors have the right to recall their deputies before their term expires if they begin to equivocate, if they swerve from the path, if they forget their dependence on the people, on the voters.

“This is a remarkable law, comrades. My advice, the advice of a candidate for deputy to his electors – the right to recall the deputies before their term expires, to watch over their deputies, control them, and should they take it into their heads to swerve from the right path, get rid of them, to demand the holding of new elections. The Government is obliged to fix new elections. My advice is to remember this law and make use of it if need be.”

But Trotsky asserts that the New Constitution is at one and the

same time “a bonapartist plebiscite” (p. 263), and “a reversion to bourgeois democracy”. “In the political sphere the distinction of the new Constitution from the old is its return to the system of bourgeois democracy based on the so-called ‘universal, equal and direct vote’ of an atomised population.” This is a description of bourgeois democracy which might have been given by a naive nineteenth century Liberal – not that Trotsky, the ally of Fascism, is either naive or liberal. Most Marxian Socialists have hitherto believed that bourgeois democracy was based not on a particular method of voting, but on a system of society based on the control of the land, the industries and the banks by the capitalist class, and on the fact that this economically dominant class had possessed itself of all the key positions in the State apparatus and in the armed forces, the judiciary, the State bureaucracy, etc.

But in the Soviet Union, as the Constitution truly states,

“The land and all that is beneath it, waters, forests, mills, factories, mines, railways, water and air transport, banks, means of communication, large State organised agricultural enterprises such as State farms, machine and tractor stations and the like, as well as the principal dwellings in the cities and industrial localities are State properties, that is, the property of the whole people.”

Evidently the “bourgeois democracy” being introduced in Russia has dispensed with the bourgeoisie and their economic system – but it must be bourgeois, declares Trotsky, because it is “based on equal and direct voting”! We know what the bourgeoisie would think of such a system of “bourgeois democracy”. Equally absurd is the talk about the Soviet population being atomised, which Trotsky keeps on repeating as if it were a well-established fact. What is meant by atomisation? Let us take a petty middle-class suburb in London, the population of which is employed in a thousand and one heterogeneous enterprises throughout greater London and is therefore bound by no common interests, has no trade union organisation, no political organisation, in fact no bond either of economic interest or of neighbourhood, and with an utter absence of civic pride. Such a population, utterly without corporate life, is the easy prey of the yellow press and of the reactionary political adventurer. Take the opposite situation – that of a mining village in South Wales or Durham, where the miners’ union binds most of the workers together and is their cho-



sen instrument not only for remedying their economic grievances but for securing the election of workers to the local and county councils. Here is the very opposite of atomisation.

Now what is the ground for asserting that the Soviet population is being atomised, *i.e.* deprived of all means of corporate life and expression?

“In abolishing the Soviets, the new Constitution dissolves the workers in the general mass of the population,” declares Trotsky. But who in the name of heaven is abolishing the Soviets? Is it suggested that Soviets are abolished because the former exploiting classes are being granted the right to vote? Trotsky in another connection quotes the Party programme accepted in 1919, which shows that this was envisaged right from the start of the Bolshevik regime. Or is it being asserted that because the election of deputies to each local, district provincial, republic, Soviet and to the Supreme Council of the Soviet Union is now done directly by the electors and not by members of the lower Soviets sending delegates to the higher, that therefore the Soviets are abolished? In Britain, for example, the delegates to the National Committee of the Amalgamated Engineering Union are elected not by the Branches, but from members sent to the District Committees of the Union by the Branches. The District Committees in turn send delegates to the Divisional Committees and they in turn elect the delegates to the national committee, which is in effect the Annual Conference of the Union. Now suppose the Amalgamated Engineering Union decided to adopt the practice of other Unions in which Branches send their delegates direct to the Annual Conference. Would it be rational to assert in virtue of that fact that the branches, District Committees and Divisional Committees of the Union had been abolished? Yet this is Trotsky’s argument in relation to the Soviet system.

“Politically the Soviets, to be sure, long ago lost their significance. But with the growth of new social antagonisms and the awakening of a new generation, they might again come to life. Most of all, of course, are to be feared the City Soviets with the increasing participation of fresh and demanding Communist youth” (*The Revolution Betrayed*, p. 256).

Was there ever assembled in any single chapter of any single book so many manifest self-contradictions as in this chapter of

Trotsky's on the new Soviet Constitution? On page 251 the Communist Youth have the right to occupy themselves with political questions withdrawn from them; on page 256 we find that the "bureaucracy" is trembling before the danger of the aforesaid youth bobbing up "fresh and demanding" in the City Soviets, and in self protection abolishes the City Soviets forthwith. But at the 4th Session of the 7th Convention of the Central Executive Committee of the Soviet Union, we find a whole discussion devoted to the need for electing new people, active non-party workers, working women and Young Communists to leading posts in the village and City Soviets.

But, screams Trotsky, "the democratically elected institutions of local self-administration are municipalities, dumas, zemstvos, anything you will, but not Soviets" (*ibid.*, p. 247). They undoubtedly are (1) if they are based on the capitalist system of society; and (2) when they are subordinated organs of a State that is in the hands of the capitalist class. But this is not the case in the Soviet Union.

"Planning on the Russian scale would be impossible in the middle of Manchester because of the high price of land, Sir E. D. Simon told the Liberal Summer School on August 1st, but in Moscow the City Council owned the whole of the land. He could not see how Moscow could fail to become the best planned city the world has ever seen" (*News Chronicle*, August 2nd, 1937).

We will concede that directly elected Soviets are only the same thing as municipalities when we see such municipalities with the same economic and social basis and the same powers as Soviets; but a revolution is a necessary pre-requisite to this. In declaring (1) that City Soviets are abolished; (2) that they are transformed into bourgeois Municipalities, Trotsky pretends to forget the Russian Revolution and the new economic system in the Soviet Union.

Apart from the City Soviets, how can one talk of the working class being atomised when every factory has its elected committee, when 20,000,000 workers are organised in democratic trade unions, when every factory, office, Red Army unit and collective farm can put forward its candidate for the Soviets?

Perhaps the directly elected Town and City Soviets will be less under popular control than was the case previously? On the contrary, the Central Executive Committee laid it down as essential "to

make obligatory the practice of fixing daily reception hours (not less than two hours a day) for receiving complaints, statements and demands of rank and file citizens, both by the chairmen of executive committees and by the heads of departments, prohibiting during these hours the holding of any meetings, or of their being absent, or of their receiving workers of the apparatus". When Lord Mayors and heads of departments in British municipalities are forced to become equally accessible to rank and file citizens, we will modify our bad opinion of municipalities.

The last criticism made by Trotsky relates to the Party and its role in Socialist democracy. The type of criticism offered is by no means confined to Trotsky, but is a commonplace amongst bourgeois democrats everywhere who imagine that the essence of democracy is two or more political parties playing at outs and ins. Great Britain is in their estimation a democratic country. It is true that at least seven million industrial workers – men, women and youths – are unprotected by any trade union agreement or Trade Board regulation, that ten million industrial workers are outside the orbit of trade unionism and have no one to negotiate on their behalf with the employers, that victimisation deters millions from joining the union. It is equally true that millions of workers, professional people and shopkeepers, dare not proclaim any political opinion of a mild Labour character without endangering their economic existence. The sources of information are held by a small group of press lords and by a Broadcasting Corporation in the grip of trusted servants of the capitalist class. The best halls are in the grip of the exploiting class, which often refuses to let them to the workers. Financial groups working in the dark can bring down popularly elected Governments, as was the case with the Labour Government in 1931. Yet with all those multitudinous restrictions on political liberty we are told that we have true democracy because two political parties on the basis of the capitalist system are allowed to play at ins and outs. The Whigs and Tories commenced this pleasant little game in the eighteenth century, and ever since millions of Britishers have been taught to believe that the essence of democracy is the shadow-boxing of political parties.

It mustn't be taken for granted that because two parties are regarded as democracy that twenty-two parties might reasonably be regarded as still greater democracy. On the contrary, that is an abomination and chaos in the opinion of British democrats, who are

always looking down with contempt on the poor backward foreigners who do not understand that democracy is dependent on the existence of two parties – His Majesty's Government and His Majesty's Opposition, according to the prescription of the Whigs and Tories of the eighteenth century – and that four parties is a crowd, and five universal chaos. And in order to protect democracy from the chaos of more than two political parties, British law requires every candidate for Parliament to deposit £150, which he loses if he polls less than one-eighth of the votes cast. Democracy must be maintained by protecting the political monopoly of His Majesty's Government and His Majesty's Opposition and by imposing pains and penalties on adventurous outsiders who try to muscle in on it.

The good British democrat looks at the Soviet Constitution to see if it makes a provision for two political parties. He sees that the Constitution is founded on an economy consisting in the main of State and collective property; that workers are guaranteed the right to work by the abolition of unemployment, that they are given the right to leisure embodied in the 7-hours day and paid holidays and that they are given the fullest access to higher education and are subsidised by the State in order to be able to take advantage of the educational facilities. He sees that all workers are protected by trade union agreements which cover a vaster range of subjects than in Great Britain, and that the unions, based on the widest trade union democracy, have a powerful voice in the management of industry.

All these things leave him cold, for there are not two political parties. You can narrow every democratic right by political or economic means, but, in the opinion of these democrats, so long as you have two parties you have democracy. On the other hand you can abolish an exploiting class, eliminate unemployment, give the worker control of industry, give his democratic mass organisations the fullest right to participate in elections, but unless you follow the example of the Whigs and Tories and have two political parties, there is no democracy.

Trotsky, in search of arguments to conceal the great achievements of the new Constitution, is prepared to fall back on the arguments of the Capitalist democrats, and assert that Soviet democracy is a fraud because it does not legalise a number of competing political parties. He is not content with two parties. He wants as many as there are people to form them.

“Article 126,” he says, “which is the axis of the Constitution as a political system, ‘guarantees the right’ to all male and female citizens to group themselves in trade unions, co-operatives, youth, sport, defensive, cultural, technical, and scientific organisations. As to the Party – that is, the concentration of power – there it is not a question of the right of all, but of the privilege of the minority. ‘The most active and conscious (so considered, that is, from above – *L.T.*) citizens from the ranks of the working class and other strata of the toiling masses, are united in the Communist Party... (at this point, the following words are omitted by Trotsky: which is the vanguard of the toilers in the struggle to develop the Socialist system and – *J.R.C.*) *which constitutes the guiding nucleus of all organisations, both social and governmental*” (*The Revolution Betrayed*, p. 254).

We give the above quotation from the Constitution as it is rendered by Trotsky. The authorised English translation renders the latter sentence as “which represents the leading core of all organisations of the toilers, both public and State”.

Trotsky’s comment is:

“This astoundingly candid formula, introduced into the text of the Constitution itself, reveals the whole fictitiousness of the political role of those ‘social organisations’ – subordinate branches of the bureaucratic firm” (*ibid.*).

Now let us be quite clear as to what is implied by the above paragraph, and why Trotsky omitted the portion of the paragraph which we have reinserted. The paragraph does no more than describe a fact, namely that the Communists are the leading core of the mass organisations. They are that in virtue of the fact that they have won the confidence of the members and have been elected to leading positions. But the paragraph does not guarantee to the Communists the legal right to remain the leading core in the mass organisations, public and State. Indeed the secret ballot in union elections gives the workers the right to vote out Communists who are not working satisfactorily. Despite Trotsky’s cunning insinuation no special privileges are established by this paragraph for Communists working inside the mass organisations. The Communist Party is the vanguard of the mass organisations, not in virtue of

legal rights, but in virtue of its capacity to win the confidence of the mass organisations which it is leading.

It is because the Party leadership of the mass organisations of the toilers can only be won and maintained by winning the confidence of the members of these bodies, and not by paragraphs in the Constitution, that leaders of the Communist Party in the Soviet Union have recently been laying such stress on the need for the Party wiping out from its ranks all tendencies towards an arrogant and superficial officialism and showing to the world that it retains the full measure of the confidence and affection of the people of the Soviet Union; that it is capable of leading the mass organisations – the Soviets, the Unions, the Co-operatives and the Youth – in the struggle to realise such a productivity of labour as will raise the standard of life of the Russian workers far above that of the highest paid workers in Western Europe; that through its leadership of the mass organisations it can draw millions of new workers into the administration of the State and wipe out the last remnants of self-satisfied bureaucracy; that through its guidance of the masses it can bring forward millions of new people as administrators, technicians and specialists, and can thus undermine all tendencies to technical and specialist monopolies; that in the factories it can help the manual workers to raise their qualifications and move toward the elimination of the distinction between manual and mental labour; that through its leadership on the Soviets and in the collective farms it can raise the standard of culture and begin the struggle towards eliminating the differences between town and country, between worker and peasant.

This mighty advance towards the higher stage of Communism can only be undertaken by the democratic Soviets, and the democratic mass organisations of all kinds, encouraging their members to greater initiative in all aspects of the advance towards Communism. In leading the organised masses towards the goal of Communist Society the Party will only be able to fulfil its tasks if it not only teaches the masses but if it learns from them, if it continually expands its ranks by bringing in the best of the new forces which have come forward in the factories, the collective farms and the Soviets. That is the real Socialist democracy, where the Party, composed of the cream of the workers who have developed in the great democratic organisations of the country, co-ordinates and guides the advance of these organisations towards the Communist society “where

each will give according to his abilities and take according to his needs”.

The petty bourgeois democrat cannot understand that the struggle of rival political parties is only the form of restricted democracy which grows on the soil of capitalism, with its division of society into hostile classes, and that democracy developing on the soil of a Socialist society advancing towards Communism will take entirely different forms, which will give the ordinary man real control of his social life, instead of being the wage slave of the capitalist and the dupe of the capitalist political caucus.

But in his struggle to discredit Soviet democracy Trotsky unashamedly exploits these prejudices engendered by a capitalist environment and clamours for the setting up of rival political parties on Soviet soil, not shrinking back from the advocacy of bloody revolution against the existing Soviet Government in order to achieve this retrograde aim (*The Revolution Betrayed*, p. 273).

He seeks to justify this attitude by pretending that in the early days of the Soviet regime the prohibition of opposition parties “was a temporary measure dictated by conditions of civil war, blockade, intervention and famine”. This is completely untrue, and not a single sentence from any Communist Party pronouncement is produced to justify it. The opposition parties were suppressed because they became instruments in the hands of classes and sub-sections of classes which were hostile to the establishment of Socialism. When in the midst of civil war the Communist Party of the Soviet Union looked forward to victory in the civil war, the ending of intervention and famine and the establishment of Socialism, it did not envisage the revival of opposition parties – which would inevitably become representative of the remnants of the former exploiting classes – but had the following quite different prospect:

“On the way to the final victory of Communism it is possible that the relative importance of the three fundamental proletarian organisations of modern times (Party, Soviets and Industrial Unions) will undergo some changes, and that gradually a single type of workers’ organisation will be formed. The Communist Party, however, will become absorbed in the working class only when Communism ceases to be the object of struggle, and the whole working class shall have become Communist” (Resolution of the Second

World Congress of the Communist International, 1920, on “The Role of the Communist Party in the Proletarian Revolution”).

In the same period Lenin, in a controversy with German “Left” Communists, made the above conception more precise when he said:

“Repudiation of Party and of Party discipline – this is what the opposition *amounts to*. And this is tantamount to completely disarming the proletariat for *the benefit of the bourgeoisie*. It is the equivalent to precisely that petty-bourgeois diffuseness, instability, incapacity for sustained effort, unity and organised action, which, if indulged in, must inevitably destroy every proletarian revolutionary movement. From the standpoint of Communism, repudiation of Party means leaping from the eve of the collapse of capitalism (in Germany), not to the initial, or middle, but to the highest phase of Communism” (*Left-Wing Communism*, p. 28).

Not only was the revival of opposition parties not envisaged, but the monopoly of the Bolshevik Party was to be maintained up to the higher stage of Communism, when the necessity for any political party would disappear. The demand for the revival of opposition parties in Russia was always the demand of the Right-Wing Social Democrats (the Mensheviks) after the Bolshevik Revolution.

In this they were logical. They believed that it was impossible to advance to Socialism in Russia, that the Bolsheviks, in dividing up the land among the peasantry and liquidating the monarchy, had merely created the conditions for the development of capitalism in Russia; hence their demand for the revival of a capitalist democratic system with its clash of political parties. They too, like Trotsky and Bukharin, were ready to denounce the Bolsheviks’ refusal to do this as “Bonapartism”, and to advocate a bloody revolution in order to restore their beloved political parties.

“But if there is not to be a struggle of parties, perhaps the different factions within the one party can reveal themselves at these democratic elections?”

When Trotsky asks about the rights of factions, it is not the



right of Communist Party members to express their opinion within the Party that he is concerned with. That is not and never has been challenged. What Trotsky means by factions is not minority opinion on one or other issue within the Party, but the right of a group to establish its own leadership, its own connections, its own press within the Party – in short, its right to establish a party within the Party with a view to splitting the Party. That will never be tolerated.

One of the fundamental lessons which the Communist Party of the Soviet Union has drawn from the recent experiences of Trotskyist wrecking in the Soviet Union, is the need to safeguard fully the right of criticism of every Party member, because the bureaucratic stifling of criticism leads to moods of complacency amongst certain officials, to a certain lack of watchfulness, which facilitated the work of the wreckers.

“The Party masses,” said Stalin, “check up on their leaders at meetings of active members, at conferences and congresses by hearing their reports, by criticising the shortcomings and lastly by electing or not electing to the leading organs these or those leading comrades. Precise observance of democratic centralism in the Party, as is demanded by the rules of our Party, the absolute principle of election of Party organs, the right of nominating candidates and their recall, secret ballots, freedom of criticism and self-criticism – all these and similar measures must be carried into effect in order, among other things, to facilitate the checking up on and the control of the Party leaders by the Party masses” (Stalin’s speech at Central Committee Communist Party of Soviet Union, March 3rd, 1937).

There is no party structure of “irremovable bureaucrats” who have reduced the party members to silence in accordance with the legend put forward by Trotsky and the *Daily Herald*, but a party in close contact with the working class, drawing the best elements from it, continually eliminating from its leading forces those who are incapable of giving leadership, continually renewing its apparatus with new and vital people. Indeed the very people who talk about “irremovable bureaucracy” are constantly presenting us with tabulated information extracted from the Soviet press as to the number of prominent Party State and Industrial administrators who have been removed.

The criticism of the masses before the Party elections in 1937 shook the complacency of many a Party member in high places who had tended to be so absorbed in the daily task as to forget that he was in a Socialist State surrounded by unscrupulous external enemies; that those enemies would try to get in touch with people in the Soviet Union who were hostile to Socialism, and would do all in their power to hinder Socialist advance. A keen light was also thrown upon people who were acting as Party aristocrats, ignoring the control of the organs of the Party and the Government, and seeking to build themselves up as semi-independent Party or industrial bosses. Some of those people became a prey to Trotskyism. Infected by the disbelief in the possibilities of the Soviet Union being able successfully to resist intervention, they were prepared to try and buy off the enemies of the Soviets – Japan and Germany – by territorial concessions, and knowing that the existing Soviet and Party leadership were not prepared to stand for this policy, were prepared to struggle for a new Government by assassination and sabotage. Others of a similar type helped Trotskyism, not by adhering to Trotsky's policy, but by creating through their whole attitude such discontent amongst sections of workers with whom they were in contact, as would, if it had gone on, have provided nourishment for Trotskyism and Fascism.

Yet when the Communist Party of the Soviet Union proceeds to clear these people out of the Party, to remove them from the posts which they occupy in public life, a large part of the Socialist and Liberal press of the world, instead of approving the measures taken against those political degenerates, seeks to present their removal (and in some cases subsequent trial) as something of which democrats should be heartily ashamed. Thus it was possible for the Liberal and Socialist press to report day after day the arrests or removal of persons whose political and administrative degeneracy had helped wrecking, almost as if these people were the victims of a dictatorial "Stalin purge". The wide discussion and criticism which was raging in the unions and the Party, and which was leading to the further exposure of wrecking, was ignored in most of the "democratic" press.

Now the facts about the activity of the workers in the unions and the Party were as prominent in the Soviet press as were the accounts of people who had been dismissed from their posts and put on trial. But those facts were inconvenient. They did not fit in with

the conception of a workers' dictatorship which is held by the Liberal and Socialist press. They do not fit in with the calumny that Stalin – for reasons always unexplained – is waging war on the Old Guard. So the great democratic activity of the masses in the unions and the Party, an activity which cleaned out what was feeble or decayed, in preparation for the elections under the New Constitution, was left out of the picture. Once it is brought in, however, as it must in the interests of truth, what a difference it makes to the understanding of what is happening in the Soviet Union!

It is because the New Constitution is a devastating repudiation of all Trotsky has written on the Soviet Union for the past ten years that he is working so hard to obscure its meaning. It is because the New Constitution is a definite challenge to his friends, the Nazis, that he seeks to cover it with abuse. On pages 262 and 263, we are told it is a Bonapartist plebiscite; on page 246 we are told it is bourgeois democracy; on page 256 we are told that in order to protect themselves from the masses, the bureaucrats are abolishing the City Soviets. On page 271 we are told that the New Constitution will probably give the workers a greater chance of struggling against bureaucracy than is the case to-day. In all this farrago of contradictory "criticism" and abuse, only one thing is certain – Trotsky hates the New Constitution because it is the triumphant embodiment of the truth that Socialism, despite all his slanders, is victorious in the Soviet Union.

## CHAPTER VI

### THE POLITICAL BACKGROUND OF THE TRIALS

In the previous chapters we have discussed the evolution of Trotskyism as far as its public aspects are concerned. We have now to show that Trotskyism in action – as disclosed in the Moscow ‘trials’ – is the logical culmination of this evolution, that the leadership of assassination, sabotage and treason is not something incompatible with the previous history of Trotsky and his associates, is not a miraculous change in the whole outlook and policy of this group, but is the direct working out of their whole struggle against the revolutionary policy of the Bolshevik Party.

The evolution begins with Trotsky opposing the building of a rigidly disciplined revolutionary party in Russia. All the resources of his extensive and vituperative rhetoric are used to create opposition to this most vital and necessary proposal. Not only is the principle of a Bolshevik party attacked, but no abuse is too foul, no caricature of the leadership of the party is too gross, for Trotsky to indulge in. Right up to the eve of the February Revolution of 1917, he describes Lenin as one of the major hindrances to the development of the revolutionary movement in Russia.

He follows this up with a conception of the role of the peasantry in Russia, which implies that this important section of the population can only be a counter-revolutionary force in relation to any attempt to construct Socialism. The coming of the Bolshevik revolution brings no modification in this conception. On the contrary, our arch-egoist looks to the Bolshevik revolution to confirm his prognosis down to the tiniest detail. If the international revolution does not come, the dark peasant counter-revolution is sure to triumph in Russia.

He comes into the Bolshevik party at a moment when it appears that the international revolution is drawing near. He has therefore no need to obtrude his gloomy thesis of the impossibility of the Russian workers and peasants building Socialism on the basis of their own resources, because he, in common with the Bolsheviks, can see the development of the Revolution in the West; and so for the moment, on the basis of an entirely non-Bolshevik outlook, he finds a basis for common activity inside the Bolshevik Party.

True, his non-Bolshevik standpoint expresses itself in his atti-

tude on the signing of the Brest-Litovsk peace treaty and his proposals for the regimentation of the trade unions, but his full line does not yet find expression, for he, in common with the Bolsheviks, is expecting an early development of the international revolution. He begins to chafe at Party discipline, however, and during the illness of Lenin comes out with proposals which would have changed the Bolshevik Party from a centralised organisation operating a uniform policy into a melee of competing political groups. He advances these proposals as the beginning of his struggle for leadership of the Party.

Immediately after Lenin's death he formally lays claim to this leadership. The whole theme of the *Lessons of October* is that Lenin had been able to lead the Bolshevik revolution to victory because he had abandoned his old standpoint for that of Trotsky; some of the other Bolshevik leaders had not sufficiently abandoned their standpoint and consequently had made mistakes during the period of the seizure of power; and that unless the whole Communist International took these lessons to heart it was doomed.

When his standpoint was decisively rejected, this only increased his hatred of the Bolshevik Party. And so when the international revolution suffered a setback and the defeatists Zinoviev and Kamenev came out against the possibility of building Socialism in a single country, Trotsky, who shared this standpoint, was prepared to form an unscrupulous alliance with them, even to the point of splitting the Party asunder. From 1924 on, Trotsky can only see the Party led by Stalin, submitting to the peasant and capitalist counter-revolution. The party is surrendering to the rich peasant, to the urban trading class. The hour of counter-revolution is drawing nigh. Perhaps one should make a last desperate attack on this advancing counter-revolution accompanied by a last desperate attempt to accelerate the international revolution, but if this fails then there is no hope.

So that when after the Party has thrown him out and Trotsky sees a real attempt in the Five Year Plan to liquidate the remaining capitalist sections in Russia, he prophesies defeat as certain. "The adventurist policies of Stalin are leading the country to its doom," he shrieks. When the capitalist elements are liquidated and the doom does not materialise, Trotsky goes over to the standpoint of the most bitter Right-Wing "Socialist" opponents of the Russian Revolution; accuses the Bolshevik leaders of pursuing a policy

which must lead the country to economic chaos and civil war. To reverse this “dangerous” policy which is based on the “assumption” that Socialism can be built in a single country, he first demands the reform of the Soviet Government, and then advocates its armed overthrow. He seeks to prepare the mind of the working class abroad for the moment when his terrorist policy has to come to the surface by launching a vile public campaign in which he accuses the Soviet leaders of his own disease – *viz.*, Bonapartism. All the apparently “Left” criticisms of the Soviet Union contained in *The Revolution Betrayed* are but a preparation on an international scale for the coup which Trotsky and his allies are preparing inside the Soviet Union.

That is the evolution of Trotsky as shown in his public writings. Is there therefore anything incredible in the standpoint that once having overthrown the existing Bolshevik Government he would regard it as necessary to resort to a measure of capitalist restoration?

Yet most of the critics of the Moscow Trials disqualify themselves straight away by ignoring the historical development of Trotskyism. They learnedly discuss the “mystery” of why the Trotskyists turned against the Soviet Government when the key to the mystery is partially disclosed in the earlier public writings of Trotsky himself. They assert the improbability of Trotsky organising the assassination of Stalin, at the very moment when Trotsky in his published work is describing how all power is being concentrated in Stalin’s hands and is demanding the removal of Stalin by armed revolution. But if the armed revolution is slow in coming, would not the assassination of the man who has concentrated so much power in his hands accelerate the process?

These considerations do not prove that Trotsky is guilty of what he was charged with in the Moscow Trials. That is a matter for the evidence itself. But they do most emphatically discount the suggestion that it is politically incredible that Trotsky and his allies could have engaged in such activity.

From the moment he was expelled from the Communist Party of the Soviet Union Trotsky could see nothing but impending economic collapse and civil war. In 1928 we find him writing from his exile to the Sixth Congress of the Communist International in the following terms:

“Instead of telling them (*i.e.*, the Russian workers) fibs

about having realised 90 per cent socialism, we must say to them that our economic level, our social and cultural conditions, approximate to-day much closer to capitalism, and a backward and uncultured capitalism at that, than to socialism. We must tell them that we will enter on the path of real socialist construction only when the proletariat of the most advanced countries will have captured power, that it is necessary to work unremittingly for this, using both levers – the short lever of our internal economic affairs and the long lever of International proletarian struggle” (L. Trotsky, *On the Draft Programme of the Comintern*, 1928).

Note that the Soviet Union cannot in Trotsky’s opinion even enter on a socialist path without the support of a workers’ revolution in other countries.

In 1930 the last hopes of a peaceful capitalist restoration in the Soviet Union were dispelled. The Five Year Plan was in full swing, and the cauldron of capitalist hatred boiled over. A great campaign of vilification of the Soviet Union was launched in Britain, under the slogan of fighting against “forced labour” and the “persecution of religion”. The reactionaries in Poland and the Border States discussed the possibilities of intervention – but they were in the grip of the economic crisis, and hesitated. The aged Kautsky wrote a book in which he analysed the class forces which would be at work in the impending Russian civil war. A group of counter-revolutionary experts in the Soviet Union went ahead with organised sabotage in preparation for the coming intervention, and drew up its cabinet. The All-Union Bureau of Mensheviks proceeded to organise sabotage and prepared to profit from the imminent intervention. The Labour and Socialist International published a manifesto calling upon the Russian workers to struggle for democracy, a manifesto which the British delegation to the Labour and Socialist International refused to support because it “doubted the wisdom and expediency of such an appeal” (Labour Party Conference Report, 1930).

Trotsky wrote an appeal to the members of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union in which he declared:

“These lines are dictated by a feeling of greatest anxiety for the Soviet Union and the fate of the dictatorship of the proletariat. The policy of the present-day leadership, the tiny group of Stalin, is leading the country at full speed to

dangerous crises and collapses” (Open letter to members of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union,” March 1930).

In November of the same year he writes:

“To aim at the construction of a nationally isolated Socialist Society<sup>1</sup> means, in spite of all temporary success, to pull the productive forces backwards even as compared to capitalism....”

“The sharpest convulsions of the U.S.S.R. are created by the fact that the present leadership tries to make a virtue out of a necessity, and out of the political isolation of the workers’ State, constructs a programme of an economically isolated socialist society. From this has resulted the attempt at complete socialist collectivisation of peasant holdings on the basis of the pre-capitalist inventory – a most dangerous adventure which threatens to undermine the very possibility of collaboration between the proletariat and the peasantry.”

A year later he also sees the development of civil war in the Soviet Union. There can be, he avers, no elimination of the kulak, and even if collectivisation had a moderate success it would create the most terrible of problems:

“If we should further assume that collectivisation, together with the elements of new technique, will considerably increase the productivity of agricultural labour, without which collectivisation would not be economically justified, and consequently would not maintain itself, this would immediately create in the village, which is even now overpopulated, ten, twenty, or more millions of surplus workers, whom industry would not be able to absorb even with the most optimistic plans” (*Problems of the Development of the U.S.S.R.*, 1931, p. 8).

A most elastic calculation this, which makes an allowance for an error of ten or more millions!

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1 This is Trotsky’s definition of the aim of the Five Year Plan and would not be accepted by the Central Committee. The Central Committee aimed at developing basic industries which were not dependent on the capitalist world, but it did not aim at national isolation.



“The impossibility of constructing a self-sufficient Socialist economy in a single country revives the basic contradictions of Socialist construction at every new stage on an ever greater scale and with an ever greater depth” (*Problems of the Development of the U.S.S.R.*, 1931, p. 10).

In short, the more industry is developed, the more collectivisation grows, the greater the danger of civil war.

“Two trials – against the specialist-wreckers and against the Mensheviks – have given an extremely striking picture of the relationship of forces of the classes and the parties in the U.S.S.R. It was irrefutably established by the court that during the years 1923-8 the bourgeois specialists, in close alliance with the foreign centres of the bourgeoisie, successfully carried through an artificial slackening down of industrialisation, counting upon the re-establishment of capitalist relationships” (*Problems of the Development of the U.S.S.R.*, 1931, p. 26).

Five, years later Trotsky was to describe these very trials as Stalinist “frame-ups”.

The development of contradictions in the Soviet Union and the existing regime in the Party will, Trotsky predicts, lead to a civil war.

“From the moment when party tradition with some and fear of it with others, cease holding the official party together, and hostile forces break through to the surface, State economy will suddenly feel the full force of the political contradictions. Every trust and every factory will cancel the plans and directives coming from above in order to ensure their interests by their own means. Contracts between single factories and the private market, behind the back of the State, will become the rule instead of the exception.... The managements of the trusts would quickly approach the position of private owners or agents of foreign capital, to which many of them would be compelled to turn in their struggle for existence. In the village, where the forms of collective farms which are not very capable of offering resistance, would hardly have had time to absorb the small commodity producers, the collapse of the plan prin-

ciple would precipitously unleash the elements of primitive accumulation” (*Problems of the Development of the U.S.S.R.*, 1931, p. 29).

This is Trotsky, the dashing super-industrialiser, the advocate of the offensive against the kulaks, facing up to the difficulties of the first Five Year Plan. He is already, as the evidence of the trial of Kamenev and Zinoviev showed, beginning to turn to the policy of terror against Stalin, whose rash policy, he asserts, is precipitating these results.

German Fascism is already looming on the horizon, and Trotsky states:

“if the war of the world bourgeoisie against the Soviets will break out after the seizure of power by the Fascists in Germany, then that will mean frightful isolation and a life and death struggle under the hardest and most dangerous conditions for the U.S.S.R.

*“The crushing of the German proletariat at the hands of the Fascists would already comprise at least half of the collapse of the Soviet Republic” (Germany, Key to the International Situation, 1931).*

From 1931 till 1932, the struggle of the rich peasants in the Soviet Union grew in intensity, and all kinds of sabotage were resorted to in order to destroy the collective farms from within. Here is a description, from the pen of a Ukrainian counter-revolutionary, of the sabotage that was practised:

“At first there were mass disturbances in the kolhosi (collective farms) or else the Communist officials or their agents were killed; but later a system of passive resistance was favoured, which aimed at the systematic frustration of the Bolshevik plans for the sowing and the gathering of the harvest. The peasants and workers, seeing the ruthless export by their Bolshevik masters of all food produce, began to take steps to save themselves from starvation in the winter time and to grasp at any means of fighting against the hated foreign rule. This is the main reason for the wholesale hoarding of grain and the thefts from the fields – offences which if detected are punishable by death. The peasants are passive resisters everywhere; but in Ukrainia the

resistance has assumed the form of a national struggle. The opposition of the Ukrainian population caused the failure of the grain storing plan of 1931 and still more so that of 1932. The catastrophe of 1931-2 was the hardest blow that the Soviet Ukraine had to face, since the famine of 1921-2. The autumn and spring sowing campaigns both failed. Whole tracts were left unsown. In addition, when the crops were being gathered last year, it happened that, in many areas, especially in the South, 20, 40 or even 50 per cent was left in the fields and was either not collected at all or was ruined in the threshing" (Isaac Mazeppa in *Slavonic Review*, January 1934).

How leaving the harvest to rot in the fields squares with a desire to take steps to save oneself from starvation in the winter time, heaven and the Ukrainian counter-revolutionaries alone know. But the description of the methods of sabotage, practised not by the whole population as alleged, but by the kulaks with some misguided middle peasants supporting them, gives a sufficiently clear idea of the situation in some parts of the country, at the height of the resistance to collectivisation.

In all these developments the Trotskyists – repentant and unrepentant – saw their prophecies coming true. The dark peasant counter-revolution was at last on the march. The Russian workers had no friendly workers' governments to support them in Europe, and were headed straight for disaster.

"A large number of Trotskyites who had returned to the Party," explained Radek, "were working in key positions in various parts of the country at a time when the fight for the Five-Year Plan had become acute, when it had assumed the very acute form of clashes with kulaks in some parts of the country and with those elements among the middle peasants who followed the lead of the kulaks, and these former colleagues in the struggle began to flood me with information of the most pessimistic character, information which most fatally affected my opinion of the situation in the country.... This was in 1930 and 1931. I appraised the situation as follows: the gains of the Five-Year Plan were enormous, an important step had been made in the direction of industrialisation. To a certain extent, the

collective farms were already a definite fact. But at the same time, on the basis of the information I then possessed and the appraisal of the situation then made by the Trotskyite economists I was intimate with – I will mention Smilga and Preobrazhensky – I believed that the economic offensive was being conducted on too wide a front, that the material forces available (number of tractors, etc.) would not permit of universal collectivisation, and if this general offensive were not slowed down this would, as we defined it by a catch phrase ‘end like the march on Warsaw’, that at this fast rate industrialisation would produce no results, but would only cause huge expenditure.

“Already at that time, in 1931, I thought it was necessary to hold back the offensive, and to mass resources on definite sectors of the economic front.

“In short, I dissented on the main question: on the question of continuing the fight for the Five-Year Plan. To analyse these disagreements from the social angle – of course, I then believed the tactics which I regarded as correct to be the best Communist tactics – but if one were to ask for the social analysis of this thing I would have to say: history’s joke was that I overestimated the power of resistance, the ability, not only of the mass of the kulaks, but also of the middle peasants, to pursue an independent policy, I was scared by the difficulties and thus became a mouthpiece of the forces hostile to the proletariat” (*Trial of the Anti-Soviet Trotskyite Centre*, Moscow, 1937, pp. 83-4).

Trotsky had written a programme article on “Adventurism and its Danger in Soviet Economics”; in 1932 he followed this up with an article with the revealing title “Soviet Economy in Danger”. The struggle for collectivisation had reached its critical point, and the valiant Trotsky advocated retreat and again retreat.

The industrialisation of the country, in his opinion, was going ahead in a too rapid and hopelessly uncoordinated fashion:

“The misfortune does not lie in the fact that the impossibility of adventuristic tempos has been revealed. The whole trouble is that the prize leaps in industrialisation have brought the divers elements of the plan into a dire contradiction with each other. The trouble is that economy

functions without material reserves and without calculation. The trouble is that the social and political instruments for the determination of the effectiveness of the Plan have been broken or mangled. The trouble is that the accrued disproportions threaten even bigger and bigger surprises. The trouble is that the uncontrolled bureaucracy has tied up its prestige with the subsequent accumulations of errors,

“The trouble is that a crisis is impending with a retinue of consequences such as the enforced shutting down of enterprises and unemployment” (Trotsky, *Soviet Economy in Danger*, 1932).

Having in 1930 predicted the coming of an unemployment crisis in Russia (a prediction that events falsified), Trotsky predicts another in 1932. He also predicts ruin in the countryside.

“The headlong chase after breaking records in collectivisation without taking any account of the economic and cultural potentialities of rural economy, has led in actuality to ruinous consequences. It has destroyed the stimuli of the small producer long before it was able to supplant them by other and much higher economic stimuli. The administrative pressure which exhausts itself quickly in industry, turns out to be absolutely powerless in the sphere of rural economy.”

Retreat, Trotsky therefore declared, was necessary.

“A temporary retreat is exigent both in industry and in rural economy. The hitherto line of the retreat cannot be determined beforehand. It will be revealed only in the experience of capital reconstruction.

“First of all a retreat is inevitable in the sphere of collectivisation. Here more than anywhere else the administration is the captive of its own mistakes.

“Concurrently in the villages there has appeared a new stratum of the so-called ‘retired’, that is, former kolkhoz members. Their number is growing. It is out and out insanity to keep by force within the collectives peasants who pilfer the crops, who sell the seed in bazaars and subsequently demand from the Government for sowing.... 1933 must serve to bring rural economy into alignment with the technical, economic and cultural resources. This means the se-

lection of the most viable collectives, their reorganisation in correspondence with experience and the wishes of the basic peasant mass, first of all the peasant poor. And at the same time the formulation of such conditions for leaving the kolkhozes as would reduce to a minimum the disruption of rural economy, to say nothing of the dangers of civil war.

“The policy of mechanically ‘liquidating the kulak’ is now factually discarded. A cross should be placed over it officially. And simultaneously it is necessary to establish the policy of severely restricting the exploiting tendencies of the kulak. With this goal in mind the lowest strata of the villages must be welded together into a union of the peasant poor” (*Soviet Economy in Danger*, 1932).

‘The retreat which the Trotskyites wanted was a complete retreat, a restoration of capitalist relations. Their programme of that period was indicated by Bukharin at his trial in March 1938:

“Just because it seems to me that this trial is of public importance, and because this question has been dealt with extremely little, I thought that it would be useful to dwell on the programme which has never been written down anywhere, on the practical programme of the ‘bloc of Rights and Trotskyites’, and to decipher one formula, namely, what is meant by the restoration of capitalism, in the way it was visualised and conceived in the circles of the ‘bloc of Rights and Trotskyites’...

“The Right counter-revolutionaries seemed at first to be a ‘deviation’; they seemed, at a first glance, to be people who began with discontent in connection with collectivisation, in connection with industrialisation, with the fact, as they claimed, that industrialisation was destroying production. This, at a first glance, seemed to be the chief thing. Then the Ryutin platform appeared. When all the State machines, when all the means, when all the best forces were flung into the industrialisation of the country, into collectivisation, we found ourselves literally in twenty-four hours, on the other shore, we found ourselves with the kulaks, with the counter-revolutionaries, we found ourselves with the capitalist remnants which still existed at the time

in the sphere of trade. Hence it follows that the basic meaning, the judgment from the subjective standpoint, is clear. Here we went through a very interesting process, an over-estimation of individual enterprise, a crawling over to its idealisation, the idealisation of the property-owner. Such was the evolution. Our programme was – the prosperous peasant farm of the individual, but in fact the kulak became an end in itself. We were ironical about the collective farms. We, the counter-revolutionary plotters, came at that time more and more to display the psychology that collective farms were music of the future. What was necessary was to develop rich property-owner. This was the tremendous change that took place in our standpoint and psychology. In 1917 it would never have occurred to any of the members of the Party, myself included, to pity Whiteguards who had been killed; yet in the period of the liquidation of the kulaks, in 1929-30, we pitied the expropriated kulaks, from so-called humanitarian motives. To whom would it have occurred in 1919 to blame the dislocation of our economic life on the Bolsheviks, and not on sabotage? To nobody. It would have sounded as frank and open treason. Yet I myself in 1928 invented the formula about the military-feudal exploitation of the peasantry, that is, I put the blame for the costs of the class struggle not on the class which was hostile to the proletariat, but on the leaders of the proletariat itself. This was already a swing of 180 degrees. This meant that ideological and political platforms grew into counter-revolutionary platforms. Kulak farming and kulak interests actually became a point of programme. The logic of the struggle led to the logic of ideas and to a change of our psychology, to the counter-revolutionising of our aims” (*Trial of Anti-Soviet Bloc of Rights and Trotskyites*, pp. 379-81).

This whole defeatist policy of Trotsky and the Rights was in the sharpest opposition to that of the Soviet Government and the Communist Party of the Soviet Union, which did not run around shrieking about the necessity for retreat, the abandonment of all but the most successful collectives and the abandonment of the policy of “liquidating the kulaks”, On the contrary, the Communist Party

was beginning its bold and courageous struggle to grapple with the difficulties that were being experienced in the field of collectivisation, to make all collective farms successful, and to continue without faltering the policy of eliminating all capitalist elements from agriculture. It was about to mobilise 25,000 trusted Party members for work in the policy sections (Politodel) of the collective farms; the duty of these sections, with the aid of all the Communists and of the great majority of the peasants, was to smash the saboteurs, and to see that everyone pulled his or her weight either in the Machine and Tractor Station or on the farm, and to give active help in the solution of all the problems with which the collective farms were confronted. The result was the overcoming of the difficulties and the mighty advance in Soviet agriculture from 1934 onwards.

But around the Trotskyist programme many of the known defeatists in the Party were gathering. There were no workers amongst them. They were drawn for the most part from those strata of Soviet society that were most out of touch with the workers. Zinoviev and Kamenev were naturally present in any grouping based on a policy of retreat before difficulties; many of the former Trotskyist leaders like Radek and Pyatakov had returned to their vomit, and these proceeded to establish relations with the Right-Wing group led by Bukharin, Tomsky and Rykov. The *rapprochement* between the Rights and the Trotskyists was facilitated by the fact that Trotsky, to use Bukharin's phrase, had shed his left uniform and was adopting a position indistinguishable from that of the Rights whom he had formerly derided.

This was by no means the first occasion on which the Rights and the Trotskyists and Zinovievists had entered upon conversations with a view to elaborating a common policy.

When in 1928 Bukharin was feeling his way to developing opposition to the first Five Year Plan, particularly on the peasant question, he approached Kamenev with a view to forming a *bloc* against the Party line. "Stalin's policy leads to civil war," he declared to Kamenev, "he will have to drown risings in blood." Here is a similar hysterical prognosis to that of Trotsky.

The Rights and the Trotskyists found a more or less common basis in the Ryutin platform (referred to in Bukharin's statement quoted above), which was circulated at the height of the difficulties connected with kulak resistance to collectivisation in 1932. Ryutin, a Right-Winger who had been secretary of the Moscow Regional



Committee, was in prison at the moment when this document was in circulation, and it is certain from the admissions of the defendants in the third Moscow trial that it was a collective production, embodying the views of the leading Right-Wingers in the Party.

The essence of the Ryutin programme was that it demanded the dissolution of the collective and State farms, and the leasing of Soviet factories to foreign capitalists. The document was notable, however, in that it contained an incitement to terrorist acts, particularly against Stalin, against whom the document directed a particularly vindictive diatribe. Alongside the Right-Wingers who were caught circulating this document were a number of Trotskyists of second rank. The leaders of the Right Wing, who as we know now had exhaustively discussed the document, remained in the background, while Zinoviev and Kamenev had been caught with "the goods on them" and had been expelled from the Party.

About the beginning of 1932 the position of the opposition groupings was as follows:

1. A mixed Trotskyist and Zinovievist group, which was exposed at the first Moscow trial in August 1936. Most prominent in this group were Zinoviev and Kamenev, the leaders of the former Leningrad opposition; I. N. Smirnov, one of the most resolute supporters of Trotsky during the discussions of 1923-27, and A. E. Dreitzer, on whose shoulders fell the bulk of the day-to-day organising work of this group.

Trotsky characterises the latter as follows: "Dreitzer was an officer of the Red Army. During and after my expulsion he had, together with ten or twelve of the officers, organised a guard around my home." Other followers of Trotsky in this group were S. V. Mrachkovsky, E. S. Holtzmann, V. A. Ter-Vaganyan, V. P. Olberg, R. V. Pickel, M. Lurye, N. Lurye, K. B. Bernan-Yurin.

The Zinovievists were I. P. Bakayev, I. I. Reingold, G. E. Evdokimov.

2. A parallel centre of Trotskyists which was exposed at the second trial in January 1937, consisted of Y. L. Pyatakov, K. B. Radek, G. Y. Sokolnikov, L. P. Serebryakov, N. I. Muralov, Y. A. Livshitz, Y. N. Drobnis, M. S. Boguslavsky, I. A. Knyazev, S. A. Rataichak, B. O.

Norkin, A. A. Shestov, M. S. Stroilov, Y. D. Turok, I. Y. Hrasche, G. E. Pushin, V. V. Arnold.

This group held much more important positions in Soviet Economy than the first mentioned group. Pyatakov was vice-commissar of Heavy Industry, and was able to place other members of the group in key positions, Rataichak was chief of the Central Administration of the Chemical Industry, and was able to do likewise.

3. The *bloc* of Rights and Trotskyists exposed at the third trial in March 1937. The predominant group in this combination was composed of the Right-Wing leaders N. I. Bukharin, A. I. Rykov and G. G. Yagoda. Bukharin had been regarded as one of the theoreticians – although a devilishly unstable one – in the Party. At the time of his arrest he was engaged in responsible scientific and journalistic work and had an international reputation acquired through his popularisations – and deformations – of Marxism. Rykov was an ex-prime Minister of the Soviet Union, and Yagoda, up till 1936, had been the head of the political police. The Trotskyist element in this centre was composed of leading diplomats and ex-diplomats like K. G. Rakovsky, ex-ambassador in London and Paris; N. N. Krestinsky, ex-ambassador in Berlin; S. A. Bessonov, A. P. Rosengoltz. A number of bourgeois nationalists who had joined the Communist Party of the Soviet Union believing that it was leading in the direction of capitalist restoration, and who, as the Five-Year Plan unrolled, became increasingly hostile to the Soviet Government, were the close allies of the Right in this grouping. G. F. Grinko, A. Ikhrarov and F. Khodjayev were prominent representatives of this tendency. M. A. Chernov was an ex-Menshevik who maintained connections with the Menshevik centres abroad. Then there was a group of doctors under the influence of Yagoda. Drs. L. G. Levin, D. D. Pletnev, I. N. Kazakov, V. A. Maximov-Dikovskiy. I. A. Zelensky was the former head of the All-Union Administration of Co-operatives. Others of lesser political importance, spies and tools of the dominant leadership, were V. I. Ivanov, P. T. Zubarev, P. P. Bulanov, P. P. Kryuchkov and V. F. Sharangovich.

4. A military group whose best known leaders were M.

N. Tukhachevsky, I. E. Yakov, I. P. Uborevitch, A. G. Kork, R. P. Eidemann, B. M. Feldman, V. M. Primakov and V. K. Putna. These operated in a measure independently but maintained contacts principally with the Right groups.

A contact centre was established in 1933 through which the groups exchanged information and co-ordinated policy. The first three groups were in constant contact with the exiled Trotsky.

These groups were united in a common purpose, to stop the rapid industrialisation, to return to individual farming over wide tracts of the country and to effect a gradual return to capitalism. Their economic programme, as outlined by Radek at his trial, was a ruthless development of that publicly outlined by Trotsky in *Soviet Economy in Danger*, and was similar to the Ryutin programme. In the sphere of industry, said Radek, it meant:

“not only the granting of concessions on industrial enterprises of importance to capitalist States, but also the transfer, the sale to private capitalist owners, of important economic enterprises to be specified by them. Trotsky contemplated the issue of debenture loans, *i.e.*, the admission of foreign capital for the exploitation of those factories which would formally remain in the hands of the Soviet State.

“In the sphere of agrarian policy, he (*i.e.*, Trotsky) quite clearly stated that the collective farms would have to be disbanded, and advanced the idea of giving tractors and other complex agricultural machinery to individual peasants in order to revive a new kulak stratum. Lastly it was quite openly stated that private capital would have to be revived in the cities. It was clear that it meant the restoration of capitalism” (*Trial of Anti-Soviet Trotskyite Centre*, 1937, pp. 113-4).

Pyatakov also gave the essence of Trotsky's ideas as follows:

“To put it simply, Trotsky explained that it would be a very serious retreat. This is exactly what he said: you and Radek are still under the sway of the old ideas of 1925-6 (*i.e.*, when Trotsky was advocating super-industrialisation, *J.R.C.*), and you are unable to see that in essence our com-

ing to power will mean that we will have to retreat very far in the direction of capitalism. In this connection Trotsky said that in essence our programme was the same as that of the Rights insofar as the Rights had adopted a diversive wrecking programme and considered that it was necessary to retreat towards capitalism. Trotsky expressed very great satisfaction when I told him about Sokolnikov's conversation with Tomsy and my conversation with Tomsy, and also about the contacts Radek and I had with Bukharin. He said that this was not only a tactical measure, that is to say, unity in the struggle against one and the same enemy, but that this unity had some significance in principle" (*Trial of Anti-Soviet Trotskyite Centre*, 1937, pp. 65-6).

Bukharin explained:

"If my programme stand were to be formulated practically, it would be, in the economic sphere, State capitalism, the prosperous muzhik individual, the curtailment of the collective farms, foreign concessions, surrender of the monopoly of foreign trade, and, as a result – the restoration of capitalism in the country....

"Inside the country our actual programme – this I think must be said with all emphasis – was a lapse into bourgeois-democratic freedom, coalition, because from the bloc with the Mensheviks, Socialist-Revolutionaries, and the like, it follows that there would be freedom of parties, freedom of coalition, and follows quite logically from the combination of forces for struggle, because if allies are chosen for overthrowing the government, on the day after the possible victory they would be partners in power. A lapse not only into the ways of bourgeois-democratic freedom, but in the political sense into ways where there are undoubtedly elements of Caesarism" (*Trial of Anti-Soviet Bloc of Rights and Trotskyites*, pp. 381-2).

In reply to an intervention by Vyshinsky, Bukharin admitted that what he meant by Caesarism was Fascism:

"Since in the circles of the 'bloc of Rights and Trotskyites' there was an ideological orientation towards the kulaks and at the same time an orientation towards a 'palace revo-

lution' and a *coup d'état*, towards a military conspiracy and a praetorian guard of counter-revolutionaries, this is nothing other than elements of Fascism" (*Trial of Anti-Soviet Bloc of Rights and Trotskyites*, p. 382).

Another group was working in the same direction – for the restoration of capitalism – but this group also aimed at the setting up of separate national States on this capitalist basis. At the trial in March 1938, Grinko stated that he and other Ukrainian nationalists had joined the Communist Party in the period of the New Economic Policy, but "continued to adhere to and later intensified our bourgeois-nationalist position". At first the group merely carried out "political reconnoitring", because at this stage:

"We considered that the evolution of the N.E.P. in the direction we desired was not excluded. On the other hand, we did not see in Europe the forces in alliance with which we could advance more resolutely" (*Trial of Anti-Soviet Bloc of Rights and Trotskyites*, March 1938, p. 69).

Later, when "even the blind could see" that the New Economic Policy was not leading to capitalism, "we gradually put out feelers for foreign, political forces that could help us." In this period "the Ukrainian nationalist organisation had entirely taken up the position of the Rights on general political questions, that is to say, the position of fighting industrialisation and collectivisation." In 1935 and 1936 Grinko's group established connections with the Rights and Trotskyites, being already in touch with "certain States hostile to the Soviet power". The common position of the Rights, the Trotskyites and the nationalist organisations was that they looked to "the military aid of aggressors":

"This meant undermining the power of defence of the Soviet Union, undermining activities in the army and in the defence industry, opening the front in the event of war and provoking this war; it meant extending connections with aggressive anti-Soviet elements abroad; it meant consenting to the dismemberment of the U.S.S.R. and compensating the aggressors at the expense of the border territories of the U.S.S.R." (*Trial of Bloc of Rights and Trotskyites*, March 1938, p. 76).

A somewhat similar account of the development of the nationalist movement in Bokhara and Uzbekistan was given by Khodjayev, who in 1920 joined the Bokhara bourgeois-nationalist organisation "National Alliance". This organisation:

"set itself the aim of transforming the Bokhara People's Republic into a bourgeois-democratic republic, as a buffer State between Britain and Soviet Russia" (*Trial of Bloc of Rights and Trotskyites*, March 1938, p. 212).

Later, Khodjayev and his group carried out systematic activities in Uzbekistan, with a view to wrecking the fulfilment of the first Five-Year Plan; connections were established with both the Rights and Trotskyists, and this nationalist group became completely associated with the general conspiracy against the Soviet Union and for the restoration of capitalism on a separate national basis.

Ikhrarov, another member of the same group as Khodjayev, had joined the Trotskyist opposition in 1923, and in 1928 was one of the leaders of the "National Independence" organisation in Uzbekistan; in the subsequent years, Ikhrarov and his followers carried out wrecking activities especially in agriculture, and in 1933 he established connections with the Rights through Bukharin. Bukharin expressed to him the view that "republics such as those of Central Asia" could not attain Socialism without going through the stage of capitalism; "they would inevitably have to pass through the stage of normal capitalist development". This coincided with the aims of the Uzbekistan nationalists, and so they agreed to make common cause with the Rights, on the basis of a promise of independence if the Soviet power was overthrown (*Trial of Bloc of Rights and Trotskyites*, pp. 346-7).

The Trotskyists and the Rights, who reorganised their ranks and drew bourgeois-nationalist organisations into association with them in 1933, were confirmed in their course by the coming of Fascism in Germany. To the dark peasant and bourgeois-nationalist counter-revolution which they were trying to develop inside the country, was now added the prospect of Fascist invasion backed with all the resources of a highly industrialised Germany. These hidden thoughts of Trotsky find a certain expression in several passages of an otherwise carefully camouflaged resolution on "The Soviet Union and the Fourth International" written in the autumn of 1933.

“It is clear in any case,” he says, “with the further decline of the world proletarian movement and the further extension of the Fascist domination, it is not possible to maintain the Soviet power for any length of time by means of the internal forces alone.”

This estimation is of course qualified by the demagogic declaration:

“The fundamental condition for the only rock bottom reform of the Soviet State is the victorious spread of the world revolution.”

In *The Revolution Betrayed* Trotsky in a measure repeats this diagnosis:

“If the war should remain only a war, the defeat of the Soviet Union would be inevitable. In a technical, economic and military sense, imperialism is incomparably more strong. If it is not paralysed by revolution in the West, imperialism will sweep away the regime which issued from the October Revolution” (p. 216).

Trotsky of course qualifies this by declaring that war cannot be taken by itself, for war will give rise to revolution. But he continues to predict that without world revolution, Soviet economy is doomed even if the Soviet Union is *victorious* in a war. “No military victory can save the inheritance of the October Revolution if imperialism holds out in the rest of the world” (p. 220).

In 1933 Trotsky was even more explicit:

“The first social shock, external or internal, may throw the atomised Soviet Society into civil war. The workers having lost control over the State and economy may resort to mass strikes as weapons of self-defence. The discipline of the dictatorship would be broken down under the onslaught of the workers and because of the pressure of economic difficulties the trusts would be forced to disrupt the planned beginnings and enter into competition with one another. The dissolution of the regime would naturally find its violent and chaotic echo in the village and would inevitably be thrown over into the army. The Socialist State would collapse, giving place to the capitalist regime, or, more cor-

rectly, to capitalist chaos" (*The Soviet Union and the Fourth International*).

This was more than a prophecy. It was the objective of the conspirators.

It is clear, therefore, that the Trotskyists were convinced (1) that the Soviet Union, because of its drive for Socialism, was rushing headlong to disaster; and (2) that in the event of a war its defeat was certain unless, as Trotsky is careful to add for public consumption, the international revolution would come to its aid.

But whatever phrases may be retailed for public consumption the basic conception of the Trotskyists leads directly to the policy as disclosed by Radek and Pyatakov at their trial.

Those who argue that terror and sabotage are weapons foreign to genuine Marxism are perfectly correct; but this is not to say that they are weapons foreign to a group of people who, after deserting Marxism, had arrived in 1933 at the following conclusions:

"The bureaucracy can be compelled to yield power into the hands of the proletarian vanguard only by force.

"The first social shock, external or internal, may throw the atomised Soviet Society into civil war" (*ibid*).

Would not the more or less simultaneous assassination of a number of prominent Soviet leaders be the "first social shock" from which the victory of the Trotskyists might follow?

But the Soviet Union, in Trotsky's view, is menaced by Fascist intervention, is indeed already in a state of "half collapse". Would it not be advisable to make a deal with the Fascists by promising them, in the event of a Trotskyist victory, some very important territorial and economic concessions in order that they adopt a favourable attitude to the new regime?

But perhaps the "external shock", *i.e.*, war, would come first, Trotsky proposed to co-operate with the Fascists to secure their victory, so that, in the breakdown that followed, the Trotskyists could come to power on the basis of concessions to Fascism.

Bukharin's estimate of the meaning of Fascism and of the necessity of making an agreement with it went even further than Trotsky dared to go in public. Speaking of Bukharin, Ivanov, one of the accused in the third trial, said:

"You know, he (Bukharin) said, that capitalism has



now entered a new phase of development, and at this new stage capitalism is displaying fairly high elements of organisation and planning. Capitalism, he said, is revealing new and fresh strength, expressing itself in the progress of technique, which actually amounts to a technical revolution and the rejuvenation of capitalism, as it were. And that, correspondingly, we must revise our view of the contradictions, of the classes, of the class struggle, and so on. Fundamental amendments must be introduced to Marx. Marx's treatment of the question of proletarian revolutions was no longer suitable. The doctrine of Lenin and Stalin that the epoch of imperialism is an epoch of proletarian revolutions was, he said, a most harmful utopia. This, in fact, was the position from which we proceeded, and which led us to Fascism.... Bukharin said that I had not thought over this question deeply enough. Fascism, he said, corresponded to the latest trends in the development of capitalism. We arrived directly at Fascism" (*Trial of Bloc of Rights and Trotskyites*, pp. 118-19).

In the trials, both Radek and Sokolnikov gave the most detailed evidence as to their conversations with German diplomats who were exploring the strength of the agreement with Nazi Germany and Japan that had been arrived at by Trotsky.

Giving evidence Sokolnikov declared:

"I had a conversation with Kamenev in the beginning of 1934. During this conversation Kamenev informed me about the defeatist position taken by Trotsky and about his own defeatist views. Incidentally, one definite result of this conversation was that Kamenev warned me that someone might approach me with enquiries."

*Vyshinsky*: "Who might do this?"

*Sokolnikov*: "The diplomatic representative of a certain country."

*Vyshinsky*: "Kamenev warned you about this?"

*Sokolnikov*: Yes. Kamenev warned me about this."

*Vyshinsky*: "Did Kamenev tell you what enquiries would be addressed to you?"

*Sokolnikov*: "Yes, he told me that I would be asked for confirmation of the fact that the negotiations which were be-

ing carried on by Trotsky abroad were not being carried on by him in his own name, but that behind Trotsky there really was an organisation of which he was the representative."

*Vyshinsky*: "You were to confirm this if enquiries in this sense were addressed to you?"

*Sokolnikov*: "Yes."

*Vyshinsky*: "Such a question was addressed to you?"

*Sokolnikov*: "Yes, in the middle of April after one of my official talks with the representative of a certain country with whom I had frequent meetings in connection with my official duties. The conversation took place after the official talk was over, when the interpreters had withdrawn to the neighbouring room. While I was showing my visitor to the door he asked me whether I knew that 'Trotsky had addressed certain proposals to his government. I confirmed that this fact was known to me. He asked further whether these proposals were serious. I confirmed this too. He asked whether this was my own personal opinion. I said that this was not only my opinion but that of my friends as well. I understood this question of his as a confirmation of the fact that the government of that country had really received Trotsky's proposals, and wanted to make sure that Trotsky's proposals were really known to the organisation and that Trotsky's right to conduct these negotiations was not disputed."

*Vyshinsky*: "What post did you hold at that time?"

*Sokolnikov*: "Assistant People's Commissar for Foreign Affairs" (*Trial of Anti-Soviet Trotskyite Centre*, January 1937, pp. 148-9).

It may be objected that there was nothing in the previous political position of such people to make them change into such despicable traitors. They may, it is contended, have doubted the possibility of building Socialism in the Soviet Union; they may have desired the slowing down of industrialisation and collectivisation; they may have believed that the defeat of Soviet Russia in a war with the Fascist States was inevitable, and that therefore a compromise must be sought with the Fascists (1) from the point of view of enabling the group to come to power and realise its programme; and (2) from the point of view of securing that the Soviet Union would not be com-

pletely overrun by Fascism; but why, it is asked, should they turn out to be such out-and-out degenerates and traitors?

“Verily it may be said,” wrote Lenin on one occasion, “that a small mistake persisted in, learnedly demonstrated and ‘carried to its logical conclusion’, will grow into a monstrosity.” In the same way a large mistake, persisted in, learnedly demonstrated and carried to its logical conclusion may grow into a monstrous crime. When the various opposition groups began to come together in 1932, they were mainly concerned with changing the policy of the Government which they believed was driving the country to ruin, but the logic of their straggle carried them step by step to a position when they became little more than the traitorous puppets of foreign Fascism.

“We considered,” declared Sokolnikov, “that Fascism was the most organised form of capitalism, that it would triumph, would seize Europe and stifle us. It was therefore better to come to terms with it, it was better to consent to a compromise in the sense of retreating from Socialism to capitalism. All this was explained by the following argument: better make certain sacrifices, even very severe ones, than lose everything. I should explain, emphasise this principle, because without it, it would be quite impossible to understand how the *bloc* and the centre of the *bloc* could have entered upon the course of terrorist struggle, of wrecking struggle, of diversive acts, on a defeatist position” (*ibid.*, p. 151).

That was the attitude of the *bloc* when it first entered upon establishing relations with the Fascists.

“We had to decide a political problem which consisted of only one point,” continued Sokolnikov, “could we by adopting this most painful course, which in regard to the existing Party leadership, in regard to the Soviet power, in regard to the Soviet Union, represented, as we understood full well, a series of the most heinous crimes, of the most shameful crimes, represented treason and so forth – we had to decide whether after paying this price we would be able to utilise this hostile force.”

*Vyshinsky*: “Or they would utilise you?”

*Sokolnikov*: "Or they would utilise us, if we became simply an appendage of German Fascism, which would utilise us and then throw us away like a dirty rag, we would be condemned, disgraced and proved to be utter nonentities."

*Vyshinsky*: "And did you expect any other fate than to be utilised by Fascism and then thrown away like a useless rag?"

*Sokolnikov*: Of course. If we had counted only on such an end we ought to have liquidated the *bloc* completely."

*Vyshinsky*: "You thought you could retain some independence?"

*Sokolnikov*: "I am saying what we thought at that time. We figured that we had certain chances. Where did we see them? We saw them in the play of international contradictions. We considered that, let us say, complete sway in the Soviet Union could never be established by German Fascism because it would encounter the objections of other imperialist rivals, that certain international conflicts might occur, that we could rely on other forces which would not be interested in strengthening Fascism (*ibid.*, pp. 154-5).

According to Smirnov's evidence (*Trial of the Trotskyite-Zinovievite Terrorist Centre*, August 1936, p. 79), in 1931 a message from Trotsky was conveyed to him in Berlin by Sedov, Trotsky's son, "that it was necessary to change the old methods of struggle against the Party, and that the time had arrived to adopt terroristic methods of struggle". At the Dewey Commission, Trotsky was asked whether he had had any communication with Smirnov since 1929; he gave the significant reply: "I, directly, not. My son met him in Berlin in 1931, in the street" (*The Case of Leon Trotsky*, 1937, p. 89).

The organisation of terroristic acts began. Among the many attempted assassinations which were revealed at the trials may be mentioned the acts planned and nearly carried out against Orjonikidze and Molotov (Arnold, *Trial of Anti-Soviet Trotskyite Centre*, January 1937, pp. 327-9). In the March 1938 trial, Yagoda stated:

"In 1934, in the summer, Yenukidze informed me that the Centre of the '*bloc* of Rights and Trotskyites' had

adopted a decision to organise the assassination of Kirov.... Thus I declare categorically that the murder of Kirov was carried out on the instructions of the Centre of the ‘*bloc* of Rights and Trotskyites’. It was also on the decision of this Centre that terrorist acts were committed against Kuibyshev, Menzhinsky and Gorky. What was the situation here? Even before Kirov was assassinated, Gorky’s son Maxim died. I have already stated before the Court that I admit my part in causing Max’s sickness” (*Trial of Anti-Soviet Bloc of Rights and Trotskyites*, March 1938, pp. 572-3).

Activities of a wrecking character were carried out in all parts of the country. Pyatakov’s evidence in the January 1937 trial gave details of wrecking carried out, under the direction of the Trotskyite organisations, in the Ukraine (coke and chemical industry), in the Kuznetsk area (power stations), in the Urals (copper and car construction industries). On being asked by Vyshinsky whether the manager of the Central Urals Copper Trust had carried out the wrecking on his own initiative or on instructions, Pyatakov replied:

“In general all this was not done on these people’s own initiative but on Trotsky’s instructions, and then on my own personal directives” (*Trial of Anti-Soviet Trotskyite Centre*, p. 47).

At the same trial Boguslavsky stated:

“In 1934 the work of the Siberian Centre, and my work in particular, entered upon a new path. In 1934 I had my second meeting with Pyatakov.... This time Pyatakov said that our work was completely unsatisfactory, and set us tasks which, though not new, had a new sound.... In response to my pessimism, Pyatakov said: ‘We have got to get down to work, especially as Trotsky has been sending letters and directives. He accuses us of inaction bordering, as he then said, on the sabotage of his, Trotsky’s, directives’... As regards work on the railways, which I was directing myself, the number of accidents on the line considerably increased in 1934.... In 1934 there was a considerable increase in the number and percentage of locomotives put out of action” (*Trial of Anti-Soviet Trotskyite Centre*, pp. 197-8).

The wrecking acts were not only for the purpose of generally disorganising the economic development of the Five-Year Plans: they were specially directed to weaken the defence plans in order to prepare for the foreign invasion that was being organised. Rosengoltz, at the March 1938 trial, gave particulars of sabotage in trade transactions, and added:

“It is necessary to note especially the wrecking activities which followed from our aim of working for defeat – the delay in the import of materials needed for defence (*Trial of Anti-Soviet Bloc of Rights and Trotskyites*, p. 261).

Similarly, Drobniś, in the January 1937 trial, stated:

“One of the wrecking tasks in the plan was to diffuse funds on measures of secondary importance. Another was to delay construction work in such a way as to prevent the launching of important departments on the dates fixed by the Government”.

In reply to a question by Vyshinsky, Drobniś stated that the purpose was to upset the schedule, chiefly in enterprises of importance for the defence of the country (*Trial of Anti-Soviet Trotskyite Centre*, p. 209).

Some of these activities were carried out on the direct instructions of the German Intelligence Service. Chernov, speaking of the 1930 period (when the Soviet Union’s food difficulties became acute), stated:

“The chief task assigned to me by the German Intelligence Service at that time was to arrange to spoil grain within the country. This involved delaying the construction of storehouses and elevators, so as to create a discrepancy between the growing size of the grain collections and the available storage space.... As regards crop rotation, the idea was to plan the crop area incorrectly and thus place the collective farm peasants in such a position that they would be virtually unable to practise proper crop rotation and would be obliged to plough up meadows and pastures for crop growing. This would reduce the size of harvests in the country and at the same time rouse the indignation of the peasants, who would be unable to understand why they

were being forced to plough up meadows and pastures when the collective farms wanted to develop stock-breeding and required fodder for the purpose. As regards stock-breeding, the aim was to kill off pedigree breed-stock and to strive for a high cattle mortality” (*Trial of Anti-Soviet Bloc of Rights and Trotskyites*, pp. 102-3).

Simultaneously with activities of a terroristic and wrecking character, espionage was conducted on behalf of foreign States. In the earlier stages, when Germany was not the main anti-Soviet force, espionage was carried on for Germany on the basis of an exchange of information against money to be used for Trotskyist propaganda inside the Soviet Union. Thus for example, Krestinsky stated:

“In 1921 Trotsky told me to take advantage of a meeting with Seeckt during official negotiations to propose to him, to Seeckt, that he grant Trotsky a regular subsidy for the development of illegal Trotskyite activities, at the same time he told me that, if Seeckt will put up a counter-demand that we render him services in the sphere of espionage, we should and may accept it.... I put the question before Seeckt and named the sum of 250,000 gold marks, that is \$60,000, a year. General Seeckt, after consulting his assistant, the chief of staff, agreed in principle and put up the counter-demand that certain confidential and important information of a military nature be transmitted to him, even if not regularly, by Trotsky in Moscow or through me. In addition he was to receive assistance in obtaining visas for some persons whom they needed and whom they would send to the Soviet Union as spies. This counter-demand of General Seeckt was accepted and in 1923 this agreement had been put into effect” (*Trial of Anti-Soviet Bloc of Rights and Trotskyites*, pp. 259-60).

Funds were later supplied to the Trotskyites through the manipulation of Soviet foreign trade. Rosengoltz gave particulars of a number of such transactions.

“Foreign trade was criminally utilised by way of using and stealing funds to finance the Trotskyite movement. Without dwelling on quite a number of perhaps insignifi-

cant dealings, I shall mention two of the most important examples. The first was an operation carried out by Krayevsky to the amount of \$300,000, which were transmitted to the Trotskyite organisation or direct to Trotsky" (*Trial of Anti-Soviet Bloc of Rights and Trotskyites*, p. 257).

Other transactions of which Rosengoltz gave particulars were an arrangement with a representative of a foreign State for Trotsky to receive \$110,000 annually for three years; a remittance of £2,000 to Trotsky in 1933; £15,000 in 1934; and so on. Rosengoltz was able to arrange for these owing to his position as People's Commissar of Foreign Trade.

It is not possible to give in detail the enormous mass of evidence given at the successive trials. These few examples, however, from the statements of the accused themselves, show how the Trotskyists and the Rights evolved – under Trotsky's instructions – from political opposition to the line of the Party to unqualified and diabolical treason to the Soviet State and to the cause of Socialism.

No one is suggesting that the accused went to bed one night as consistent Marxists and on waking the next morning, decided to become Fascist spies. It is a question of prominent political leaders who, starting from the standpoint that it was impossible to build Socialism in the Soviet Union, came out in opposition to the measures undertaken by the Government and, when the difficulties of the Five-Year Plan were at their height, passed from opposition to discussing ways and means of overthrowing the Government; and finding their own forces inadequate for this purpose, began to enter into closer relations with the external enemies of the Soviet Union. The evolution from opposition to out-and-out treason was facilitated by the fact that the comparative groups were working against the efforts to construct Socialism which the great mass of the Russian people were making; they were divorced from the struggles and the hopes of the majority of their fellow citizens, and lived in a boxed-in world of cynicism and treachery.

The military aspect of the conspiracy was the most difficult to detect. Radek, who mentioned Tukhachevsky at the trial, declared that he was an absolutely trusted man, absolutely loyal to the Government, and it was not until May 1937 that the dangerous nest of plotters in the Red Army was discovered.

On May 18th, 1937, the *Daily Herald* announced:



“Far-reaching measures to combat espionage and place Soviet life under military domination, were announced in a (Soviet) Government decree yesterday. The decree provides for the creation of military councils with power unprecedented in peace time, in all military districts throughout the country.”

No greater evidence of the permanent bias of the *Daily Herald* against the Soviet Union could be cited than the fact that a decree which placed the Red Army under firmer civilian control was actually interpreted as one which placed “Soviet life under military domination”; for the new Army councils which were set up in the various military districts of the Soviet Union were composed of two civilian members and the commanding officer of the Army in the district in question. Measures of a defence character against espionage, measures which give the Government control over its military leaders, are presented as the opposite, *i.e.*, the growth of military domination over the Government.

This measure was followed shortly afterwards by the bringing to trial of eight Generals on the charge that they – “Being in the employ of the military intelligence service of one of the foreign States which carries on an unfriendly policy towards the U.S.S.R., had systematically furnished to the military circles of that State espionage information; committed wrecking acts with the aim of undermining the might of the Workers’ anti Peasants’ Red Army, prepared, in the event of a military attack on the U.S.S.R., the defeat of the Red Army, and pursued the aim of assisting in the dismemberment of the Soviet Union and in restoring the power of the landlords and capitalists in the U.S.S.R.”

The plan of the Generals for a *coup d’état* was explained by Rykov in his evidence, as follows:

“I remember that once, in my presence, Bukharin formulated the idea of opening the front... the existence of a military group, headed by Tukhachevsky, which was connected with our centre and which aimed at taking advantage of a war to overthrow the government. This meant preparing for intervention pure and simple. Our dealings with the Germans, which we intensified in every way, were meant to stimulate in every way an armed attack, inasmuch as in this sphere the conspiratorial organisation had entered

into treasonable relations with them" (*Trial of Bloc of Rights and Trotskyites*, March 1938, p. 186).

But at the end of 1936 it was becoming clear that the groups of Trotskyists and Rights were becoming discovered to such an extent that the whole organisation was in danger of being wiped out. And hence there was the development of the conception that a *coup d'état* ought to be launched, independently of war. The evidence given by Rosengoltz makes clear what the plotters intended:

"The point I stopped at was the conference we had with Tukhachevsky. It took place at the end of March (1937).... At this conference Tukhachevsky stated that he counted definitely on the possibility of a coup and mentioned the date. He believed that by May 15, in the first half of May, he would succeed in carrying out this military coup.... Tukhachevsky had a number of variants. One of them, the one on which he counted most, was the possibility for a group of military men, his adherents, gathering in his apartment on some pretext or other, making their way into the Kremlin, seizing the Kremlin telephone exchange, and killing the leaders of the Party and the Government" (*Trial of Anti-Soviet Bloc of Rights and Trotskyites*, pp. 252-3).

Krestinsky, another of the accused, confirmed that he had been present at this conference with Tukhachevsky, adding:

"We discussed the necessity of terrorist acts against the leaders of the Party and the Government.... We had in mind Stalin, Molotov and Kaganovich" (*Ibid.*, p. 254).

The principal line of the Generals appears to have been that a conflict with Germany must be avoided at all costs and that the necessary territorial concessions must be made in order to buy the Germans off, and as this was clearly impossible without a change of Government, the Generals were prepared to steer for that in peace or in war. Just as reactionaries in Western Europe are prepared to divert Germany from attacking in Western Europe by offering it a free hand in the East, so the renegade Generals were prepared to offer it a free hand in the West. But from the German point of view, this policy had to be backed by something more than promises. The Generals had not only to declare their willingness to make territorial

concessions, but also to prove the genuineness of their attitude by giving the German General Staff information as to the military position in the Soviet Union.

It is a curious fact that a few weeks before the Generals were brought to trial, the very capitalist press which was later to throw doubt on the treachery of these renegades, was full of rumours about a Russo-German *rapprochement*. Obviously, there was a leakage from the German side.

Mr. Wickham Steed, whose information about German developments since Hitler came to power is outstanding in its reliability, was convinced from evidence quite independent of that given at the trial that there had been a close arrangement between individuals on both General Staffs:

“On these questions I can throw some light. None of the sources of my information is Russian. All tend to bear out the hypothesis that the long-standing intimacy between the German and the Russian General Staffs, an intimacy which began soon after the Russo-German Treaty of Rapallo in 1922, had been steadily developed and carried to a point at which the Russo-German Treaty of Economic and Military Alliance had been worked out in full detail. The conclusion of the Treaty was to follow the establishment of Red Army control over the Soviet Union or, in other words, a Russian military dictatorship working in agreement with the German Reichswehr.

“I know the names of the German Generals who carried on the negotiations on behalf of the Reichswehr. They are those of very distinguished soldiers” (*Spectator*, July 16th, 1937).

Both Trotsky and Bukharin were afraid that in the event of a successful coup, the Generals would rule the roost and the civilian political groups would be left out in the cold. Rosengoltz testified: –

“Sedov (Trotsky’s son) spoke a lot about the necessity of the maximum, the closest possible connections with Tukhachevsky, inasmuch as, in Trotsky’s opinion, Tukhachevsky and the military group were to be the decisive force of the counter-revolutionary action. During the conversation it was also revealed that Trotsky entertained fears

regarding Tukhachevsky's Bonapartist tendencies. In the course of one conversation Sedov said that Trotsky in this respect even expressed the fear that if Tukhachevsky successfully accomplished a military coup, it was possible that he would not allow Trotsky into Moscow.... Trotsky therefore proposed that during the *coup d'état* we should everywhere place our own people, people who would be faithful to Trotskyism and who could be relied upon as regards vigilance" (*Trial of Anti-Soviet Bloc of Rights and Trotskyites*, pp. 245-6).

Bukharin confirmed that discussions had taken place of plans for a *coup d'état*, and added:

"When I asked Tomsy how he conceived the mechanism of the coup he said this was the business of the military organisation, which was to open the front." *Vyshinsky*: "Permit me to read Bukharin's testimony, Volume V, pp. 95-6: 'Tomsy told me that two variants were discussed: the case where the new Government would be formed in time of peace,' and this meant that the conspirators would organise a new government in time of peace, and 'the case where it would be organised in time of war; in the latter case the Germans were demanding big economic concessions', concessions of which I have already spoken, 'and were insisting upon cessions of territory'."

In that case – *i.e.*, if the front was opened to an attack from Germany – "it would be expedient to try those guilty of the defeat at the front. This will enable us to win over the masses by playing on patriotic slogans". Bukharin further explained: "I had in mind that by this, that is, by the conviction of those guilty of the defeat, we would be able at the same time to rid ourselves of the Bonapartist danger that alarmed me" (*Trial of Anti-Soviet Bloc of Rights and Trotskyites*, pp. 432-6).

People who seek to reduce politics to a state of childish simplicity ask the question: "How could Generals sink to the level of spies?" An empty question. No one suggests that the Generals were merely tools in the sense that Mata Hari was a tool. They were political personalities engaging in a struggle for power in order to change the politics of their country. To them espionage and treason

were a means to a political end – a road to power, however much that power would be limited and circumscribed by triumphant Fascism. And history is full of such Generals.

There was, for example, the Tsarist General Sukhomnilov, who was chief of the Russian General Staff in 1908, one of the foremost officers in the reorganisation of the army after the debacle of the Russo-Japanese war and one of those who shouted the loudest for war on Germany. In 1917 he was sentenced to imprisonment for life for high treason – part of the charges against him being the betrayal of military secrets to Germany. Then there was General Pichegru, an outstanding General of the French Revolution, victor of the battles of Montcastel and Turcoing, conqueror of Holland in 1795, and later military Commander in Paris. Two years later he was deported to Cayenne for conspiracy against the regime. He reappeared in Paris in 1804 as an agent of the Monarchists, with a commission to assassinate Bonaparte. The case of John Churchill, first Duke of Marlborough, who maintained communication with the exiled Stuarts while holding Supreme Command in the British Army, is known to everyone.

“But the Soviet Generals,” it is argued, “were Socialists.” Alas! Socialists are not immune from political degeneration, particularly in a period of revolution, which tests leaders from every angle. The outstanding characteristic of the main participants in the plot is that they were men who had collapsed in face of the mighty problems raised by the revolution, men who had no faith in the Party’s ability to solve those problems. Not Old Bolsheviks, but deserters from the camp of Bolshevism was their proper description when they stood before the court of revolutionary justice.

What section of the population in the Soviet Union supported all these groups which based their whole political line on the impossibility of building Socialism in a single country? Obviously, those who did not desire to see Socialism built anywhere – the ex-Tsarist bureaucrat, the bourgeois specialist who hoped for the gradual restoration of capitalism, the urban merchant and shopkeeper, the capitalist peasant, the bourgeois nationalist and the politically degenerate sections of the army. During the years of the open Trotskyist opposition, from 1923 to 1927, those elements lay low and hoped for a Trotskyist victory. They did not mind under what slogans that victory was achieved. Let the slogans appear to be ever so left, the victory of a group which did not believe in the possibility of realis-

ing Socialism in the Soviet Union meant the victory of the forces of capitalist restoration.

It was when the defeat of Trotsky dashed all their hopes that these counter-revolutionary elements increased their activity enormously. The old bourgeois experts in the mining industry engaged in a course of systematic sabotage which was finally discovered and exposed in the Shakty trial in 1928. An important group of bourgeois experts and technicians came together in the "Industrial Party", decided on measures of sabotage and wrecking, established relations with Russian capitalist circles abroad, and prepared for intervention. Their leader, Professor Ramzin, described their attitude as follows:

"Approximately beginning with 1927, with the transition to the definite reconstruction of national economy, a sharp change in the sentiments of both engineering and White emigrant groups took place. The Socialist offensive and the beginning of reconstruction furnished an immediate cause and base for active combat" (*Wreckers on Trial*, 1931, p. 7).

At the same time, the underground organisation of the Menshevik (Right-Wing "Socialist") Party, which had members in important State posts, began to be more active and to improve its connections with the Russian Right-Wing organisations abroad and with the Labour and Socialist International. The Mensheviks – a party of capitalist restoration, Socialist in name only – had declared in their 1924 programme:

"the conditions of production in Russia are being reshaped more and more on a capitalist basis by the course of objective development, and that in consequence of Bolshevik economics, both Russian and foreign capital will inevitably reconquer one position after another."

In the third trial, Chernov and Bukharin disclosed how their centre was in the closest contact with the *émigré* organisations of Mensheviks and Social Revolutionaries with a view to their co-operation with the plotters inside the Soviet Union.

Like Trotsky, the Mensheviks insisted on the impossibility of building Socialism in a single country, and in the launching of the Five-Year Plan they saw only an adventure which would produce

economic chaos and would give them the long awaited opportunity of establishing a capitalist democratic republic. At the beginning of 1928 their existing illegal organisation was brought together in an All-Union Bureau and commenced to struggle against the Soviet Government. The All-Union Bureau, which had leading members on the State Planning Commission and in the State Bank, commenced a policy of sabotage in these institutions and based its hopes of coming to power on foreign intervention. At the trial of this group one of the witnesses, Petunin, a member of the Board of Directors of Centrosoyus (the central organisation of the Russian Co-operatives), declared:

“I remember very well the content of the instructions of the foreign C.C. of the R.S.D.L.P. (Russian Social Democratic Labour Party – the Menshevik organisation), concerning the differences in the Communist Party in the Soviet Union. These instructions were contained in a letter of which I received a copy through Gromann in the summer of 1929. This letter, which was signed by Dan and Abramovitch, contained an estimate of the Right-Wing deviation in the C.P.S.U. (Communist Party of the Soviet Union). The letter pointed out, as the result of their struggle against the C.C. of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union, the Trotskyists had arrived at the position of Social Democracy, and that on the basis of this example, and as a result of the logic of the struggle, it must be assumed that the Right-Wingers would arrive at the same position during the course of the struggle. The more bitter the struggle, the more clear will this be seen, according to this letter. Therefore, oil must be poured on the fire in order that the flame of the struggle should burn more fiercely.”

These were the *internal* social forces which supported the struggle against the policy of building Socialism in a single country, and when Trotskyism itself degenerated to sabotage and treason it regarded these forces as its closest allies.

“Pyatakov pointed out’,” declared Loginov, one of the witnesses in the Pyatakov-Radek Trial, “that in the struggle against the Soviet State we must not rely on our internal forces alone, that these forces would hardly be sufficient. I

remember that this was how Pyatakov put it, pointing out that this was just how Trotsky thought, that we could not, that it was impossible to rely on the workers and proletarian masses within the country, that we ought, therefore, to try to enlist large numbers of engineers in our work. I pointed out at that time that we would hardly be able to attract the younger generation who had been brought up under the Soviet power; main attention must be devoted, not to the young engineers but to the older ones, especially those who had taken part in the struggle against the Soviet Power in the 1930-1 period" (*Trial of Anti-Soviet Trotskyite Centre*, January 1937, pp. 180-1).

Alongside the Russian conspirators, there were the open agents of German Fascism sent in from abroad. Since the Zinoviev-Kamenev Trial of 1936, the activities of Fascist agents in countries like Spain, France, Czechoslovakia, the Scandinavian countries, have been the subject of a series of exposures. Those agents have not contented themselves with espionage; they have established relations with the domestic enemies of every democratic Government. They co-operated with the Generals and the Right-Wing groups in Spain; they organised the "hooded men" in France, and with the assistance of the Rights and Trotskyists they penetrated into the State and industrial apparatus of the Soviet Union. During the first and second Five-Year Plans thousands of technicians and tens of thousands of skilled workers were brought into the country by the Soviet Government, in order to assist in the construction of new industries. What could be easier than for the enemies of the Soviet Union to send in groups of spies and wreckers in the guise of technicians?

Thousands of Germans entered the country in flight from the Fascist terror in Germany. While the overwhelming majority of them were devoted revolutionaries, it was possible for the Fascists to incorporate in their ranks groups of agents and spies who, on arrival in the country, co-operated with the organisations of Rights and Trotskyists. And just as the Fascist agents in Britain are under the protection of certain aristocratic groups, so the agents of Fascism in the Soviet Union were under the protection of the Right-Wing Chief of the political police, Yagoda.

What kind of Government could these elements establish if, ei-



ther in peace or war, they succeeded in overthrowing the Soviet Government? Only a Government of capitalist restoration.

Radek, speaking of Trotsky's letter of December 1935, the existence of which was also confirmed by Pyatakov and Serebriakov, said:

"In the sphere of politics, a new note in this letter was the way it posed the question of power. In this letter Trotsky said: 'There can be no talk of any kind of democracy. The working class have lived through 18 years of revolution, and it has vast appetites; and this working class will have to be sent back partly to privately-owned factories and partly to State-owned factories which will have to compete with foreign capital under most difficult conditions. That means that the living standard of the working class will be drastically lowered. In the countryside the struggle of the poor and middle peasants against the kulaks will be renewed. And then, in order to hold power, we shall need a strong Government, irrespective of what forms are employed to veil it'" (*Trial of Anti-Soviet Trotskyite Centre*, p. 114).

Bukharin gave a similar description of the type of Government which he thought would replace the Soviet Government.

Thus, at last the full logic of Trotskyism, of the doctrine of the impossibility of building Socialism in a single country, of reliance on those sections of the population who did not want to see Socialism built, finds its finished expression.

On the other hand, it was the working class, intent on building Socialism in the Soviet Union, that administered the sharpest blows to the Trotskyists. It was in the great enterprises of Leningrad, Moscow and the Don Basin that the Trotskyists suffered their sharpest defeats in the discussion of 1925-7. We have seen how Trotsky estimated the advanced non-Party workers chosen by their comrades in workshop, mine and office, who entered the Bolshevik Party after the death of Lenin, as "raw human material, without experience, without independence, and yet with the old habit of submitting to the authorities" (*The Revolution Betrayed*, p. 97). Obviously, anyone who did not bow down before the super-aristocrat Trotsky was only a piece of "raw human material". In the Party discussion of 1927, only 4,000 people could be found to vote for Trotsky, as

compared with the 724,000 who voted for the line of the Party. The young administrators drawn from the working class were equally hostile, as Trotsky regretfully admits (*The Revolution Betrayed*, p. 276).

How fantastic it is to present Trotsky as the "leader of the workers against the bureaucracy". The workers always fought shy of him. For the ten years previous to 1917 he was the leader of a tiny splinter group standing between the Bolsheviks and the Mensheviks, objectively supporting the latter. When, from 1923 onwards, he began to come out against the Party, he completely failed to get working-class support. His principal supporters are drawn from that stratum of the population whom he designates as the bureaucracy. They are Party and State intellectuals, despising the "raw human material" and contemptuously under-estimating the force of the Russian masses. Trotskyism is not the struggle of Socialism against bureaucracy; it is the struggle of bureaucratic degenerates (representing the forces of capitalist restoration in the Soviet Union) against the Soviet workers and against the drive to Socialism.

Not all harmful and degenerate bureaucrats are Trotskyists or Rights. They are, however, a recruiting ground for Trotskyism. Their attitude to the workers might well give the Trotsky wreckers a foothold if it was not ruthlessly combated. That is one of the reasons why the Soviet workers have launched a struggle against reactionary bureaucratic methods in every phase of Soviet life.

In the greater struggle for the realisation of the Five-Year Plans, many local and district leaders were so absorbed in attaining economic successes that they forgot all else. Why have Party meetings, the regular election of Party organisations, the regular reporting of Party leaders to the members? "Things are going on all right. We are attaining great successes. Let's get on with the job." This attitude could lead, not only to a neglect of big political questions, but also to the diminution of working-class control over the various aspects of Soviet life. This tendency had to be checked, working-class self-criticism stimulated, and the control of the Soviets and the Party consolidated. The stimulation of a mighty movement of self-criticism exposed the harmful tendencies that had resulted from the neglect of the big political questions on the basis of "let's get on with the job". It revealed that certain officials had been lax in their duties, and, as a consequence, allowed a considerable scope to the Trotskyist wreckers; that officials finding control somewhat relaxed

had misrepresented the achievements of the enterprises under their control; that others had indulged in personal self-aggrandisement; and that in some places a tyrannical attitude had been adopted with regard to the workers. The working class of the Soviet Union had not only to smash the Trotskyist wreckers but had to deal drastically with that section of administrators whose complacency, negligence and self-aggrandisement constituted a direct aid to Trotskyism. They had to clear out of important posts people with a good Party record, but who were “square pegs in round holes” and were holding back the rapid advance to Communism. This is what the *Daily Herald* calls “Russia’s Tragic Purge”. It is no doubt sad that the advance to Socialism cannot take place smoothly with all the members of the exploited class joyously and wholeheartedly participating in the march to the new life. But it is in the nature of class society that it cannot be so. The expropriated classes will resist. Difficulties will begin to accumulate, and leaders of the working class shrinking back from the difficulties will become – unconsciously at first – the supporters of policies which aid the remnants of the hostile classes which are resisting. Very sad, but, in the nature of class society, unavoidable – for the Socialist transformation is a question of class struggle and not of harmonious progress of all classes hand in hand to the new social order. It will therefore be necessary for the workers to dismiss those people who are not prepared to face all the implications of the struggle. And that, as the *Daily Herald* says, is a purge. But whether it is tragic or not depends upon who is purging whom. If the Russian Purge was directed against people who were working to develop the Socialist Society, then it would indeed be tragic. For that would mean the abandonment of the New Constitution and the beginning of a return to capitalism. But as it is directed against people who are impeding the development of Socialist Society, how can it be described as tragic?

It is unfortunate that these people were in important positions. It is not unfortunate that those who were traitors have been executed and those who were degenerate and inefficient removed. The Trotskyist traitors also believed in a purge, a purge possible only on the basis of a Fascist victory, promoted by treachery. Then the purge would have been truly tragic, for it would have denoted a purge directed against the leaders of Socialist Society. But the present successful purge means the consolidating of Socialism, the unhampered development of the New Constitution, the overcoming of one more

obstacle in the path of the development of Socialist Society to Communism.

It is a purge confounding all the sceptics as to where the Soviet Union is going. Some of those saw the downfall of Soviet power when the Brest-Litovsk Peace was signed with Germany; they hailed the New Economic Policy as "Bolshevism in Retreat"; they saw the resistance of the Kulak as the end of the Soviet regime, and when all these prophecies were shattered, they predicted the emergence of a triumphant bureaucracy that would emancipate itself from control and steer Soviet economy on to capitalist rails. The purge is the final and crushing answer to this fantasy. It reveals, not the triumph of bureaucracy, but the triumph of Socialist Democracy. It reveals the people of the Soviet Union against faint-hearts, renegades and deserters.

It is the triumph of the real revolutionaries; of those who did not flinch from the difficulties of Socialist construction in a backward country; of those who did not scare themselves with the fear of the dark peasant counterrevolution; of those who remained at the helm in the midst of the storm, when the Trotskyists and Bukharinites lost their heads and started to scream "All is lost" or "Save the ship by sailing it into an enemy port". Such traitors and deserters are not "heroes of the revolution". The heroes are those who remained unflinchingly at their posts and, under the leadership of Joseph Stalin, brought the ship into the harbour of victory.

## CHAPTER VII

### THE TRIALS AND THEIR CRITICS

The Moscow trials were undoubtedly good copy for the capitalist press, which used its opportunity to the full. There was no attempt to understand the political meaning of the activities of the prisoners. Whatever the journalists considered to be of melodramatic value was stressed and the headlines (not always corresponding with the body of the story) did the rest, so that when the unfortunate reader came away from a perusal of the reports, he had the impression of a script of a third-rate Hollywood melodrama. In reporting trials in Britain the journalist – in order to avoid contempt of court – has to keep closely to the facts. In dealing with the Moscow trials he could use his imagination to the full.

It would be an instructive exercise for the reader to peruse the verbatim report of the trial of the Metro-Vickers Engineers, the Radek-Pyatakov, or the Bukharin-Rykov-Yagoda trials, and then compare these records with the press reports. He would have very great difficulty in realising that he was reading about the same events, for ever since the trial of the Shakty wreckers in 1928 the press has laboured unceasingly to create a prejudice against Soviet justice. It is this prejudice that the henchmen of Trotskyism seek to exploit in order to throw doubt on the evidence and admissions at the trials.

Why, it is asked, in spite of this large-scale conspiracy has so little been accomplished? One Party leader, Sergei Kirov, openly assassinated; three others, Gorky, Kuibyshev and Menzhinsky, killed by inappropriate medical treatment, and that is all. And yet some of the conspirators stood at the head of the Red Army, the G.P.U., the diplomatic service and heavy industry.

Now even if that were the total extent of the conspirators' achievements it would not prove that the conspiracy was exaggerated. To take British history, it is a fact that in the reigns of William and Mary and of Anne, after the glorious bourgeois revolution of 1688, there were men in the highest posts in the State who were conspiring for the return of the Stuarts, and at a certain stage, during the reign of Anne, there were many who believed that the conspiracy would succeed. And yet in the end it came to nothing because the main body of the capitalist and landlord classes found that the

parliamentary monarchy established by the “glorious revolution”, accorded best with their interests. But it would be folly for a historian to deny the complicity of leading soldiers and statesmen in the plans for a Stuart restoration on the ground that their plans came to nothing.

In this case, however, it would be entirely wrong to confine the “achievements” of the conspirators to the murders which were carried out at their instigation. They were able to do serious damage to industry and agriculture, by the methods of sabotage – the classic weapon of a dispossessed class in a Socialist society – to which they had recourse. And so Trotsky in the course of his “defence” tries to convince the world that there was no sabotage whatever. The Dewey Commission which was set up by the American Committee for the Defence of Leon Trotsky declares, “The Commission finds from the evidence in its possession that the wrecks, delays, and damages charged against the accused in the Moscow trials are explicable in terms of haste, inefficiency and over-reaching, and that the charges of sabotage, wrecking and diversion as far as they concern Leon Trotsky, stand not proved and not credible.”

Foreign experts who participated in the building up of industry in the Soviet Union have testified to the fact that sabotage was a reality. In the *Saturday Evening Post* of December 1937 there were three articles by an American Mining Engineer, Mr. John D. Littlepage, who was engaged as an expert in the gold and copper mining industries of the Soviet Union from 1927 till 1937. Here are some of the facts which he discloses:

“During the period while I was detached temporarily from the Gold Trust and assigned to work in copper mines, I had an opportunity to observe at first hand the actions of Yuri Pyatakov, the vice-commissar executed in 1937, after he had confessed to leadership of a wrecking ring. I went to Berlin in the spring of 1931 with a large purchasing commission headed by Pyatakov; my job was to offer technical advice on purchases of mining machinery. Some things happened on that occasion which I never understood until I read Pyatakov’s testimony at his trial in 1937.

“Among other things, the commission in Berlin was buying several dozen mine hoists, ranging from 100 to 1,000 horse-power. Ordinarily, these hoists consist of

drums, shafting, bearings, gears, and so on, placed on a foundation of I or H beams. The commission asked for quotations on the basis of pfennigs per kilogram. After some discussion, the German concerns later mentioned in Pyatakov's confession reduced their prices between 5 and 6 pfennigs per kilogram. When I studied these proposals, I discovered that the firms had substituted cast-iron bases weighing several tons for the light steel provided in the specifications, which would reduce the cost of production per kilogram, but increase the weight, and therefore the cost to purchaser.

"Naturally, I was pleased to make this discovery, and reported to the members of the commission with a sense of triumph. But these men were distinctly lukewarm; they even brought considerable pressure on me to persuade me to approve the deal. I couldn't figure out their attitude. I finally told the commission members flatly that they would have to make such purchases on their own responsibility, and that I would see that my own contrary advice got on the record. Only then did they drop the proposal.

"At the time I attributed their attitude to obstinate stupidity, or perhaps some personal graft. But this incident was fully explained by Pyatakov's subsequent confession. The matter was so arranged that Pyatakov could have gone back to Moscow and showed that he had been very successful in reducing prices, but at the same time would have paid out money for a lot of worthless cast iron and enabled the Germans to give him very substantial rebates. According to his own statement, he got away with the same trick on some other mines, although I blocked this one."

Describing the situation in the zinc and copper mines in the Urals, Mr. Littlepage says:

"The Communist chairman of the whole Urals region, a man named Kabakov, was officially responsible for this procedure. Kabakov held this job for about 15 years, and had so much power that he was dubbed the 'Bolshevik Viceroy of the Urals'. For some reason which I have never understood he retained the complete confidence of the Kremlin and was always forgiven any mistake. Judged dis-

passionately his record was bad.

“Under his long rule, the Ural region, which has almost unlimited mineral riches and was given vast capital sums for exploitation, never did produce anything near what it should have done. I positively refused to work in the territory controlled by this man in 1932; five years later, in 1937, he was arrested on charges of industrial sabotage covering a period of nine years’. When I heard of his arrest, I was not surprised.

“Towards the end of 1932 I was given an assignment which has completely convinced me that organised wrecking existed on a large scale in Russia. I was sent to rehabilitate Russia’s greatest lead-zinc mines, a former British concession in Southern Kazakstan. I had been warned that conditions were pretty bad, but wasn’t prepared for anything quite so bad as I found. These mines are among the best lead-zinc mines in the world, and, in addition, the ore carries an unusually large amount of gold.

“The methods which had been used in these mines were, enough to break the heart of a mining engineer. They had resulted in several cave-ins so large that production had almost been stopped. The mines lie alongside a river and the cave-ins had caused a sudden large increase in the flow of water, which had overtaxed the installed pumping equipment, and the mines were in such condition that they were in danger of being lost beyond recovery at any moment through flooding. The Government had spent large sums for modern American machinery and equipment for these mines, but much of it was already useless. For example, a fine large flotation concentrator had been erected, but was in terrible shape because the equipment had not been taken care of, and the workmen were untrained in the use of American machinery, which, the Russian engineers themselves did not understand.

“I went into these mines as chief engineer with the same authority which I had been given when I first went to Khalata. I saw at once that immediate action was necessary to save the mines, and decided upon a plan of work. One of the chief difficulties here, as I later discovered, had been quarrels between two parties at the mines about the proper



methods to use. But the local people showed immediate confidence in my judgment and gave me excellent co-operation. As a result, we managed to get the mines and mill into fairly good shape in a few months.

“Two of the younger Russian engineers at these mines impressed me as particularly capable, and I took a great deal of pains to explain to them how things had gone wrong and how they had been righted. These engineers were not Communists, but they had been trained under the Communist regime and seemed to be working honestly.

“It was clear to me that Communist managers at the mines, ignorant of engineering problems, had compelled these young fellows to act against: their better judgment, in order to obtain some immediate increase of production at the expense of the future, and even at the risk of losing great bodies of valuable ore.

“I said to them: ‘Don’t let these Communist managers push you into anything like this again. You know what is right, and you must stick to it.’ They promised me faithfully that they should do as I advised. I made out an elaborate set of recommendations and instructions for additional improvements for mines and smelters. These instructions amounted to a blueprint detailing the proper methods for developing mines and plant for years to come.

“Well, one of my last jobs in Russia, in 1937, was a hurry call to return to these same mines. When I looked over that plant, I was ready to leave Russia for good. Once more the mines were close to destruction. Thousands of tons of rich ore already had been lost beyond recovery, and in a few more weeks, if nothing had been done meanwhile, the whole deposit might have been lost.

“I discovered that the property had gone along fairly well for two or three years after I had reorganised it in 1932. Then a commission came in from Pyatakov’s headquarters, as it had in the mines in Khalata. My instructions had been thrown into the stove, and a system of mining introduced throughout those mines which was certain to cause the loss of a large part of the ore body in a few months. Pillars which we had left for protecting the main working shafts had been mined, so that the ground around

these shafts was settling.

“One of the most flagrant examples of deliberate sabotage involved a rather elaborate ventilating system which had been ordered for the lead smelter to prevent the poisoning of workers. This ventilation system, which cost a lot of money and was necessary to protect the health of the workers in the smelter, had actually been installed in the filter section of the mill, where there were no harmful gases or dust of any kind. Any engineer would agree that such action could hardly be the result of mere stupidity, however gross.

“I went through this plant thoroughly, and drew up my report, explaining how the written instructions I had left behind me in 1932 had disappeared sometime in 1934. When I submitted this report, I was shown the written confessions of the young engineers mentioned above. They admitted that they had used my written instructions of 1932 as the basis for deliberately wrecking the plant. Their confessions explained just how and when the ‘mistakes’ had occurred which I had outlined in my report. They admitted that they had been drawn into a conspiracy against the Stalin regime by opposition Communists, who convinced them that they were strong enough to overthrow Stalin and his associates and seize power for themselves. The conspirators proved to them that they had many supporters among Communists in high places. They decided that they had to back one side or the other, and picked the losing side.”

The attempt of Trotsky to deny the reality of sabotage only serves to enhance his guilt.

If murder and sabotage took place, what implicates the defendants in the three trials? There is firstly their admissions before the examining authority, repeated by them in court, and there is the corroborating evidence.

A great deal of the criticisms of the trials consists in an attempt to deny the validity of the admissions of the accused. Consider the admissions. In the Zinoviev-Kamenev trial there were sixteen defendants, fifteen of whom pleaded guilty of all counts. In the Pyatakov-Radek trial there were seventeen defendants, all of whom pleaded guilty. In the Bukharin-Yagoda-Rykov trial there were

twenty-one defendants, who pleaded guilty.

There were fifty-four defendants in all, some of them old revolutionists; some of them, like Mrachkovsky and Muralov, were men of outstanding physical courage. Yet the people who reject the genuineness of the plea of guilty, tell us that all of these people sat in court for a week or more, and admitted crimes (punishable by death) that they had never committed. The trials took place in a large hall packed by foreign journalists, and yet out of fifty-four people, from whom (according to the hypothesis) a spurious confession had been extracted, not one was prepared to denounce the methods by which the confession was extracted. We are told that the leading group of those fifty-four were people who were opposing Stalin from the "Left", that they wanted an attack on bureaucracy, and a break with the policy of alliance with bourgeois States. Yet these men are seen talking freely in court for a week. Not only do they not give the listening world an account of the alleged political programme for which (according to the hypothesis) they are about to die, but Zinoviev, Pyatakov, Radek, Bukharin and the others give an account of their adherence to a quite different programme – a programme of capitalist restoration.

These men had a certain revolutionary reputation in the past. Their names were household words with millions of workers in the capitalist world. They had the opportunity to tell these workers that they had carried on a struggle against Stalin because he was "betraying the revolution"; and yet instead of doing this, they exposed themselves as people who had themselves betrayed the revolution.

And we are actually told by some critics, as we will see, that they did this in order to oblige Stalin.

Is not the assertion that these men were guilty a thousand times more credible than the fantastic hypotheses that are brought forward to explain away their admissions?

Trotsky has tried to score a point by contrasting the difference between the admissions at the Zinoviev-Kamenev trial and those of the Radek-Pyatakov trial.

"The trial of Zinoviev-Kamenev was concentrated upon terrorism." The trial of Pyatakov-Radek placed in the centre of the stage, no longer terror, but the alliance of the Trotskyists with Germany and Japan for the preparation of war, the dismemberment of the U.S.S.R., the sabotage of industry and the extermination of workers. How to explain this crying discrepancy? For after the execution of

the sixteen we were told that the depositions of Zinoviev, Kamenev and the others were voluntary, sincere, and corresponding to the facts. Moreover, Zinoviev and Kamenev demanded the death penalty for themselves.

“Why then did they not say a word about the most important thing: the alliance of the Trotskyists with Germany and Japan and the plot to dismember the U.S.S.R.? Could they have forgotten such ‘details’ of the plot? Could they themselves, the leaders of the so-called *centre*, not have known what was known by the accused in the last trial, people of a secondary category? The enigma is easily explained, the new amalgam was constructed *after* the execution of the sixteen, during the course of the last five months, as an answer to unfavourable echoes in the world press” (*The Revolution Betrayed*, pp. 295-6).

But it is precisely the fact that Kamenev and Zinoviev only told what had already been exposed from other sources, and that they kept back important information which has since come to light, that shows we are in the presence not of a frame-up, but of a plot whose full scope is only gradually discovered.

Sergei Kirov, one of the most important leaders in the Communist Party in the Soviet Union, was assassinated in December 1934. The actual shots were fired by one Nicolaiev, who was an active member of the Zinoviev organisation. As a result of the investigation, a part of this organisation is discovered and some of its members are shown to have been in touch with Zinoviev and Kamenev. Zinoviev and Kamenev admit “moral responsibility” for the murder of Kirov in the sense that they had created such a frame of mind amongst their adherents in relation to the Soviet Government as provided a stimulus for such actions as that of Nicolaiev.

That was the extent of their admission of guilt and they were sentenced accordingly. When people in Britain declare “It is almost incredible that old Bolsheviks should take to assassination against their opponents in the Party” they are only echoing what was the general opinion in the Soviet Union in January 1935. People were perfectly willing to accept the statements of Zinoviev and Kamenev that while they had sowed hatred against the policy of the Soviet Government they had not directly organised assassination. There were no proofs to the contrary discovered at that moment, and eve-

ryone was prepared to give Zinoviev and Kamenev the benefit of the doubt. It was only as a result of the discovery of other terrorist groups that the participation of Zinoviev and Kamenev in the organisation of assassination was fully revealed. Zinoviev and Kamenev at each stage only admitted as much as was already known from other sources. The full aims of the plot, the full meaning of the plotters' association with Nazi Germany, they concealed to the end. Such behaviour is not consistent with the theory that the O.G.P.U. first fabricated a plot and then – for reasons which are perfectly grotesque – forced a number of old revolutionists to confess to it.

But it is perfectly consistent with the fact that there was a widespread plot, the full extent of which was only gradually discovered. The people concerned were old revolutionaries who knew how to build an illegal organisation and to conceal its workings from the authorities. They were people who had been in conflict with the Party but had publicly made their peace with it and were given responsible work. Pyatakov became vice-commissar for Heavy Industry; Zinoviev commenced to write articles for the leading Party organ, the *Bolshevik* (which incidentally bore the stigmata of his previously incorrect political attitude); Bukharin became active on scientific and cultural questions. The Party took their adherence to the Party line at its face value, welcomed them back to the ranks and gave them important and congenial work to do. And therefore when the shooting of Kirov took place and the Party called for increased vigilance it was still far from appreciating the depths of treachery to which the opposition had sunk. It was only prolonged and careful investigation which led step by step to an unmasking of the main lines of the conspiracy.

The same applies to Bukharin and Rykov. They were mentioned by defendants in the first trial but denied complicity, and their denial was for the time being believed.

If the prisoners were not guilty why did they confess to crimes dishonouring of their reputation not only as revolutionists but as decent human beings? Here Trotsky, seeking desperately to exonerate himself, while at the same time concealing those sections of the conspirators who are still undiscovered, has resorted to different explanations at different times.

In 1936 Trotsky appeared before a Norwegian court as a witness in a case where some local Fascists were alleged to have attempted to raid the house where he was staying. The court was ob-

viously more interested in Trotsky than in the local Fascists and allowed him to range over a wide variety of subjects including the Zinoviev-Kamenev trial.

Dealing with the reasons for the admissions of Zinoviev and Kamenev, Trotsky said:

“All the accused, without exception, have declared that Trotsky, from abroad, had addressed to them clandestine appeals to terrorism, had given terrorist instructions, and had even sent executors (of these instructions. *J.R.C.*) into the U.S.S.R.

“My participation in terrorism is thus a co-efficient common to all the admissions. This is the minimum that the G.P.U. could not renounce. It will only give its victims a chance of their lives on condition that it obtains this minimum.” In other words the prisoners were promised their lives if they made the admission that the Government required – only to be double-crossed and shot.

This “explanation”, given out in the hope that the remaining conspirators would accomplish their object, became grotesque when the second batch of conspirators were caught and made admissions. Still for want of a better “explanation”, he persists in this one. In an article date-lined Coyoacan, Mexico, January 21st, 1937, he says: “But can one admit that Radek, Pyatakov, Sokolnikov, Serebryakov – and others – enter on the path of confessions after the tragic experience of the sixteen! Zinoviev and Kamenev had a hope of being saved. They were tricked. They paid by physical death for the confessions which signified their moral death.... To Radek, to Pyatakov, to the others one leaves the faint hope of a chance – ‘But you shot Zinoviev and Kamenev’ – Yes, we have killed them because it was necessary, because they were concealed enemies, because they have refused to admit their relations with the Gestapo. But we have no need to shoot you. Quite the contrary. You must aid us to liquidate the opposition once and for all and to liquidate Trotsky. That service will be worth your life. We will even give you work at a later moment.”

When the majority of the defendants at the second trial are shot, Trotsky picks up the explanation of the gutter press and declares that the defendants were tortured. In a speech read at the New York Hippodrome on February 9th, 1937, he said:

*“Who led these people into a state in which all human reflexes are destroyed, and how did he do it?” asks Trotsky. “There is a very simple principle in jurisprudence, which holds the key to many secrets: IS FECIT CUI PRODEST; he who benefits by it, he is the guilty one. The entire conduct of the accused has been dictated from beginning to end, not by their own ideas and interests, but by the interests of the ruling clique. And the pseudo-plot, and the confessions, the theatrical judgment and the entirely real accusations, all were arranged by one and the same hand” (The Revolution Betrayed, p. 300).*

Here is a truly desperate attempt to cloud the issues. The interests of the “ruling clique” and of the people of the Soviet Union could only have been served by the discovery of a real plot against them. But Trotsky would try and have us believe that a whole series of entirely innocent men, working quietly at their posts – some of them in key positions in the country – were arrested and forced to confess to a plot which had no existence in reality. Why? What purpose could this serve? The trials gave the capitalist press of the world an opportunity which they used to the full to throw mud at the Soviet Union. The Soviet Government was perfectly well aware that they would do so, and yet it is alleged to have gratuitously presented capitalism with this opportunity by inventing a monstrous plot which had no existence in fact. And people who accept this monstrous nonsense dare to talk of “credibility”; “Who led these people into a state in which all human reflexes are destroyed?” Who indeed? What proof is there that the prisoners were other than in their normal state of physical and mental health? They answered questions for hours on end. The testimony of the one was carefully compared with the testimony of the other before a crowded court. When they are asked if they were tortured in order to confess, what do they say?

*Vyshinsky (State Prosecutor): “I am interested in knowing why you decided to give truthful testimony. Examining the record of the preliminary investigation, I see that at a number of interrogations you denied any part in underground work. Is that so?”*

*Muralov: “Yes. Up to December 5, Eight months.”*

*Vyshinsky: “Why, then, in the end did you decide to*

give, and did give, truthful testimony? Explain the motives that led you to the decision to lay everything on the table – if you have laid everything on the table.”

*Muralov*: “I think there were three reasons which held me back and induced me to deny everything. One reason is political, and profoundly serious; two of an exclusively personal character. I shall begin with the least important, with my character. I am very hot-tempered and resentful. That is the first reason. When I was arrested, I became embittered with resentment.”

*Vyshinsky*: “Were you badly treated?”

*Muralov*: “I was deprived of my liberty.”

*Vyshinsky*: “But perhaps rough methods were used against you?”

*Muralov*: “No. No such methods were used. I must say that in Novosibirsk and here I was treated politely and no cause for resentment was given. I was treated very decently and politely” (*Trial of Anti-Soviet Trotskyite Centre*, January 1937, pp. 231-2).

We are asked by Trotsky to believe that one of his most outstanding followers, a man who never made his peace with the Communist Party of the Soviet Union, not only confessed to crimes of which he was guiltless, but actually falsely declared that he was treated most politely.

We are told that Stalin was anxious to assure the world bourgeoisie that he had completely abandoned Socialism and revolution and was moving back to capitalism, and that the executions were a proof of the genuineness of his intentions. And so Stalin selects a number of men who never believed in the possibility of building Socialism in Russia anyhow, and has them shot in order to show the world that he also no longer believes in that possibility! And the victims – enemies of Stalin from past struggles – they also treat Stalin “decently and politely” and falsely accuse themselves of committing a crime which they know is punishable by death. Surely the more the Trotskyists try to explain away the trial, the more fantastic their explanations become. In fact the more they talk the more they confirm the fact that there was a plot of a particularly despicable character.

Bukharin in his last plea told the listening world:



“Repentance is often attributed to diverse and absolutely absurd things like Tibetan powders and the like. I must say of myself that in prison, where I was confined for over a year, I worked, studied, and retained my clarity of mind. This will serve to refute by facts all fables and absurd counter-revolutionary tales.

“Hypnotism is suggested. But I conducted my own defence in Court from the legal standpoint too, orientated myself on the spot, argued with the State prosecutor; and anybody, even a man who has little experience in this branch of medicine, must admit that hypnotism of this kind is altogether impossible” (*Trial of Anti-Soviet Bloc of Rights and Trotskyites*, March 1938, p. 777).

Trotsky in his evidence before the Mexican “Commission” makes a further attempt to explain why Muralov confessed:

*Finerty* (Counsel for the Commission): “If these confessions were false, Mr. Trotsky, do you exclude as a motive for the confessions the desire on the part of the defendants unselfishly to serve the party?”

*Trotsky*: “I said, I can admit it for Muralov. They stand now in a situation – because the psychosis of war is now the most important factor in the hands of the bureaucracy. Everything is explained by the war danger. People like Muralov and others read only the Soviet papers. They don’t know foreign languages. For years they read that I am abroad, acting against the Soviet Union, that I am in alliance with Lord Beaverbrook and Winston Churchill. Everyone of them says ‘it is false, but it is possible that everything is true’. He is not in connection with me and he is shaky –”

Interpreter: “Shaken.”

*Trotsky*: “Shaken in his confidence. That is from one side. From the other: ‘Stalin is the chief of the country. If we fight against Germany and Japan, we will fight under the leadership of Stalin. You are a friend of Trotsky, but you can’t invite him to come here. In the situation his activities are prejudicial to the defence of the Soviet Union.’

“At the time he merely hesitates. He hesitated for one, two, three months. He hesitated for eight months. They

showed him one deposition, one confession after another. Then this man broke down. He satisfied them in every way."

*Finerty*: "So, he might actually have believed that you were party to a foreign —"

*Trotsky*: "I cannot admit that he accepted the accusation as it is, because he took upon himself the same false accusation. But my oppositionist activity, my critique against the ruling caste — it is possible that it seemed to him prejudicial for the defence of the Soviet Union."

*Fineriy*: "That was coupled with some hope of clemency?"

*Trotsky*: "With Muralov less than with others. He was in the full sense of the word a heroic personality" (*The Case-of Leon Trotsky*, pp. 395-6).

Here is indeed a hypothesis from the padded room. A "heroic personality" who confesses to a crime he never committed, in order to oblige political enemies of many years' standing, political enemies whom he had accused of leading the country to destruction!

No wonder, when it comes to his final speech before the Dewey Commission, that Trotsky, throwing all his previous "explanations" overboard, abandons any attempt to "explain":

"To be sure, even then there remain a few questions which demand answers. Chief among them are: Why then did the accused, after twenty, twenty-five, thirty or more years of revolutionary work (note that Trotsky includes in revolutionary work the opposition to the building of Socialism in the Soviet Union. *J.R.C.*), agree to take upon themselves such monstrous and degrading accusations? How did the G.P.U. achieve this? Why did not a single one of the accused cry out openly before the court against the frame-ups? etc., etc. In the nature of the case, I am not obliged to answer these questions" (*The Case of Leon Trotsky*, pp. 482-3).

But if there is no answer, then a most important element in the case of the Soviet Government is upheld.

British readers will remember the fierce accusations of torturing prisoners directed against the Soviet Union at the time of the trial of

the Metro-Vickers engineers in 1933. In this trial several of the British engineers had confessed to certain of the activities with which they were charged. The British press unhesitatingly declared that the confessions were due to torture. When the accused appeared in the public court, Messrs. Monkhouse and Thornton, two of the engineers in question, withdrew their picas of guilty which they had made in the preliminary examinations; the other, Mr. Macdonald, first pleaded guilty, then withdrew his plea of guilty, and then confirmed it. All of these men were questioned by the counsel for the prosecution as to why they had pleaded guilty.

Mr. Thornton, for example, is asked why he signed a certain statement which said:

“The protocols of interrogation first in Gussev’s, mine, and each other’s presence, and then in Kutuzova’s, mine and each other’s presence, which were shown to me during this interrogation and in which I confess facts about my spying activities and my connections with other persons, I have read. I can make no additional remarks about the records of these protocols. The protocols are taken down correctly and are confirmed by my signature.”

Vyshinsky asks Thornton: “Do you confirm this?” and the following dialogue ensues:

*Thornton:* “No, it was written and I signed it.”

*Vyshinsky:* “Do you confirm that you made it voluntarily without being influenced, without any pressure?”

*Thornton:* “Yes.”

*Vyshinsky:* “Everything that you read?”

*Thornton:* “Yes.”

*Vyshinsky:* “Then you signed?”

*Thornton:* “Yes, and now the Court will examine it.”

*The President:* “But why did you give such information? Was it only to take up everyone’s time, the Court’s and the Public Prosecutor’s? Or did you have some special reason? What you are saying is absurd. You have been making depositions for three weeks so as to deny them now.”

*Thornton:* “I merely —”

*The President:* “Decided to provide work for the

Court?"

*Thornton:* "I did it because, as I have said, I was frightened."

*The President:* "How were you frightened? By whom were you frightened? Where and when were you frightened?"

*Thornton:* "I was not frightened by arrest and by the consequences, but simply this way..."

*The President:* "No, you give a straight reply so that it will be clear and plain to everybody; who frightened you, when did they frighten you, in what room?"

*Thornton:* "I want to speak through the interpreter."

*The President:* "When you find it difficult to reply you always resort to the aid of the interpreter. But very well, you may."

*Thornton:* "No, I will speak in Russian. I was simply afraid, but of what I do not know myself."

*The President:* "And you were afraid on March 11th, March 12th, March 13th and April 4th. You were evidently also afraid on April 10th, the day before the trial, because you made no statement."

*Thornton:* "Some of the points there are right and some of them I want to withdraw, and I was told that this would have to be done during the trial."

*The President:* "Who told you that? Give his name."

*Thornton:* "I was told by" – (tries to remember).

*Vyshinsky:* "Well, let that pass. Let me ask something else. I am interested in the circumstances in which you were questioned in the office of the Public Prosecutor of the Republic by my assistant Roginsky, in my presence. Were the facts that are set down here written exactly as I told or not?"

*Thornton:* "As I spoke. Yes, correctly."

*Vyshinsky:* "Nothing was distorted."

*Thornton:* "No, you did not change anything."

*Vyshinsky:* "But perhaps Roginsky did?"

*Thornton:* "No."

*Vyshinsky:* "Perhaps the O.G.P.U. distorted it?"

*Thornton:* "No, I signed it with my own hand."

*Vyshinsky:* "And with your head? When you were writ-

ing did you consider and think?"

*Thornton:* (Does not reply).

*The President:* "And whose head is thinking for you now?"

*Thornton:* "At present I feel different."

*Vyshinsky:* "Let us finish with this record. It is important to establish the facts. We will draw conclusions later; at present it is important for me to confirm from the deposition which was made on March 19th that the facts which were here set down were really told by you, that there was no falsification and no juggling."

*Thornton:* "That is so."

*Vyshinsky:* "The depositions which you made before were given quite freely and voluntarily, without any pressure or coercion. Do I understand you correctly?"

*Thornton:* "Correctly."

*Vyshinsky:* "I have no further questions."

There is the examination of Mr. Macdonald during that short period in which he withdrew his plea of guilty:

*The President:* (To Macdonald) "Please come here." (Macdonald goes to the table of the Special session.) "Was the deposition on page 204 written by you in your own handwriting?"

*Vyshinsky:* (To Macdonald) "Read this, please."

*Macdonald:* "Yes, I signed it."

*Vyshinsky:* "Under what circumstances did you sign it?"

*Macdonald:* "I considered it convenient under those circumstances."

*Vyshinsky:* "Under what circumstances? Was any special method of examination applied to you?"

*Macdonald:* "No."

*Vyshinsky:* "Were you forced to write this?"

*Macdonald:* "No, but I signed It because it was not the open court."

*Vyshinsky:* "Were you compelled to do so?"

*Macdonald:* "In the beginning I refused to do so."

*Vyshinsky:* "Where?"

*Macdonald:* "Before the investigator – when the inves-

tigator said sign I said 'no'. But he did not allow me to do otherwise."

*Vyshinsky*: "He forced you to?"

*Macdonald*: (No answer).

Later Macdonald returned to his original plea of guilty. The third British prisoner, Mr. Monkhouse, in seeking to withdraw certain admissions referred to the length of his interrogation on being arrested, declaring that it lasted eighteen hours. He later admitted "he had no watch" and apologised for his mistake when Vyshinsky confronted him in court with the actual records of the interrogation which showed that this had lasted for no more than, twelve hours, broken by two intervals for meals, one of an hour.

On his release from prison Mr. Monkhouse described his treatment as follows;

"They were extraordinarily nice to me and exceedingly reasonable in their questioning. My examiners seemed first-rate technical men who knew their job. The O.G.P.U. prison is the last word in efficiency, entirely clean, orderly and well organised. This is the first time I have ever been arrested, but I have visited English prisons and can attest that the O.G.P.U. quarters are much superior. My release resembled a friendly farewell party. All my papers and belongings were restored to me; O.G.P.U. officials carried down my bag, shook hands cordially and showed every concern for my comfort. I was assured that the other British prisoners would be equally well treated" (*Daily Dispatch*, March 15th, 1933).

Now the value of this testimony is obvious. There are a number of "prisoners of the O.G.P.U." who did in a measure confess, two of whom subsequently tried to retract or to modify their confessions. The British press was under no doubt that they were tortured in order to extract confessions. The *Daily Express* of March 20th, 1933, screamed: "Our countrymen are undergoing the horrors of a Russian prison." The *Times* of April 17th declared: "Great anxiety is felt as to what is happening to Mr. Macdonald in prison between the sittings of the court. Those long acquainted with the Chekist methods think his life is in danger." The *Daily Mail* invented a strange Tibetan drug which sapped the victim's will power and made them

confess whatever the prosecution wanted them to confess. A majority of British newspapers were convinced that the prisoners were being forced to confess by torture or similar means. The evidence for this was as good (or as bad) as that which seeks to prove the exercise of pressure on Zinoviev, Kamenev, Radek and Pyatakov. When the British prisoners agreed in court that no torture or other form of pressure had been applied to them, a section of the press declared that if the prisoners were free from the grip of the O.G.P.U. they would tell another story. A few months later, all the prisoners are freed, and can reveal the frightful tortures by which "all human reflexes are destroyed" in order that prisoners may be forced to confess to crimes which they did not commit. Alas for the credulous! The opportunity afforded to these three gentlemen to expose the methods of torture practised by the O.G.P.U. has not been utilised to this day. Surely this very concrete refutation of "confessions obtained by torture" should make us suspicious of all subsequent allegations – particularly of allegations which are made by one of the accused (Trotsky) who is, providentially for him, out of the reach of the police.

A group of French Trotskyists, led by the expelled Communist André Ferrat, rejects torture as an explanation and puts forward another suggestion still more fantastic, namely that the prisoners confessed to crimes they had *never* committed because Stalin told them that it was their party duty to do so.

"The accused declare that they have not been subjected to any torture; nothing permits us to affirm the contrary. On the one hand it is improbable that torture could break men of the temper of Pyatakov, Radek, Muralov...

"The truth is what benefits the party. What benefits Stalin – what the party demands, what Stalin demands. That is the attitude adopted by the former oppositionists, who renounced independent political activity and their ideas. The confessions they made during the trials flow from the same mentality, the same attitude as their statements of 1927, as all the declarations of repentance that followed them....

"Hence when in 1936, the leadership of the party judged it necessary, in the alleged interests of the revolution, to deal a blow to Trotskyism and to Trotsky, when it

was decided to use for this end the former oppositionists, the, former Trotskyists, what could they oppose to the orders of the party, to the will of Stalin? After the sacrifice of their ideas they were required to sacrifice their lives and their honour. This was needed for the defence of the U.S.S.R. Trotskyism is the principal danger, for in the case of war, it might create difficulties, turn the workers away from the duty to the party, or profit by the circumstances to substitute for the government of Stalin another government. It is thus that the party leadership reasons; it demands from the “capitulators” – its hostages – this last service: participate in the execution of Trotskyism. Through their permanent capitulations of the past ten years, the former opposition are all destined to play this last comedy, to forge this last link in the chain of hypocrisy that for years has constituted their lives.

“There are some who, in spite of their weaknesses in the past, do not go along with the amalgam, who revolt, with a last exertion of will, on seeing the gulf to which their policies have driven them. Well, they will have time in prison for reflection, for proving whether their devotion to the party of which they talk so much will not turn out to be more powerful than petty bourgeois scruples. Those who agree to render this supreme sacrifice to the regime, which for them continues to be the regime of the proletarian revolution, will be the ones to appear at the public trial. They will be under discipline as members of the Communist Party” (Pamphlet *Why did they Confess?* published by the “Que Faire” group).

This is advanced as a “credible” explanation by those who deem that the straightforward official version is “Incredible”. According to this hypothesis there was no Trotskyist plot in Russia. The Government – not menaced by any Trotskyist plot – had nevertheless a fantastic fear of Trotskyism, which it decided to combat by staging a trial of supporters of Trotsky. In spite of its fears of Trotskyism the Government cannot find any genuine Trotskyists for its purpose, so it procures a number of “former Trotskyists” whom it asks to confess to a crime which they never committed. The “former Trotskyists,” obedient to Party discipline, cheerfully oblige by con-



fessing to a crime the punishment of which they know to be death. They love the Party so much that they confess to co-operation with Hitler in order to destroy the Party, although in point of fact, there was no such co-operation. No wonder even the credulous American Trotskyists who translated this explanation are doubtful of the "credible" explanation of their French counter-parts.

Surely the most absurd and contemptible argument is that used by Friedrich Adler who compares the Moscow Trials with witchcraft trials in the Middle Ages.

"During this era (of witch burning, *J.R.C.*) thousands of 'confessions' were solemnly made before the courts in which the defendant affirmed he had met the devil in person, that he had concluded a pact with him and that on the basis of this pact he had practised all kinds of sorcery....

"The Russian Revolution which has made such extraordinary efforts to fight against superstition has returned under Stalin to the methods of the witchcraft trials."

Here is a pretty analogy. In a period of history, when belief in witchcraft was general, when some of the most learned men of the day believed that communication with the devil was possible, when there was indeed a widespread practice of "Black Magic", certain prisoners confessed to having communication with the devil – a sheer physical impossibility. Therefore, argues the learned Adler, when Holtzmann, Romm, and Pyatakoff confessed to having communications with Trotsky, their confessions must be placed on the same plane as those of old women who boasted that they had communications with the devil. Is it then a physical impossibility to have communication with Trotsky?

If Adler was anxious for historical analogies, he could no doubt have discovered a few treason trials. These, alas, would hardly have served his purpose; for where in history would he find a group of men who had been prominent political leaders confessing while on trial for their lives to crimes of which they were absolutely innocent? Where in history have heads of business institutions described in detail acts of sabotage which were never organised? True there were some forced confessions in historical treason trials, but the accused seized the first opportunity to retract. In the Menshevik trial of 1931, and in the Moscow Trials of 1936-7, an unparalleled opportunity was given to the defendants to retract. Yet it was not

taken. Why? Only the assumption of their guilt can provide a rational answer.

Another argument of Adler's is to the effect that the charges cannot be true because they are the same as those levelled at the Russian Mensheviks in the trial of 1931. The Mensheviks were accused of sabotage, of co-operating with hostile foreign States in seeking to overthrow the Soviet Government. The charges are more or less the same, argues Adler, therefore they cannot be true.

But is it not probable that people seeking the same aim, *i.e.*, the overthrow of the Soviet Government, are likely to employ the same methods? Because methods are not a matter of choice, but a matter of aim and circumstance. The whole history of the Soviet Union has shown that just as the strike is the favourite method of working class struggle under capitalism, so sabotage is the favourite, because most practical, method of struggle of enemies of the Soviet State. As for supporting intervention in the Soviet Union, Friedrich Adler knows perfectly well that in the Civil War the troops of the Allied intervention (the Czechs in Siberia, and the British in Archangel) were supported by governments in which there were professed "Socialists" (Social Revolutionaries and Mensheviks), and who certainly had as much – or as little – justification for calling themselves Socialists as Trotsky has to-day. The suggestion that it is unthinkable that "Socialists" should ally themselves with capitalists against the Soviet Union, ignores the well-known fact that Mensheviks and Social Revolutionaries did in fact so ally themselves.

Even after the Civil War was over the well-known German Socialist leader, Karl Kautsky, continued right up to the coming of Hitler in Germany to advocate armed intervention in the Soviet Union without his membership of the German Social Democratic Party ever being called in question. In 1930, this embittered anti-Bolshevik, who was one of the outstanding leaders of European Socialism prior to 1914, published a book in which he declared that Bolshevism had degenerated into Bonapartism, that a crisis was developing in Russia, and that the armed overthrow of the Soviet Government must be supported by all Socialists.

Four years later Trotsky, having arrived at the conclusion that terrorism is necessary, issues a justification of a precisely similar character. The Soviet Union has in his view become a Bonapartist State of a peculiar kind, and against this State armed force is necessary. "No normal 'constitutional' ways remain to remove the ruling

clique. The bureaucracy can be compelled to yield power into the hands of the proletarian vanguard (Trotsky's designation of his group, *J.R.C.*) only by force." It is true that Trotsky predicts that the force will not involve civil war but merely measures of a "police character," but that is the superficial optimism of a General Franco.

Is it therefore strange that Trotsky, having arrived at the same standpoint as those "Socialists" who advocated war and intervention against the Soviet Union, should adopt methods similar to those that they adopted?

"All trials of political opponents, real and alleged," says Shachtman, Trotsky's American henchman, "that is, all trials held in public, have been monotonously identical under the reign of Stalin. No documents, no material evidence, nothing written adduced, all the evidence confined to the spontaneous and 'voluntary' confessions of the invariably penitent accused. This has been the case from the Shakty trial to the Zinoviev Trial."

This is completely untrue. There were witnesses and material evidence to supplement the evidence of the accused in all these trials. And what is more, before Trotsky went over to terrorism it never occurred to him to doubt these trials for a single moment. In a pamphlet *Problems of the Development of the U.S.S.R.*, which Shachtman translated in 1931, Trotsky treats both the Shakty and the Menshevik trial as "giving an extremely striking picture of the relationships of force of the classes and the parties in the U.S.S.R." He expresses no doubts about these trials. On the contrary, he says:

"It was irrefutably established by the Court that during the years 1923-8 the bourgeois specialists, in close alliance with the foreign centres of the bourgeoisie, successfully carried through an artificial slackening down of industrialisation, counting upon the re-establishment of capitalist relationships" (page 26).

To take the Radek-Pyatakov trial as an example, there was the testimony of five accomplices, Bukhartsev, Romm, Tamm, Stein and Loginov.

There were the Experts Committee of three, which showed that some of the explosions could not have occurred accidentally. Further, letters that Knyazev, a prominent railway official concerned in

wrecking, had received from Japanese agents and had omitted to destroy, were found amongst his personal effects and were identified by him.

The diary of the accused Stroilov, who had been blackmailed by German Secret Service agents into engaging in espionage and sabotage, was produced and was found to contain their telephone numbers, which were checked and confirmed by the appropriate telephone directory.

The movements of the German agents mentioned in the trial were confirmed by the production of official records of their arrival. Their identity photographs were produced, and the accused Stroilov picked them out from a number of other photographs. The charge of "no documents, no material evidence" will not bear examination.

"It is a judicial play," declares Trotsky in the American press, "the roles written in advance. The accused only appear on the scene after a series of rehearsals which give the director the advance assurance that they will not overstep the limits of their roles."

We can only quote an eye-witness of the Radek-Pyatakov trial, Mr. Dudley Collard, the well-known British barrister:

"If the story told by the defendants was untrue, someone must have invented it. Unless one makes the fantastic assumption that the seventeen defendants, instead of conspiring together to overthrow the State, conspired together to write their parts in the intervals between being tortured, someone other than the defendants must have written a seven days' play (to play eight hours a day) and assigned appropriate roles to the seventeen defendants, the five witnesses, the judges and the Public Prosecutor. It would have taken a Soviet Shakespeare to write such a lifelike drama as was played during those seven days, but no matter. Thereupon the defendants must have spent the period since their arrest not in being interrogated, but in rehearsing together until they were word perfect (in company with Vyshinsky, the judges and witnesses). It is also necessary to assume that all the accused were such brilliant actors that, in spite of the pressure brought to bear upon them to make them play their parts, they were able to play their parts without one slip and without once being prompted during seven days in such a way as to deceive all those who were present

into thinking the play was real" (*Soviet Justice and the Trial of Radek and Others*).

It only remains to be added that the accused knew that the reward for successful acting was death.

There are three points in the trials, however, on which Trotsky has tried to fasten in order to discredit the whole edifice of evidence put forward.

In the first trial, Holtzmann, one of the accused, confessed to having a long interview with Trotsky in the Hotel Bristol in Copenhagen. "But it so happens that the Hotel Bristol," says Trotsky gleefully, "was razed to its foundations in 1917. In 1932 this hotel existed only as a fond memory." The Trotskyists are gleeful: the O.G.P.U., which made the prisoners confess down to the minutest detail, was apparently so clumsy that when it made Holtzmann confess that he had seen Trotsky in the Hotel Bristol in Copenhagen in 1932, it did not even trouble to ascertain whether there was a Hotel Bristol in Copenhagen in 1932. A frame up is (according to Trotsky) devised down to the minutest detail, but the authors are so clumsy that they mention meeting places in hotels that do not exist. But what do the facts show? Holtzmann testified that when he arrived at the station he crossed over to the Bristol Hotel. Now opposite the station there is no Bristol Hotel. There is, however, the Grand Central Hotel, and in the same building there is a Bristol Cafe. Further, at the date mentioned, it was possible to obtain entrance to the Hotel through the cafe. It may be that Holtzmann, seeing the sign above the cafe, was confused as to the name of the hotel. He was naturally not taking notes with a view to a future confession. It is one of the curiosities of Trotskyist quibbling that while they were at great pains to convince the world that no Bristol Hotel existed in Copenhagen, they concealed the fact that just over from the station, as described by Holtzmann, there was the Bristol cafe through which entrance could be obtained to the Grand Central Hotel. But those who believe in Trotsky's innocence will find the following remark of Trotsky more than curious. "Holtzmann apparently knew the Hotel Bristol through memories of his emigration long ago, and that is why he named it." On the one hand we are told by the Trotskyists that the confessions were dictated to the prisoners by the remorseless O.G.P.U., and on the other hand we have a prisoner who obligingly makes up his own confession out of his memo-

ries of emigration.

The second objection is the journey of Pyatakov to see Trotsky in Oslo in 1935. It is declared that this is impossible because not a single foreign aeroplane landed at the Oslo Airport in December 1935.

On the other hand, not only Pyatakov, but a witness, Bukhartsev, the Berlin correspondent of *Isvestia*, gave the most circumstantial details as to how the journey was arranged in a special aeroplane placed at Pyatakov's disposal by the German Government. To put it on the lowest possible level, it is more likely that the Nazi Government, which has known how to get hundreds of aeroplanes into Northern Spain in spite of the control exercised by the Non-Intervention Committee, should succeed in getting a single aeroplane in and out of Norway, than that Pyatakov and Bukhartsev should charge themselves with a crime which they never committed.

The next so-called loophole refers to the evidence of the witness Romm, another *Isvestia* correspondent who carried correspondence between Trotsky and Radek. Romm deposed that he had a meeting with Trotsky in the Bois de Boulogne at the end of July 1933 and had a conversation lasting from twenty to twenty-five minutes. Trotsky seeks to refute this by declaring that he was staying during the month of July 1933 at Royan, and that he was seen there by Messrs. John Paton and C. A. Smith of the British Independent Labour Party, and those gentlemen have very obligingly told the world that they saw Trotsky there in the flesh during that period. We do not doubt that for a single moment. Suppose in a criminal case in Great Britain a witness testified that he had a conversation with one of the accused in Hyde Park in the middle of July. Would it be regarded as an adequate refutation of that witness's evidence that the accused had been domiciled in Edinburgh during July? Are there not trains travelling between Edinburgh and Glasgow, and are there no motor-cars? Really, would that type of refutation convince anybody?

But Trotsky had what he believed to be a decisive argument – his archives.

In his speech read at the New York Hippodrome on February 27th, 1937:

“In the year of my deportation and the eight years of my emigration I wrote close and distant friends about 2,000

letters, dedicated to the most vital questions of current politics. The letters received by me and the copies of my replies exist. Thanks to their continuity the letters reveal, above all, the profound contradictions, anachronisms, and direct absurdities of the accusation, not only in so far as myself and my son are concerned, but also as regards the other accused. However, the importance of these letters extends beyond that fact. All of my theoretical and political activity during these years is reflected without a gap in these letters. The letters supplement my books and articles. The examination of my correspondence, it seems to me, is of decisive importance for the characterisation of the political and moral personality – not only of myself, but also of my correspondents” (*The Revolution Betrayed*, p. 306).

But when the moment comes for presenting these archives to the Commission we find the extraordinarily significant admission that there is no record of any correspondence with the Soviet Union in the period covered by the trials. No letter of Trotsky to his friends in the Soviet Union after 1931 and no letters from them. Of what value then are the so-called archives in refuting the charges against Trotsky? No value whatever. And yet the incredible Dewey Commission tells the world that part of the case for Trotsky, which it fully endorses, is based on “the archives of Trotsky, consisting of thousands of documents to which the Commission has had full access.”

One of the political arguments that carried conviction with the Dewey Commission was that Trotsky in his public writings has frequently denounced the accused in the trials, at the same time as he is alleged to be co-operating with them. A large part of the evidence of this commission is occupied with this question.

How, for example, it is asked, could Trotsky have co-operated with Radek, after he had repeatedly denounced him as an unstable and unreliable person? Describing Radek in 1918 Trotsky told the Dewey Commission: “He was active for a certain time (in 1918) in the Commissariat for Foreign Affairs, but the diplomats claimed it was absolutely impossible to say anything in his presence, because tomorrow it was known by all the city. We removed him immediately...”

Yet, in spite of this estimation of Radek, Trotsky found it possible to co-operate with him in the years between 1925 and 1928.

Why should he have found it impossible after 1931?

Or take Zinoviev and Kamenev. When Trotsky wrote his pamphlet on the lessons of October in 1924 the main weight of his attack was concentrated on Zinoviev and Kamenev. These leaders, he averred, were guilty of the most outrageous wavering on the eve of the October Revolution. Perhaps it was their influence, Trotsky hinted, which had caused wavering amongst the leadership of the German Communist Party in 1923. He left little doubt that Kamenev and Zinoviev represented dangerous Right-Wing tendencies in the Communist Party and that it was essential to weaken their influence in the leadership. That did not prevent him from forming an alliance with them a short time later, in order to combat the line then being pursued by the Party. The fact that he denounced them after 1928 does not render less likely a subsequent rapprochement. The same applies to Bukharin and Rykov. Their differences with Trotsky began to narrow when he began to take a position on the question of collectivisation that was indistinguishable from their own.

The fact is that Trotsky throughout his whole history was notorious for forming blocs of people of the most diverse political standpoints – whose only common denominator was frenzied opposition to the Bolshevik Party. The August Conference of 1912 was an attempt to form such a grouping. A little knowledge of Trotsky's political history would have prevented the Dewey Commission from spreading the whitewash so lavishly.

It is easily understandable why Trotsky continued to attack his associates in the Soviet Union after they had come together again on the basis of a counter-revolutionary platform. For if their attack on the Soviet Government was to be effective it had to be camouflaged. A sudden cessation of criticism would have given the game away, whereas a continuance helped to maintain the camouflage.

But if there were no conspiracy in the Soviet Union why the trials?

Here the explanations of Trotsky's defenders are many and varied.

"The Trial," says the American Trotskyist Shachtman, "also served the purpose of the bureaucracy in distracting the attention of the Soviet proletariat and the workers in the capitalist lands from the base betrayal of the Spanish working class by the Stalinist apparatus." This was written on November 1st, 1936, after the Soviet Un-



ion had declared that it was no longer bound by the non-intervention agreement, and when it was apparent to the whole world that the Soviet Union was rendering most generous aid to the Spanish people – aid which was to transform the whole prospects of the struggle. What “aid” Trotskyism rendered the Spanish people will be seen later. It would be more correct to say that Trotsky and his supporters have used the trials in order to endeavour to detach working class support from the Soviet Union, at the very moment when it was rendering unforgettable assistance to the Spanish people.

The “explanation” of Trotsky is that the trials were staged in order to discredit him and the Fourth International.

“An international conference has recently been held under the sign of the Fourth International. This movement does not cease to grow beneath the blows of its enemies, while the Communist International is the prey of trouble and confusion. Now Stalin cannot keep his leadership of the bureaucracy and his power over the people without having international authority. The growth of the Fourth International, information about which penetrates more and more into Russia, constitutes a grave peril for him. Finally, the leading coterie fears more than anything the still living traditions of the October Revolution, inevitably hostile to the new privileged caste. All this explains why Stalin and his group have not for a moment ceased to combat me personally.”

Is this a rational explanation? According to Trotsky’s whole hypothesis there was no conspiracy in the Soviet Union; the accused were not in opposition to the Government, they had “capitulated” to the Government; Trotsky had no relation with the Nazis, he had few direct connections with the Soviet Union and no organisation within it; and yet the Government suddenly swoops upon scores of people who are loyally doing the jobs assigned to them, Prime Ministers of National Republics, Vice-Commissars of Industry, prominent diplomats, ex-leaders, whose names were well known throughout the international Labour Movement, and charged them with crimes they never committed. And all this is done – to make things a little more difficult for Trotsky and to discredit the Fourth International! One might as well argue that the trials were held to discredit the Rugby Union and the Southern League. Was there ever such a crying disproportion between means and ends? The Bolshevik steam-roller is set in motion to crack a pea-nut.

Trotsky put in a document to the Dewey Commission in which

he cites a number of predictions which he made as to Stalin's attempt to inculcate the Left opposition in criminal actions.

"This document," says the final report of the Commission, "shows that in 1939 Trotsky warned that Stalin would try to draw a line of blood between the Party and the Opposition. He must absolutely connect the opposition with terrorist attempts, preparations for armed insurrection, etc." Here is an excellent example of a conspirator incriminating himself by proving too much. For Trotsky gave evidence to the Commission to the effect that he had little or no connections with the opposition in the Soviet Union since 1931 and indeed did not know whether it existed in any organised form at all. Why then should Stalin seek to draw a line of blood between the Party and the opposition from 1931 onward if the opposition in the Soviet Union was virtually non-existent? Right at the outset of the hearings of the Dewey Commission the names of the accused in the first two trials were read over to Trotsky and he was asked which of the accused were Trotskyists immediately prior to the trial; his answer was:

"Not one of them that I know, because there are some people whose names I learned for the first time from the reports of the court. Theoretically, it would be possible to admit that there might be *former* Trotskyites. I don't know. But the people who are known to me were my adversaries for years before the trial" (*The Case of Leon Trotsky*, p. 75).

So if we accept this view, Stalin, who is out to draw a line of blood between the Party and the opposition, does nothing between 1927 and 1936, and when he proceeds to draw the line in 1936 he cannot find any real oppositionists at all, and has, according to Trotsky's amazing argument, to be content with a lot of ex-oppositionists who are nothing more nor less than adversaries of Trotsky.

The Commission tells us that Stalin in 1929 was trying to connect the opposition with preparations for armed insurrection. But this Commission was examining the evidence in the year 1937, and it had before it documents like *The Soviet Union and the Fourth International* and *The Revolution Betrayed*, in both of which Trotsky advocates armed insurrection against the Soviet Government. Was Trotsky compelled by the O.G.P.U. to write those books in

order to help Stalin to connect the “Left” opposition with the preparation of armed insurrection?

Still Trotsky, who keeps on writing, furnishes us with another reason for the trials:

“Old traditions and new awakenings produce friction and criticism even among the bureaucracy. It is this that necessitates constant ‘purges’. Since it is impossible to tell the masses that the arrests, deportations and executions have been used against people who demand a diminution of the privileges of the bureaucracy and amelioration of the living conditions of the masses, the journalistic calumnies and persecution of the opposition had to be gradually replaced by juridical frame-ups.

“But since the most dangerous element for the caste is the representatives of the revolutionary generation, even though they preserve their fidelity to the old banner only partially, the G.P.U. will debase these old Bolsheviks by proving them spies and traitors” (*New York Journal and American*, March 6th, 1938).

So there was an opposition after all. It was for diminishing the privileges of the bureaucracy and improving the living conditions of the masses! Well, if that were so, only one out of the 54 accused in the three main trials had to say so and the workers from the factories and the collective farms who were in court would have heard it. The international journalists who were in court would have sent that message buzzing around the world. Besides, the conspirators had international connections. Bukharin was abroad as late as 1936. Some of them were in the diplomatic service and had access to the Press in the various capitals where they were residing. If Trotsky is correct, why has it been impossible to this day for the conspirators to make known their real aims?

The Dewey Commission finds that the charge of individual terrorism is incredible on the basis of Trotsky’s attitude toward individual terrorism throughout his career. But the evidence submitted by Trotsky on his attitude to individual terrorism consists mainly of quotations from his writings against terrorism under the Tsar. But let anyone examine his writings in recent years. Let them consider the meaning of such remarks as “the first social shock, external or internal, may throw the atomised Soviet society into civil war”, and

ask oneself if a political degenerate capable of such an estimation might not, as part of a wider plan, envisage terrorism as a means of administering an internal social shock.

Still acting on the assumption that if one throws out a sufficiency of "explanations" some of them are bound to be believed by someone, the Dewey Commission tries once again:

"The Commission finds that the conclusion appears to be inevitable that the indictments and the confessions in the series of widely publicised trials against the regime, were governed in each case by current internal difficulties economic and political and by the current situation in the foreign relations of the Soviet Union. In other words the trials have not really been criminal but political."

Did the Commission take any evidence which showed that the years 1936-8 were years of economic or political difficulty inside the Soviet Union? It did not. All evidence goes to show that these years were years of remarkable economic growth (despite all the saboteurs could do) and of advancing standards of life for the people. We are asked to believe that at the very moment that the Soviet Government was telling the people of the marvellous progress it had made, it was also staging trials to explain the terrible difficulties it was in. No, it will not do!

There only remains the pseudo-historical explanation of the capitalist intellectuals, *i.e.* "all revolutions devour their children." In his concluding speech, Rakovsky dealt with this "explanation."

"It is a ridiculous, groundless analogy. Bourgeois revolutions did indeed finish – excuse me if I cite here some theoretical arguments which, however, are of significance for the present moment – bourgeois revolutions did indeed finish by devouring their own children, because after they had triumphed they had to suppress their allies from among the people, their revolutionary allies of the Left.

"But the proletarian revolution, the revolution of the class which is revolutionary to the end, when it applies what Marx called 'plebeian methods of retaliation', it applies them not to the advanced elements, it applies them to those who stand in the way of this revolution, or to those who, as ourselves, were with this revolution, marched

along with it for a certain time, and then stabbed it in the back” (*Trial of Anti-Soviet Bloc of Rights and Trotskyists*, p. 760).

Undoubtedly, this is correct. It is confirmed by all the known public activity of the accused in recent times, it is confirmed by the evidence and the carefully checked admissions, it is confirmed by the whole development of the Soviet Union which does not turn back from its Communist objective, which does not, as Spain proves, turn back from proletarian Internationalism, but fulfils its duty unflinchingly. If the Labour Movement in the capitalist countries would go forward to its goal as resolutely as the Soviet Union, victory would soon be ours.

## CHAPTER VIII

### TROTSKYISM AND THE WAR AGAINST THE U.S.S.R.

One of the arguments of Trotsky's supporters is that his public activity is in all respects in complete opposition to the crimes of treason and sabotage of which he has been found guilty. They challenge the world to show where Trotsky has unequivocally advocated the assassination of the leading personalities of the Soviet Union, the sabotage of industry or the need for his supporters in the U.S.S.R. to ally themselves with German or Japanese Imperialism. How can one believe, they ask, that Trotsky can engage in public propaganda which so manifestly contradicts his private aims?

Now it would not be difficult to adduce instances of where the public activities of agents of capitalism within the Labour movement have manifestly contradicted their real aims, but this is unnecessary in relation to Trotsky, for his public propaganda does not in any way contradict his real aims. It is true that it does not fully detail and defend his real aims, but it certainly does not contradict, and in fact reinforces and supplements them.

This will be seen if we take Trotsky's public attitude to one of the most vital features of the activity of the Soviet Union, its struggle against the Fascist aggressors for the maintenance of peace. The whole of Trotsky's public attitude consists in actively discouraging the workers from supporting this policy, thus helping forward the line of his Fascist allies.

Before dealing fully with this question, it is worth while recalling Trotsky's attitude to war at the time when Trotskyism was still a variant of Right-Wing Socialism and therefore a part, though a harmful one, of the Labour Movement. There are two attitudes of Trotsky to war and the Soviet Union during this period. Firstly, the playing with the idea of war as a means of stimulating the World Revolution, and secondly, the speculation of the possibility of Trotsky's fraction becoming victorious during an Imperialist War against the U.S.S.R.

The adventurist playing with war as a means of stimulating the world revolution lay at the bottom of Trotsky's opposition to signing the peace terms dictated by the Germans at Brest-Litovsk, at the beginning of 1918. At that moment, the Russian army was literally disintegrating and there was not the slightest chance of being able to

resist the imposition of the harsh peace terms. Yet Trotsky led a violent opposition to Lenin's proposal to sign the peace terms, declaring that the proper policy was for the Soviet State to withdraw from the war, without signing the Peace Terms. Under the slogan of "Neither war nor peace" Trotsky succeeded in getting the Bolshevik Central Committee to reject Lenin's policy.

Trotsky's policy concealed a fundamental inability to analyse the concrete situation in which the Soviet Power found itself, as well as a stupid underestimation of the enemy. "The Germans will not attack," declared Trotsky. But alas, the Germans did attack, and soon afterwards the Soviet State had to sign a treaty far more onerous than the one originally proposed. To-day in his effort to cover up not only his recent past, but all his relations with Lenin, Trotsky has tried to suggest that the dispute over the signing of the Peace was a mere nothing:

"The differences concerning Brest-Litovsk are extremely exaggerated now by the Comintern. Every new year brings a new exaggeration. They were of a transitory and conjunctural character – the differences. I found it necessary to say to world public opinion and to the world toiling masses that we wished to fight against Prussianism, but that we could not do it. I tried to demonstrate by action the falsehood of the accusation that we had a secret agreement with German militarism. Lenin said in answer that it was of certain importance to show and to educate the masses by action, but if we perished in this demonstration – the group that was to take its message to them – how could they get their lesson? It was a question by what line we could continue the fight against German militarism in order not to perish ourselves. In the determination of this line, I had some practical and empirical differences with Lenin – no more" (*The Case of Leon Trotsky*, p. 51).

Trotsky was seeking to steer the revolution on to the rocks in the teeth of Lenin's violent opposition, and yet to-day he seeks to reduce this life and death controversy to "some practical and empirical differences"!

Lenin estimated it otherwise in March 1918, when he said:

"We said that it was a frivolous illusion to believe that

we could hold the army. The more quickly we demobilise the army, the more quickly will the social organism as a whole recover.

“That is why the revolutionary phrase: ‘the Germans cannot attack’, from which followed the other phrase: ‘We can declare the state of war at an end. Neither war nor the signing of peace’, was such a profound mistake, such a bitter over-estimation of events. But suppose the Germans do attack? ‘No, they cannot attack.’ Have you the right to stake, not the fate of the international revolution, but the concrete question: will you not be accomplices of German Imperialism at the decisive moment? But we, who since October 1917 have become defensists, who have recognised the principle of defence of the fatherland, we all know that we have broken with imperialism, not in words but in deeds; we destroyed the secret treaties, vanquished the bourgeoisie in our own country and proposed an open honourable peace so that all the nations might see what our intentions are.

“How can people who seriously accept the point of view of defending the Soviet Republic agree to a gamble that has already brought forth bitter fruit? And this is a fact, because the severe crisis which our Party is now experiencing owing to the formation of a Left Opposition in it is one of the severest crises the Russian revolution has experienced” (*Selected Works*, Vol. VII, p. 293).

“A gamble that has already brought forth bitter fruit,” says Lenin. “One of the severest crises the Russian revolution has experienced.”

“Only some practical and empirical differences,” says Trotsky twenty years later.

Lenin said:

“A period has set in of severe defeats, inflicted by Imperialism, armed to the teeth, upon a country which has demobilised its army, which had to demobilise. The thing I foretold has come to pass. Instead of the Brest-Litovsk peace we have received a much more humiliating peace, and the blame for this rests on those who refused to accept the former peace. We know that through the fault of the



army we were concluding peace with Imperialism. We sat at the same table with Hoffman and not with Liebknecht – and by that we assisted the German Revolution. But now you are assisting German Imperialism, because you have surrendered wealth amounting to millions – guns and shells – and anybody who had seen the incredibly painful state of the army could have foretold this” (*ibid.*, p. 298).

“You are assisting German Imperialism by surrendering wealth amounting to millions.” Indeed a “practical and empirical difference,” Herr Trotsky!

If the Peace of Brest-Litovsk had been signed when Lenin desired, much territory would have been saved and much valuable war material would have remained at the disposal of the Soviet State.

But had it been signed, we can be sure that the adventurous Trotsky would have gone on shouting about the treachery of signing the Peace of Brest-Litovsk and how much better everything would have been if his policy of “neither peace nor war” had been tried. Unluckily for Russia, his gamble was tried, and led to heartrending defeat.

There was, however, one gambler’s proposition in later years that was rejected, and Trotskyists are never tired of repeating how much better the situation would be to-day if it had been tried. Briefly Trotsky’s suggestion put forward at the time that the Hitler movement was growing rapidly, but had not yet been given power, was that the Soviet Government should declare war on Poland, the Baltic States and Germany, in the event of Hitler being raised to power by German capitalism.

“In recent years the bureaucracy of the U.S.S.R. have on each and every occasion, often quite unjustifiably, shrieked about the immediate war danger to the U.S.S.R. Now this danger assumes a real character and concrete outline. This must become the axiom of every revolutionary worker, that the Fascist attempt to seize power, in Germany, can only lead to the mobilisation of the Red Army. For the proletarian State this will become in the most direct and immediate sense, revolutionary self-defence. Germany is not merely Germany. It is the heart of Europe. Hitler is not merely Hitler. He is a candidate for super-Wrangel. And also the Red Army is not merely the Red Army – it is

the weapon of the proletarian world revolution" (*Article by Trotsky*, November 26th, 1931).

Now Trotsky knew perfectly well that this amounted to inciting the Soviet Union to launch world war. It would be difficult to conceive of any act more calculated to unite the capitalist powers against the Soviet Union, or to drive masses of still hesitating Germans into the arms of Hitler. When in 1929 some of Trotsky's German friends asked why the Soviet Union did not send the Red Army into China to support the workers and peasants, Trotsky replied:

"To reproach the Soviet Republic that it did not, weapon in hand, intervene in the Shanghai or Canton events, is to replace revolutionary policies by sentimental demagoguery.

"How can the Soviet Union in this situation decide to carry out a war for the Chinese Eastern Railway? I have already said that if war comes, it will not be a question of the Chinese Eastern Railway, but of something immeasurably greater. Of course, the Chinese Eastern Railway is a more important object than the head of the Archduke, which gave the impulse to the war of 1914. But it is not a question of the Railway. A war in the East would, whatever the immediate cause, immediately transform itself into a struggle against Soviet 'Imperialism', that is to say, against the Dictatorship of the Proletariat, and with much greater speed than the war about the head of the Archduke transformed itself into a war against Prussian Imperialism" (L. Trotsky: *Defence of Soviet Union*, September 1929).

The description of what would have been the consequences of intervention by the Red Army in China is exact. But what would have been the consequences of an announcement on the part of the Soviet Government that it intended to intervene in Germany, "The Heart of Europe", with all the force of the Red Army, and in order to do so it proposed to violate the neutrality of Poland and the Baltic States? This was the strategy of criminals and provocateurs, and Trotsky knew it. Yet his disciples still continue to tell the world how the coming of Hitler to power in Germany could have been avoided if the Soviet Union had only applied strategy *a la* Trotsky.

Ever since he went into opposition to the policy of the Bolshe-

vik Party and the Government of the Soviet Union, Trotsky hoped for the victory of his group as the result of the difficulties of the Soviet Government in a war. In 1927, the two great Imperialist Powers – France and Britain – began to intensify their hostile attitude to the Soviet State on account of its support of the Chinese Revolution. The growing war danger was in the minds of all serious people in Russia, and the feeling began to grow, even in the ranks of Trotsky's supporters, that the opposition ought to make its peace with the Party. In reply to these propositions, Trotsky declared that in the event of war his fraction would intensify its opposition to the Party and would seek to utilise the difficulties of the war, with the object of overthrowing the leadership of the Party and the Government and thus coming to power. Trotsky cited the example of Clemenceau, who had maintained a continuous opposition to the French Government during the war, until in a crisis the bourgeoisie called him to power. Trotsky knew very well the difference between French Parliamentary Governments, dominated by a narrow financial oligarchy, and the Government of the Soviet Union – a Government of the working class. A change in the attitude of a small section of the financial oligarchy could result in a Clemenceau or a Lloyd George coming to power. Such possibilities were not open to Trotsky's opposition, operating in the completely different situation of the Soviet Union. At the moment when he proffered the analogy between himself and Clemenceau, Trotsky was witnessing his policy being turned down by practically every assembly of workers in the Soviet Union. He knew, and the Party knew, that his only possibility of coming to power was to organise the enemies of the regime (all those who for whatever reason, theoretical or practical, were the opponents of the policy of building Socialism in the Soviet Union), and to utilise the difficulties created by the war, in order to create a counter-revolutionary movement aiming at the seizing of power.

When Trotsky drew an analogy between his position and that of Clemenceau, who had conducted a struggle against the French Government even when the enemy was 80 kilometres from Paris, everyone knew that he was declaring that in the event of war against the Soviet Union, the energies of the Trotskyist fraction would be devoted to creating discontent in the army, the factories, the villages, against the leadership of the Party and the Government. He knew that such a line of policy would attract to his standard all the capitalist elements who had still in 1927 a restricted place in the Soviet

economy, as well as the dispossessed Russian capitalists and landlords – those in emigration, no less than those inside the country. It was, therefore, fully recognised by the Russian workers that Trotsky was proposing to stab the Soviet Union in the back if it were involved in a war, and this attitude contributed to his overwhelming defeat.

In the midst of the struggle, one of Trotsky's closest adherents, Christian Rakovsky, speaking at a Party Conference in the Moscow district, was alleged to have said that the Soviet Union should retaliate on the provocations of London and Paris by war.

Rakovsky was ex-ambassador to England and France, and the reports of his speech created a sensation extending far outside Russia.

At the 15th Party Congress, Rakovsky angrily denied having said this at all, and quoted from the stenogram of the Moscow Party Conference the relevant passage:

“Comrades, when the opponent feels our weakness it does not do away with and does not postpone but hastens war. If we should tell the truth – no one hears us here – with the different correlation of forces, in a different situation, half of what has been done (to the Soviet Union, *J.R.C.*) would have been sufficient to cause war long ago. When we were driven out of Pekin, when we were provoked in London, when we were provoked in Paris, – do you not think that, if our situation were different, this would have served as a cause for rebuffing these acts in a deserving revolutionary manner? I was asked here: ‘How, by war?’ Yes, comrades, even by war – because we are a proletarian revolutionary State and not a Tolstoyan sect” (Report of 15th Party Congress, p. 103).

“He has made *some* correction,” was shouted by one delegate, for it was clear that the correction only made matters worse. The Trotskyist ex-ambassador was implying that the attitude of the Soviet Union was dictated not by a desire to keep the peace but by a temporary weakness, and that when that weakness was overcome one could expect a warlike foreign policy. Small wonder that the belief grew that the Trotskyists were seeking to incite the Soviet Union to pursue a more aggressive policy, so that in the ensuing war, Trotsky could try out his famous Clemenceau tactics.

The evidence of Rakovsky at the trial of "Rights and Trotskyists" held in Moscow in March 1938 throws further light on this famous tactic and on how Trotsky sought to create the conditions for bringing it into operation.

"Trotsky," according to Rakovsky, "told me another fact. He had already managed to render a certain service to the British Intelligence Service; this was at the beginning of 1927. According to him, in return for certain services rendered him by this organisation, he helped the Conservatives to bring about the rupture of relations with the U.S.S.R. He had advised the Intelligence Service that a convenient incident could be brought about by organising a raid on ARCOS. He mentioned certain London Trotskyites who were employed there.... through whom specially fabricated documents were planted on the ARCOS premises to be found during the raid, and that he had in this way given Joynson-Hicks (then Home Secretary) something by which to convince his colleagues of the necessity of breaking off diplomatic relations between the U.S.S.R. and England" (*Trial of the Anti-Soviet Bloc of Rights and Trotskyites*, pp. 306-7).

The coming of Hitler to power marked the rise of a new international situation that was to create the gravest problems for the Labour movement, and to demand a reconsideration, not of basic principles, but at least of the tactics of the struggle against war.

Generals who think in terms of the last war are liable to lose the next. Revolutionaries who think that the next revolution will faithfully reproduce the last, may be more than disappointed; they may be annihilated. So will those who expect the struggle against the next war to take exactly the same forms as the struggle against the last, for there are important differences between the situation to-day and that in 1914, immediately before the European War.

In 1914, two great Imperialist combinations confronted each other in Europe. Both were equally aggressive; both coveted each other's territory; if German Imperialism was bent on expanding into the Balkans and Asia Minor, French Imperialism was intent on the seizure of Alsace-Lorraine, Russian Imperialism on the conquest of Galicia and of Constantinople, and British Imperialism on liquidating the German naval menace and clearing Germany out of Africa. The war plans of the rival general staffs were equally based on an offensive strategy. It was a question of who would attack whom.

In the aftermath, it remains a question of who did attack whom.

Was it the Russian or the German mobilisation which pushed humanity over the abyss? Historians will wrangle over that question until the crack of doom. Not that it matters. Both sides wanted each other's territory. Both sides were ready to spring. The question of which side anticipated the other by a split second belongs to the minutiae of history. It is not fundamental.

The situation to-day is quite different. To-day the whole world can see a powerful Fascist-Imperialist bloc, armed to the teeth, openly announcing its aggressive aims, preparing to carve up the world to its design.

There is no rival aggressive Imperialist bloc. No one is making territorial claims on Germany. No one is coveting Italian territory – except perhaps its dear ally – Germany. And no one proposes to annex an inch of the pre-1931 Japanese territory.

We are not suggesting that the other Great Powers in the Capitalist world are precious innocents. They are vicious Imperialist robbers. France will suppress a rising in its North African colonies, Britain a rising in India, America a revolt in the Philippines, with a brutality that will equal anything that the Japanese have done in China, and with a hypocrisy that will make the Japanese look like stuttering amateurs in diplomacy. We have no desire to idealise any of the Imperialist Great Powers,

Nevertheless, it is clear that the three remaining Great Powers are not combining for aggression against the Fascist bloc and are not seeking to grab any of the territory of the Fascist bloc. The French Imperialists are strongly against German expansion in Europe and for the maintenance of the status quo. The National Government of Great Britain is their shifty and treacherous ally with regard to the West, but is prepared elsewhere to conciliate the Fascist aggressors, at the expense of other people. They must be appeased (to use the latest masked word of diplomacy) by being encouraged to grab the territory of someone else – Spain, China, Czechoslovakia, the Ukraine, the Belgian or Dutch colonies.

The Fascist Imperialist bloc has developed a new technique of aggression for new purposes. It seeks not only to strip its prey of colonies and other territory, leaving the defeated to rule in their own way the territory which is left to them. On the contrary, it seeks to replace existing Governments with Fascist puppet governments subordinate to the victorious aggressors. It seeks to undermine from within in preparation for its attack from without. It participated in

the organisation of the rising of the Spanish Fascist Generals and rushed assistance to their aid immediately the rising broke out. The Austrian Nazis were its agents and prepared the invasion of their country. It sends arms to the underground Fascist organisations in France and Roumania. The Henlein party in Czechoslovakia are its agents, organising revolt against Czech democracy.

This is something new in international politics. In 1914 there was no body of French public opinion, linked with German Imperialism politically and prepared to work within France for the overthrow of the existing Government by force of arms in order to promote German expansion. To-day there is such a body. In Britain there was no organised body acting as the advocate of German Imperialism, and prepared to justify its every action. To-day there is such a body. And more important, the Fascist bloc has "friends" in the most responsible government posts. This is a new and portentous fact.

The anti-Communist Pact is the outward and visible expression of the new technique of aggression, for under the guise of suppressing Communism, Italy, Germany and Japan are claiming the right to wage war on any country which displeases them.

"The signatories argue," says the *Economist*, "that the new pact is not offensive because it is not directed against any State or country – not even against the Soviet Union – but only against a subversive international organisation which already stands condemned in the eyes of most of the peoples of the world. The plea is specious but unconvincing. To our mind the very elasticity of the objective of the new crusaders' hostility in their deed of partnership is the most sinister feature.

"Who is the Bolshy? That is the crucial question, and it is already clear that in German, Italian and in Japanese eyes he is an almost infinitely protean creature who can be detected masquerading under any and every disguise. At moments no doubt he may take the shape of Stalin; but his other avatar is Negrin and at the present moment he is incarnate in the person of Chiang Kai-shek.... This awful warning from China has a moral for British Tories; for although not even the three crusaders would accuse the Conservative Party of malice propense, there is such a thing as

being a Bolshy in spite of oneself and even without one's own knowledge. Hitler has already found the formula. The democratic countries, he propounded to us some time ago, are breeding grounds for the Communist bacillus. Wherever you see the corruption of Democracy festering to-day, you can be sure of being notified to-morrow of an outbreak of the Communist plague" (November 13th, 1937).

All this involves a profound change in the relation of States to each other throughout the world and calls for a new strategy if peace is to be defended. No one is suggesting that there should be any departure from the revolutionary principles of Bolshevism in relation to war. But the new situation calls for the elaboration of a new strategy on the basis of these principles. To adhere to the Bolshevik strategy of 1914-18 under the delusion that one is adhering to the Bolshevik principles of 1914-18 is to fall into the utmost confusion. Yet many of the critics of the present-day international policy of the Communists cling in passionate obstinacy to this blunder.

We must start not from the world of 1914, but from the world of 1937, in which a Fascist bloc aiming at the redivision of the territory of the world has been formed, a bloc which is supported by powerful sympathetic movements within all of the countries it is menacing – with the exception of the Soviet Union, which has dealt with the sympathisers and allies of Fascism,

In *Mein Kampf* Hitler advocates an alliance with Britain and Italy with a view to war. In the first months after his coming to power he was even prepared to include France in an anti-Soviet pact, leaving to a later period his quarrel with that country. Indeed before Hitler came to power Trotsky predicted that such a combination would be built and would menace the Soviet Union.

"In fact, it would really be sheer political stupidity to believe that once they came into power, the German National Socialists would begin with a war against France or even Poland. The inevitable civil war against the German proletariat will bind Fascist foreign policy hand and foot in the first period of their rule. Hitler will need Pilsudski just as much as Pilsudski will need Hitler. Both alike will become tools of France. Just as the French Bourgeois fears the seizure of power by the German Fascists at the present moment as a leap into the unknown – so will French reac-



tion, in its 'nationalist', as well as in its Radical-Socialist form, stake all on Fascism the day of Hitler's victory" (*Germany, the Key to the International Situation*, p. 19).

It is undeniable that an alliance between Hitler and French reaction was a possibility. Nay, if the Soviet Union had not pursued a skilful policy it would have become a certainty.

Suppose the Soviet Union had followed the advice of some of its critics and refused to enter the League of Nations; suppose it had refused to arrive at a common policy with France and Czechoslovakia; what would have been the result?

Let us take the case of France. Without the Soviet Union France would have had no alternative but to come to an agreement with Germany, and would have had no option but to assist Germany in attacking the Soviet Union. Nay, without this policy there would have been no People's Front Government in France and no powerful advance of the French working class. It is well known that a number of French reactionaries like Tardieu and Laval were for a rapprochement with Germany, and were subsidising La Rocque and other Fascist groups in its support. It is equally certain that the National Government of Great Britain was for this policy and was prepared to bring all the necessary pressure to bear to get it accepted. Of course, the politically enlightened sections of the French working class would have strongly opposed this policy, but if the Soviet Union had not been prepared to enter the League of Nations and co-operate with France there would have been no alternative immediate policy for them to support, for the possibility of putting forward an alternative policy to that of an understanding with Germany (on the basis of submission to Germany) was entirely dependent upon the Soviet Union's entry into the League and its co-operation with France. Of course, one could have said to the French people, "Make a revolution and join together with the Soviet Union outside the League of Nations", but also revolutions are not made to order and "make a revolution" is not a concrete answer to every situation.

In May 1936 the French people would have voted in the shadow of the war menace and the only concrete policy before them would have been that of the reactionaries. It is probably an underestimation to say that the Popular Front would have been heavily defeated. In those circumstances the Popular Front could not have been formed at all, for the support of the French middle class would

have gone to the reaction. It was the existence of a positive peace policy that enabled a swing to the left to take place. So far from the Soviet Peace policy proving to be a handicap to the French working class, it was of the greatest possible assistance to it.

The critics of the Soviet Union allege, however, that a crime is being committed against Socialism by the association of the Soviet Union with the League of Nations and with the countries inside it who do not want an immediate war.

There is nothing new, however, in the Soviet Government using the contradictions between the Capitalist States who want an immediate war and those Capitalist States who do not. In the early days of the Bolshevik revolution, when German Imperialism was attacking the Soviet Union, the Bolsheviks explored the possibility of coming to an arrangement with French Imperialism in order to obtain the means of repelling the Germans. Dealing with this episode Lenin said in a letter to the American workers:

“When the German imperialist robbers in February 1918 threw their armies against the defenceless, demobilised Russia, which staked its hopes on the international solidarity of the proletariat before the international revolution had completely ripened, I did not hesitate for a moment to come to a certain ‘agreement’ with the French monarchists. The French Captain Sadoul who sympathised in words with the Bolsheviks, while in deeds a faithful servant of French Imperialism, brought the French officer de Lubersac to me. ‘I am a monarchist. My only purpose is the defeat of Germany’ de Lubersac declared to me. ‘That goes without saying’ (*cela va sans dire*), I replied. But this by no means prevented me from coming to an agreement with de Lubersac concerning certain services that French officers, experts in explosives, were ready to render by blowing up railway tracks in order to prevent the advance of German troops against us. This as an example of an ‘agreement’ of which every class conscious worker will approve. We shook hands with the French monarchist, although we knew that each of us would readily hang his ‘Partner’. But for a time our interests coincided. To throw back the rapacious advancing Germans we made use of the equally rapacious counter interests of the other imperialists thereby

serving the interests of the Russian and of the International Socialist Revolution. In this way we served the interests of the working class of Russia and other countries, we strengthened the proletariat and weakened the bourgeoisie of the whole world, we used the justified practice of manoeuvring, necessary in every war, of shifting and waiting for the moment when the rapidly growing proletarian revolution in a number of advanced countries had ripened.

“And despite all the wrathful howling of the sharks of Anglo-French and American Imperialism, despite all the calumnies they have showered upon us, despite all the millions spent for bribing the right Social-Revolutionary, Menshevik and other social-patriotic newspapers, I would not hesitate a single second to come to the same kind of agreement with German Imperialist robbers should an attack upon Russia by Anglo-French troops demand it.”

In 1922 when French and British Imperialism was seeking to build a capitalist united front against the Soviet Union, the Bolsheviks frustrated this by signing the Treaty of Rapallo with German Imperialism.

In the draft programme before the 4th Congress of the Communist International in 1922 the question of the Soviets finding themselves in alliance with a capitalist State was mentioned without provoking any opposition. The idea that the Bolsheviks, previous to joining the League of Nations, had opposed all alliances or pacts with capitalist States is absolute nonsense.

Does this policy of building a strengthened League of Nations – based on the co-operation of the Soviet Union, France and Great Britain and the smaller States of Europe – offer a hope of peace? It is a League based on the co-operation of the Soviet Union with certain capitalist States. May this not involve the Soviet Union in certain compromises? Would it not be better to rely on the independent action of the workers’ organisations to stop war, rather than on a combination of Imperialist States and the Soviet Union? Those who argue thus are posing a wholly unreal dilemma. The independent action of the workers is not in contradiction to the effort to build a strengthened League of Nations. It is manifest that neither the Italian nor German workers are to-day in a position to take mass action to prevent Hitler or Mussolini from going to war. If the States which

do not desire an immediate war can be kept disunited, it is obvious that Hitler and Mussolini will be able to appease their peoples with a series of military and diplomatic successes, each of which will make the anti-war struggle of the German and Italian people more difficult, and will clear the way for large scale war. The disunity of the anti-Fascist countries will therefore be a frightful handicap to the struggle of the German and Italian peoples.

Or take the case of the British working class which must fight against the concrete war policy of our own Government, which is one that aims at perpetuating the disunity of the anti-Fascist countries and at seeking to appease the Fascist powers by allowing them a free hand to grab territory, so long as it does not belong to the British Empire. Can it be a matter of indifference to the British workers if the Fascists are given a free hand over the greater part of Europe and are incited to seize the colonies of countries other than Britain? If fresh millions of European workers pass under Fascist domination, how long will the British workers be able to maintain their existing democratic rights?

Obviously the foreign policy of the British Government cannot be a matter of indifference to the British working class. The concrete struggle of the British people against war involves a struggle against the pro-Fascist orientation of the National Government and in favour of a policy which forces that Government, in co-operation with France and the Soviet Union, to build up a strengthened League of Nations and seek common action with the United States of America.

It is no argument to say that we need to fight to secure the early replacement of this Government by a Government based on Labour and supported by all progressive sections, and not merely to carry on a struggle for a new foreign policy to be operated by the present Government.

This is absolutely correct, but the struggle for a new foreign policy – a struggle facilitated by the fact that powerful elements of British capitalism are in opposition to the foreign policy of the present Government – is a necessary part of our struggle for a new Government based on Labour.

“Get a People’s Government” or “Get a Socialist Government” are not magic formulas solving all questions. If we had a People’s Government or even a Left Socialist Government in Britain tomorrow, this Government would have to enter into relations with

the Soviet Union and with those capitalist States in Europe which were opposing Fascist aggression. The idea fostered by Trotskyists and by those "Left" Socialists who are beginning to relay Trotskyist ideas, that a Left Socialist Government would abandon internationalism for a policy of far from "splendid" isolation, and declare its indifference to the advance of Fascism in Europe, is too fantastic for words. A British Socialist Government, no less than the Soviet Government, would have to participate in a combination of States aiming to restrain the Fascist aggressors. Yet that is precisely the crime of the Soviet Union in the eyes of the Trotskyists and those "Lefts" whom they are fooling.

There are two immediate possibilities and two only in Europe to-day. The first is that the countries opposed to Fascist aggression remain split and that Fascism attacks them one by one, seizing parts of their territory, destroying the democratic rights of their peoples and in some cases ending their existence as independent countries. Such successful Fascist aggression would be not only a shattering blow at the people in the conquered countries but would rivet the chains still more firmly upon the limbs of the German and Italian people.

The second is that the Soviet Union and the capitalist countries which are opposed to Fascist expansion, build up a peace combination strong enough to hold the Fascists in check and to give the people in the Fascist countries the opportunity of gathering their forces for attack on their oppressors.

The Fascists and their allies in the democratic countries work desperately to prevent the realisation of this latter policy, bringing forward all types of argument in favour of the anti-Fascist countries remaining disunited in face of the combined drive of the Fascist States. The Trotskyists reinforce the Fascists by carrying on similar propaganda inside the Labour movement, giving their arguments a pseudo-Socialist colour. Both aim at the same thing – the perpetuation of the disunity of anti-Fascist forces in the face of united Fascist attack.

The Trotskyist "Fourth International" published a long and tedious thesis on the duty of revolutionaries in war. There is only one thing missing – namely, what is the policy that the workers in non-Fascist countries should pursue in the teeth of the advancing allied Fascist counter-revolution?

Denunciation of the positive peace policy of the Soviet Union,

predictions of the economic collapse of the Soviet Union in the event of it being involved in a war, boastings as to what the Trotskyists will do in the event of war breaking out; but on positive activities to be undertaken now there is nothing, unless the frenzied denunciation of the peace policy of the Soviet Union can be regarded as a positive policy. "Keep away from the Soviet peace policy; denounce as counter-revolutionary all attempts to check Fascist aggression; prepare for revolutionary activity in the war which must come" – that is the essence of the Trotskyist policy. Despite its revolutionary phrases it is an out and out pro-Fascist policy, for it means that it is a matter of indifference to the workers whether Fascism advances in Europe or not, the only thing to be concerned with is the Revolution. It is clear that this is a doctrine evolved for the express purpose of duping the masses, because it is evident that unless the advance of Fascism can be stopped all immediate prospects of revolution will be destroyed.

"The task of the European proletariat," declares Trotsky in the course of a fierce attack on the peace policy of the Soviet Union, "is not the perpetuation of boundaries, but on the contrary, their revolutionary abolition, not the status quo but a socialist united states of Europe" (*The Fourth International and War*).

Can there be a more transparent evasion of the question in the interests of Fascism? The workers ask: "What is our duty in view of the open Fascist preparations for an attack on the European status quo?" and they receive the answer: "We are not for the European status quo, we are for the Socialist United States of Europe." It is self-evident that the working class cannot attain its emancipation on the basis of the European status quo – either territorial or social. The working class requires to change the European status quo in a progressive direction, but surely that involves it taking up a definite attitude to the Fascist imperialist attempt to change the status quo in a reactionary direction by means of war. Is it not evident that if the Fascists succeeded in changing the European status quo they would create infinitely more national injustices than exist at present, and would make it infinitely more difficult to change the status quo in a revolutionary direction?

The leaders of the working class movement in Germany and Italy were only too well aware that any Fascist successes in changing

the status quo can only strengthen the regime of bestial terrorism within the Fascist countries. The policy of seeking to restrain the Fascists from going to war to change the status quo, is a policy which aids the European working class to gather its forces to overthrow Fascism by revolutionary means, thus changing the status quo in a progressive direction. It is manifest therefore that the Trotskyists, in trying to convince the workers that they are not interested in the preservation of the European status quo, are really seeking to convince them, that they are not interested in impeding the advance of Fascism in Europe.

Amongst the first victims of the Fascist attack on the European status quo will be the small States in Europe. The Trotskyists are desperately anxious to convince the workers of those States not to resist the Fascist invasion in any way.

“The defence of the national State, first of all in Balkanised Europe – the cradle of the national State – is in the full sense of the word a reactionary task. The national State with its borders, passports, monetary system, customs and the army for the protection of customs has become a frightful impediment to the economic and cultural development of humanity. Not the defence of the national State is the task of the proletariat but its complete and final liquidation” (*The Fourth International and War*).

The advice here given to the workers in the smaller States of Europe is quite unequivocal. If their local Fascists, Degrelle in Belgium or Henlein in Czechoslovakia, endeavour to overthrow democratic government, then it is obviously the duty of the workers to resist them, but if the attack on democratic institutions takes the form of a foreign Fascist invasion, supplemented by a rising of the local Fascists, we are assured that it is a “reactionary task” to attempt to repel the invasion! The workers of Spain are obviously in the midst of such a “reactionary task” at the present moment in seeking to defeat the German- Italian invasion! The Spanish Trotskyists have, however, done their best to ensure that this “reactionary task” will not be fulfilled.

But, argue the Trotskyists, the policy of building a combination of States against German and Italian Fascism means the holding back of the working class movement in the countries participating in this combination.

“The Soviet Government,” declares Trotsky, “concluded a series of treaties with bourgeois governments: the Brest-Litovsk peace in March 1918; a treaty with Esthonia in 1920; the Riga peace with Poland in October 1920; the treaty of Rapallo with Germany in April 1922; and other less important diplomatic agreements....

“Although the Rapallo agreement with democratic Germany was signed... on a formal basis of ‘equal rights’ for both parties, nevertheless if the German Communist Party had made this a pretext to express confidence in the diplomacy of its country, it would have been forthwith expelled from the International” (*The Revolution Betrayed*, pp. 179-80).

The suggestion is that if the Government of a capitalist country is to-day associated with the Soviet Union in the struggle for peace, it is now the policy of the Communist International to force its affiliated parties to co-operate with such Governments rather than struggle for the interests of the working class. This is a blatant lie. The fact that a bourgeois Government is in co-operation with the Soviet Union does not mean that the Communist Parties abandon their struggle against capitalism. They know the vacillating and uncertain character of such co-operation, and therefore strive for the replacement of the bourgeois Government by one which will really co-operate with the Soviet Union. The fact that the Flandin Government ratified the Franco-Soviet Pact did not mean that the French Communist Party supported that Government out of gratitude. On the contrary, the French Communist Party strove for the replacement of the Flandin Government by a Government of the People’s Front that would sincerely co-operate with the Soviet Union in the struggle to defend peace and democracy.

But this association with bourgeois Governments, it is contended, is holding the Soviet Union and the Communist Parties back from supporting a working class engaged in a life and death struggle. The “Left” dupes of Trotskyism seek to adduce the attitude of the Soviet Union to Spain as a proof of this. Their argument is that an isolated Soviet Union would be in a better position to aid Spain than a Soviet Union associated with capitalist countries in the League of Nations.

No more fallacious arguments could be adduced. For as we



have shown that the Soviet Union's co-operation with France was the only alternative to France co-operating with Germany at the expense of the Soviet Union; that a Soviet refusal to co-operate with France could only have resulted in the strengthening of the Right Wing forces in France and the defeat of the attempt to form a government supported by the People's Front, so far from Soviet co-operation with France having impeded the struggle of the popular forces in Spain, it has prevented German-English-French co-operation in full support of Spanish Fascism. What the Left dupes of Trotskyism will not see is that the alternative to the co-operation of Left-Wing France with the Soviet Union was the co-operation of Right-Wing France with Nazi Germany. This, and not the immediate Social Revolution, was the alternative facing Europe.

Could an isolated Soviet Union have been able, in the face of a Right-Wing France and Britain associated with Germany and Italy, to have rendered the aid that it has to the Spanish people? Could the Soviet Union have kept open the Mediterranean routes in face of such a combination? Of course not. The fact that the Soviet Union has successfully struggled against the very real danger of its isolation, strengthens it in helping the Socialist and Democratic forces throughout the world.

Spain is the classic proof of the fact that while Soviet diplomacy has the same aims as the international working-class movement it does not follow that they should pursue identical methods of achieving these aims. The Soviet Union has, for example, participated in the work of the non-intervention committee, seeking to oppose all the reactionary moves which Germany, Italy and Great Britain were making on that committee.

On the other hand, the Communist Parties in the democratic countries opposed the non-intervention policy and sought to mobilise working-class pressure on their Governments to force them to give the Spanish Government the right to purchase arms in its own defence in accordance with international law. It was not the business of the working class to approve of the policy of non-intervention, but to force their Governments to abandon a policy that the Fascists had no intention of observing.

The Soviet Union struggle on the Non-Intervention Committee could not be assisted by the Labour Movement giving the policy of non-intervention its approval, for this could only strengthen the reactionary forces in Britain and France. On the contrary, the more the

Labour movement struggled against the entire policy of non-intervention, the more it lightened the struggle of the Soviet Government on the Non-Intervention Committee.

The Soviet Government in its struggle for peace and democracy has from time to time to enter into compromises with capitalist States. It cannot, however, be the duty of the working-class movement to regard such compromises as being the most desirable achievement. On the contrary, it is its duty, by pressure on its own Government and by seeking to replace the Government by one more favourable to the defence of peace and democracy, to secure for the Soviet Government a still more effective field of action in the diplomatic sphere. While the open and avowed reactionaries in the Labour movement seek to utilise the fact of the Soviet Union's participation in the Non-Intervention committee as a justification for holding back the working-class movement from bringing pressure on its own Government, they are reinforced by the Trotskyists using "Left" phrases. The Trotskyists demand that the Soviet Union leaves the Non-Intervention Committee – a policy that could only facilitate an agreement between the reactionaries against the Spanish people.

The Soviet Union is heroically struggling for peace. The reactionaries in the British Government are struggling with all their might against the formation of a Peace bloc in Europe. A united British working class could break their resistance; on the other hand, the absence of unity may result in the British reactionaries giving such assistance to the Fascists, that the Soviet Union may find itself in war against Fascism. In such a war the Soviet Union may be supported by certain capitalist States, for example, France. What is the duty of the working class in such a situation? What role will Trotskyism play in such an eventuality?

"Defence of the Soviet Union from the blows of the capitalist class," declared the Trotskyist Fourth International in 1935. That is the verbal camouflage necessary if Trotskyism is to dupe active workers in the Labour movement. But the whole propaganda of Trotsky is deliberately designed to convey the impression that the Soviet Union is not worth defending. Every lie that it is possible for obsessed minds to invent is launched against the Soviet Union. Those lies are eagerly relayed against the Soviet Union by the Capitalist press – a particularly obnoxious role being played in this respect by certain so-called Liberal papers. Between each furious bar-

rage of lies Trotsky keeps repeating: "Of course we must defend the Soviet Union." Small wonder that some of the oldest and most forthright of Trotsky's disciples have decided to drop the camouflage and come out against the defence of the Soviet Union. Urbahns and Ruth Fischer amongst German refugees, Laste and Souvarine in France, and Van Ooverstreeten in Belgium all come out for working-class neutrality in the event of an attack on the Soviet Union – and to-morrow, in the United States, Max Eastman will follow them. They quarrel with the "master" and demand that he comes out in open sabotage of the great Workers' State. The "master" finds it judicious, however, to maintain the camouflage a little longer. For him to go over publicly to the standpoint of Laste would be a too striking confirmation of the truth disclosed in the Moscow trials.

However, on one question the Trotskyists are unanimous. If war breaks out and any Government in a capitalist country is found to be on the same side as the Soviet Union, even if that Government is a Labour or Popular Front Government, it is the duty of the working class to strive might and main for the defeat of this Government in the war. This the Trotskyists allege is the true anti-war policy of Lenin.

Now it is true that in the European war of 1914-18 – a war between two Imperialist combinations for mastery over the colonies and markets of the world – Lenin declared that the workers were interested in the defeat of their respective Governments, because such a defeat would facilitate the workers' revolution against the Imperialists who had plunged the world into war.

Trotsky was strongly against Lenin's slogan of defeatism as applied to the Tsarist Government in 1915. He and his followers however are strongly in favour of it in relation to the allies of the Soviet Government in 1938!

Lest readers consider that this is a fantastic exaggeration, let me quote one of the leading British theoreticians of Trotskyism, Mr. C. L. R. James:

"To-day they (the Communist Party of Great Britain) are shamelessly telling the British workers to fight with the British bourgeoisie if Britain allies itself with the Soviet Union. While fighting with the British bourgeoisie the workers must in some miraculous way maintain an inde-

pendent class policy. 'This,' says J. R. Campbell, 'would clear the way for the defeat of our own capitalist class once the main Fascist aggressor was defeated.' As always it is Stalin's foreign policy and not the workers' revolution that guides these paid agents" (*World Revolution 1917-18* by C. L. R. James, pp. 377-8).

All people who do not accept the divinity of Trotsky are "paid agents" to these petty-bourgeois *enragés*.

But is it not possible for honest workers to doubt if the cause of the working class is being served by the defeat of the democratic allies of the Soviet Union and the installation of a Fascist puppet government for example, in France, while Hitler turns to concentrate his full strength against the workers' State?

Take the situation that will confront the working class in France right from the start of such a war. There will be strong Fascist sympathisers behind the lines, pro-Fascist sabotage in high places will be rampant, there may even be in France a pro-Fascist insurrection, and the Trotskyists suggest that at this moment the working class should throw their weight into the struggle alongside the Fascists in order to undermine the fighting capacity of the bourgeois parliamentary government! Could Hitler and Goering possibly hope for better allies?

In his efforts to justify this treacherous pro-Fascist policy, Trotsky resorts to the most amazing contortions, seeking to prove that it is a matter of indifference to the workers if the combination of States associated with the Soviet Union is defeated or victorious.

He starts out by predicting that if the war remains merely a war, *i.e.*, if the revolution does not break out prior to the victory of either side, then the Soviet Union and the working class will sustain overwhelming defeat.

"Can we, however, expect that the Soviet Union will come out of the coming great war without defeat? To this frankly posed question we will answer as frankly; if the war should remain only a war, the defeat of the Soviet Union would be inevitable. In a technical, economic, and military sense, imperialism is incomparably more strong. If it is not paralysed by revolution in the West, imperialism will sweep away the regime which issued from the October Revolution" (*The Revolution Betrayed*, p. 216).

Even a protracted war without a military defeat may lead, Trotsky asserts, to the destruction of the Soviet State as it now exists.

“The protracted nature of the war will reveal the contradictions of the transition economy of the U.S.S.R. with its bureaucratic planning.... In the heated atmosphere of war one can expect sharp turns towards individualistic principles in agriculture and handicraft industry, towards the attraction of foreign and allied capital, breaks in the monopoly of foreign trade, the weakening of governmental control over trusts, the sharpening of competition between the trusts, their conflict with workers, etc.... In other words in the case of a protracted war accompanied by the passivity of the world proletariat the internal social contradictions of the U.S.S.R. not only might lead but would have to lead to a bourgeois-Bonapartist revolution” (*The Fourth International and War*).

A defeat would be disastrous for the Soviet Union. A prolonged war would be disastrous for the Soviet Union. And it appears from the following extract from the evidence before the Dewey commission in Mexico that a military victory would also be disastrous for the Soviet Union!

*Professor Dewey*: “May I ask a hypothetical question? Suppose the bourgeoisie of England and France, in alliance with the Soviet Union, defeated Fascist Germany and Feudal Japan, might not the result be to make the Soviet Union a bourgeois country?”

*Trotsky*: “Yes, a victory. A victory of France, of Great Britain and the Soviet Union. A victory over Germany and Japan could signify first a transformation of the Soviet Union into a bourgeois State, and the transformation of France into a Fascist State, because for a victory against Hitler it is necessary to have a monstrous military machine, and the Fascist tendencies in France are powerful now. A victory can signify the destruction of Fascism in Germany and the establishment of Fascism in France” (*The Case of Leon Trotsky*, p. 292).

What is the meaning of all this? It is that if Hitler plunges Europe into war the working class is not interested in his defeat,

because this no less than a Hitler victory will lead to Fascist domination in Europe. Associated with this there is another idea:

“Even a military defeat of the Soviet Union would be only a short episode, in case of a victory of the proletariat in other countries. And on the other hand, no military victory can save the inheritance of the October Revolution if imperialism holds out in the rest of the world” (*The Revolution Betrayed*, pp. 219-20).

What other countries is Trotsky referring to? In the concrete war situation the countries likely to attack the Soviet Union immediately are Germany, Italy, Japan and Poland, with British Imperialism aiding and abetting them. Is the victory of the workers in the four countries mentioned likely to be made easier by the military victory of their Governments over the Soviet Union? Would the expansion of Germany over Eastern and Central Europe help the victory of the German working class over Hitler? Is it not clear that we can rule out of consideration a successful revolution of the workers in Germany, Italy, Poland, Czechoslovakia, Austria and Yugoslavia, Roumania and Bulgaria, in the event of a Fascist victory over the Soviet Union? So we are left with the Scandinavian countries, Holland and Belgium, France and Spain. Can anyone but a complete political idiot doubt for a moment that the victory of Fascism over the Soviet Union would strengthen political reaction in those countries and make the victory of the workers more difficult? And does anyone imagine that the workers of the countries in question could consolidate their victory in face of a Fascist combination that had just succeeded in overthrowing the Soviet State? The more we analyse the line of Trotsky the more it appears as one of the essential weapons of the Fascist world offensive.

But, declares Trotsky, performing yet another contortion,

“the danger of war and a defeat of the Soviet Union is a reality, but the revolution is also a reality. If the revolution does not prevent war, then war will help the revolution. Second births are commonly easier than first. In the new war it will not be necessary to wait a whole two years and a half for the first insurrection” (*The Revolution Betrayed*, p. 219).

Trotsky goes on to refer to the growing contradictions inside

Germany, Italy and Japan, but will those growing contradictions lead to revolution in the event of military success? Are not the Governments of the countries mentioned looking to a successful war in order to ease their internal contradictions? Success in the field will lead to an easing of the contradictions. Defeat will lead to their sharpening. The strength of the resistance to Fascist aggression will therefore be a factor sharpening the class contradictions in the Fascist countries.

“Without the Red Army,” admits Trotsky, “the Soviet Union would be crushed and dismembered like China. Only her stubborn and heroic resistance to the future capitalist enemy can create favourable conditions for the development of the class struggle in the Imperialist camp” (*The Revolution Betrayed*, p. 220).

Why then do the Trotskyists seek to deprive the Red Army of allies? Why do they seek to induce the French workers to struggle alongside the French Fascists, in order to prevent the People’s Front Government and the French army from taking their place alongside the Red Army? Why do they argue that a defeat of the Red Army would be but a temporary episode in the event of the victory of the workers of other countries, when it is evident that the successful resistance of the Red Army is the necessary condition for the victory of the workers in other European countries?

But a still more amazing contortion is to come. The American Communists are told:

“It would be absurd and criminal in case of war between the U.S.S.R. and Japan for the American proletariat to sabotage the sending of American munitions to the U.S.S.R.” (*The Fourth International and War*).

But if American Imperialism in its own interests decides to send the American fleet to the assistance of the Soviet Union, then the Trotskyists hold that it is the duty of the American working class to carry out a political struggle against this. The defeat of the Soviet Union by Japan is for them a lesser evil than the victory of the Soviet Union and the United States over Japan!

“But is it not chimerical,” it may be asked, “to expect the United States and France to defend the Soviet Union? Why should they be interested in upholding the land of Socialism?” Now it is

true that an imperialist France or United States will co-operate with the Soviet Union in defence of its own interests and not in defence of the Soviet Union. Nevertheless it would be ridiculous to argue that their co-operation would be of no value, and that the best interests of the working class would be served by an isolated Soviet Union confronting a united Fascist war alliance. Naturally such imperialist allies would be unreliable in the extreme, but there is a difference between a vacillating ally and an out-and-out enemy. The working class in an imperialist country associated with the Soviet Union could not give a vote of confidence to its own imperialists. for it would have to resist capitalist war profiteering; to fight for the cost of the war being transferred to the shoulders of the capitalist class; to protect its democratic liberties; to seek to prevent an understanding between the capitalists of the democratic and the Fascist countries; to seek to prevent the strangulation of the German revolution in the event of Hitler being overthrown.

Nor could the workers in an imperialist country associated with the Soviet Union take up an attitude of benevolent neutrality to their Government. On the contrary, they must strive to get the strongest and most resolute anti-Fascist Government in order to clean the rear of Fascist sabotage and ensure the successful prosecution of the military struggle. That means in France the struggle for a People's Front Government in which the leadership of the organisations of the working class is decisive; in England the struggle for a Labour and Democratic Government based on a Labour Party to which the Communist Party is affiliated, and supported by the Democratic forces of the country. It will also be the duty of the Communist Party in such countries never to allow the working class to forget the capitalist roots of Fascism and war, and to emphasise that the struggle will be in vain if it does not result in clearing the way for the advance of Socialism throughout Europe.

But the advance to Socialism demands that the military victory of Fascism be prevented at all costs. On the other hand, Trotskyism orients itself on the military victory of Fascism, because it believes that such a victory would facilitate the victory of Trotskyism in the U.S.S.R.

In its public propaganda in the democratic countries it seeks to prevent the formation of a Peace bloc pledged to struggle for the maintenance of peace. It asks the workers in these countries to believe that the association of their Government with the U.S.S.R.



would be a step leading not to peace but to war; that their best interests will be served by forcing their Governments to maintain an attitude of neutrality in the event of a Fascist war alliance attacking the U.S.S.R.; and that in the event of the U.S.S.R. and a bloc of bourgeois Governments being engaged in a struggle against the Fascist alliance, it is a matter of indifference to the working class which side wins.

One can understand why, as the Fascist States move to war, the increase in Trotskyist propaganda takes on extraordinary dimensions, for it is no longer supported merely by small and noxious sects but by the vast weight of the Fascist propaganda machine.

There is no contradiction between this type of public propaganda and the plans which, according to the evidence at the Trials, Trotsky approved of for a military coup in the event of war being declared on the Soviet Union. In the March 1938 trial, ex-Ambassador Krestinsky gave the following summary of the Trotskyists' line:

“And now with regard to setting the date for taking action. From the very moment of my meeting in Meran it was considered definitely established that our action was to be timed with the outbreak of war, and that therefore we, here, in the Union, could not independently set the date for Tukhachevsky's action, and we did not do it.... We were waiting for the war to begin, we were waiting for the attack.

“After Pyatakov and Radek had been arrested, when Bessonov was going to Berlin, I took advantage of this and sent verbal information to Trotsky to the effect that after I had taken up this question with Rosengoltz and Rudzutak I could formulate the situation as follows: we think that quite a large number of Trotskyites have been arrested, but nevertheless the main forces of this anti-Soviet bloc – the Trotskyites, the Rights and the military conspirators – are as yet not affected, have not been smashed, that action could be taken, and that for this purpose, it is essential for the centre that foreign action should be hastened. This was in October 1936. But late in November 1936 Tukhachevsky spoke to me excitedly and in grave terms at the Extraordinary Eighth Congress of Soviets. He said arrests had begun and there was no reason to think that things would stop with the ar-

rests which had already been made. Apparently the smashing up of the Trotskyites and the Rights would go on.... He drew the conclusion: there was no use waiting for intervention. It was necessary to act on our own....

"I talked it over with Rosengoltz, then I talked it over with Rudzutak, and we came to the conclusion that Tukhachevsky was right, that time was pressing. We decided to ask for Trotsky's opinion. As a rule I did not write to him about such questions, I preferred to convey the information verbally. I sent a letter to Trotsky with the diplomatic mail through Bessonov.

"The letter dealt with the necessity of changing the line according to which our internal coup was necessarily to be connected with a war....

"Bessonov conveyed this letter to Trotsky, who at that time was still in Norway. My impression then was that Bessonov did it by sending for Sedov, but as it turns out he sent the letter through Reich-Johannson, and a reply was received to this letter. Trotsky replied that he agreed....

"It transpired that Trotsky on his own initiative raised the question of hastening the coup and sent these instructions in a different, roundabout way in a letter addressed to Rosengoltz" (*Trial of Anti-Soviet Bloc of Rights and Trotskyites*, pp. 280-3).

The action that the Trotskyist conspirators had decided on in the event of a war was disclosed further in the evidence. Bukharin, one of the most prominent of the Right conspirators, who were linked together with Trotsky's adherents, stated:

"When I asked Tomsy how he conceived the mechanics of the coup he said this was the business of the military organisation, which was to open the front" (*ibid*, p. 433).

This explains why the public propaganda of Trotskyism calls upon the workers of the democratic countries to oppose their Governments taking part in a war alongside the Soviet Union.

The policy which Trotsky recommends to the workers in the democratic countries in the event of war has found acceptance in organisations which are not strictly Trotskyist. Sections of the Labour movement like the I.L.P., which a decade ago was the mainstay of

reformism in the Labour movement, relay the pro-Fascist ravings of Trotsky under the delusion that they are criticising the Soviet Union from the left, and the results of recently-converted reformists posing as super-revolutionaries can be truly extraordinary.

Here is the I.L.P.'s pill for the world earthquake – its infallible recipe for working class behaviour in the next war:

“In the event of a war between two capitalist countries, or two groups of capitalist countries, it will be the duty of the British working class to concentrate on the task of overthrowing the British capitalist government and to co-operate with the workers of other countries in overthrowing their capitalist governments. If and when Workers Power has been achieved, it will be the Socialist duty to judge the objective situation from a class point of view and to decide whether action in support of one side is desirable in order to make working-class forces the dominating factor. In such a situation if Workers’ States are involved in a conflict with capitalist countries, it will be the duty of a working-class government in Britain to go to the assistance of such States, whilst refusing to be committed to the war aims of any capitalist allies which they may have” (Resolution entitled – “To Resist War”, I.L.P. Conference, Easter 1937).

The author of this resolution is worthy of his place in any capitalist diplomatic service in the world. As a finder of formulas he is in the foremost class. In order, however, to understand his formulas it is necessary to make them a little more concrete.

His first proposition is that if war breaks out between two groups of States in one of which is the Fascist alliance – Germany, Italy and Japan – and in the other the Soviet Union, it is a matter of indifference to the working class of Britain which side wins.

His second proposition is that the working class must concentrate on overthrowing the British capitalist government irrespective of whether it is (a) neutral, (b) allied with the Fascists, or (c) allied with the Soviet Union. Of course our diplomat does not tell the I.L.P. that the overthrow of the capitalist class demands more than concentration. It demands favourable objective conditions, and these may not be present at the outbreak of a war.

But by raising the question of the working class taking power in this abstract way, our diplomat evades giving a clear answer to the

question as to whether the working class has to take the same attitude to a war in which its Government is fighting alongside the Soviet Union, as it does to a war in which its Government is fighting against the Soviet Union.

Still, his implied answer is that it is a matter of indifference. Just as the German worker has to do all in his power to prevent the German army from marching to attack the Soviet Union, so the French worker has got to do his utmost (alongside the French Fascists) in preventing the French army from marching to support the Soviet Union.

The third proposition is that after the working class has taken power in Great Britain it is no longer indifferent as to whether the Fascist alliance triumphs over the combination of States which includes the Soviet Union. On the contrary, it must consider "whether action in support of one side is then desirable in order to make working-class forces the dominating factor" – or in plain English whether to help the Soviet Union and the States associated with it. But cannot our diplomat, cannot all members of the I.L.P., grasp the fact that the victory of the Soviet Union should be the dominant consideration of every working class, whether it is in power or not? Yes, a British Socialist Government must desire the victory of the Soviet Union in a war, but equally must a British working class desiring to set up such a government; for a defeat of the Soviet Union in a war would postpone the prospects of victory for the British workers for a very long time.

The fourth proposition of our diplomat is the most remarkable of all. He is not opposed to a British Socialist Government co-operating with the Soviet Union in a combination which contains "capitalist allies". Why then in heaven's name is the I.L.P. continually attacking the Soviet Union for its co-operation with bourgeois France? Why is it possible to find in another resolution of the same conference the statement that:

"The foreign policy of Soviet Russia, with its reliance on the League of Nations and Pacts with capitalist governments, rather than an alliance with the working-class forces of the world, has had a depressing effect on the revolutionary movement of other countries" (Resolution on Soviet Russia).

Surely it is clear that the working class, in common with Soviet

Russia, is interested in (1) building a combination of States that will make it difficult for the Fascist alliance to launch out in a general war, and (2) securing the defeat of the Fascist alliance if, in spite of all our efforts, such a war does break out?

But, it is alleged, this is not a peace policy but a war policy. The Communists are fighting to obtain allies for Russia in the next world war.

“The Stalinist version of the United Front is not unity for action but unity to lead all workers into imperialist war,” declares James, the British Trotskyist. “The People’s Front, understood in its fundamentals, is the major form of the preparation among the masses for the achievement of national unity within the democratic nations in support of the coming war,” declares the American Trotskyist Burnham (James Burnham, *The People’s Front*, p. 62).

Here is a petty bourgeois fatalism masquerading as Marxism. Nothing can stop the oncoming Fascist aggression, they declare, and the Communists in pretending that it can be stopped are only leading the workers into war.

It is claimed here that the building of a powerful combination against the Fascist aggressors would only be a revival of the old pre-war alliances, and so far from preventing war would accelerate the drive towards it. This argument can be put in a very simple form. “Peace will be maintained if no united resistance is offered to the advance of Fascism.” Here Trotskyism pretending to be very “Left” meets pro-Fascist Toryism pretending to be very peaceful, and combines with it in thrusting the same arguments upon us.

It is not true that the building of a combination of countries seeking to prevent the outbreak of war is the same thing as building up an alliance for war.

In 1914, two war alliances confronted each other, both sides claiming portions of each other’s territory – France as eager for Alsace-Lorraine as Germany was for French colonies. The war plans of the General Staffs on each side were based on the offensive. Today no one is coveting German or Italian territory. No one has any aggressive designs against them.

Fortunately in spite of their vast armaments neither Germany nor Italy is in an economic position to wage a prolonged war. The German people is already enduring war bread and meatless days

even before the war has broken out. Prices are rising steeply, while wages and salaries remain on the crisis level of the year 1932. In Italy the economy of the country is already strained to the point of exhaustion. So long as their potential victims remain disunited and incapable of resistance, the economic difficulties of Hitler and Mussolini will spur those dictators to action. But immediately a powerful combination is formed to resist Fascist aggression, and the German and Italian people see that the projects of their rulers cannot be realised without a long and terrible war, it will be possible to hold the Fascist aggressors in check and maintain peace for a further period. Surely this is the lesson of Czechoslovakia.

This is the only possible peace policy that can be pursued in Europe to-day. The Trotskyists, however, seek to win the workers away from this policy by depicting it as a war policy, and thus find themselves in the same camp as the pro-Fascist reactionaries of all countries.

No one is seeking to bring the British people into a war alongside the Soviet Union. No one is asking them to defend the Soviet Union, in the interests of the Soviet Union. We are asking them to co-operate with the Soviet Union in defending peace – the supreme interest of the British people.

And we say without hesitation that the peaceful people of Great Britain need the Soviet Union more than the Soviet Union needs them. If our pro-Fascist madmen and their Trotskyist allies succeeded in their design of detaching France from the Soviet Union, the peril of the British people would be greater than the peril of the peoples of the Soviet Union. Once the democratic West was separated from the Socialist East, Fascism would have a free hand against the Western democracies no less than against the Soviet Union, and it would have strong grounds for assuming that the way to the Fascist world empire lay not in an attack on the Bolsheviks but in a headlong offensive against the Western democracies. If Britain does not stand shoulder to shoulder with the Soviet Union in a peace bloc, it will betray not Russia but the British people. With the Soviet Union, however, the Western democracies could force Fascism to keep the peace. Every year the Socialist-Democratic grouping will grow stronger, for the economic might of the Socialist section of the bloc is growing at a rate impossible in any capitalist country.

“If we should assume for a minute the possibility of realising Socialism as a finished social system in the isolated framework of the U.S.S.R.”, said Trotsky in 1930, “... what intervention could even be talked of then? The socialist order of society presupposes high levels of technique, culture and solidarity of the population. Since the U.S.S.R., at the moment of complete construction of Socialism, will have, it must be assumed, a population of from 200,000,000 to 250,000,000, then we ask what intervention could be talked of then? What capitalist country, or coalition of countries, would dare to think of intervention under these circumstances?” (*The Permanent Revolution*, Preface to the American Edition, p. xv.)

The Soviet Union is rapidly approaching that stage of development, which Trotsky regarded as impossible in 1930. That is why the strength of the Peace group will grow, and with it, the strength of the forces of Socialism throughout the world.

“The example of a backward country, which in the course of several ‘Five Year Plans’ constructed a mighty Socialist society with its own forces would mean a death blow to world capitalism, and would reduce to a minimum, if not to zero, the costs of the world proletarian revolution,” sneered Trotsky in 1930 (*ibid*, p. xv).

That example is before our eyes to-day. Socialism is undermining capitalism by the example of peaceful development. Capitalism can only attack Socialism through war. That is why the Fascists, if they can be held in check, will be lost for ever.

## CHAPTER IX

### TROTSKYISM AND THE PEOPLE'S FRONT

We have seen that the Trotskyist policy on war, while pretending to be of a very Left Socialist character, if applied, can only help the Fascist alliance with which Trotsky was proved at the Moscow Trials to be in close association. The attempt to check the advance of this alliance is to be sabotaged by the Trotskyists not under Fascist slogans but under slogans bearing an extremely Left Socialist character. This method of sabotage from the Left can be of very great aid to Fascism, for unless it is exposed, thousands of misguided workers who hate Fascism and War can, under the influence of Trotskyism, become the architects of their own enslavement.

A similar policy of sabotage is being carried out in relation to the struggle against Fascism in the various countries. Under the guise of being very Left the Trotskyists pursue a policy which can only disrupt the anti-Fascist forces and help forward a Fascist victory.

Naturally there is no attempt by the Trotskyists to frame a policy on the basis of an objective evaluation of the situation existing in a given country, bearing in mind the relations of that country to the rest of the world, for this would inevitably expose the true character of Trotskyist policy.

Instead of proceeding from a concrete analysis we are presented with a theoretical hotch-potch, calculated to confuse the workers and justify the sabotage of the anti-Fascist front. Elements of the old Trotskyism in which alliance of the workers with other sections of society, notably the peasantry, is rejected; misrepresentation of the tactics which brought victory to the Bolsheviks in the Russian revolution, and the urging of the workers to apply this caricature to the struggles of to-day; a wholly mechanical interpretation of the relation of monopoly capitalism to Fascism; attempts to draw an analogy between the immediate post-war period when parliamentary democracy was the rallying ground of reaction against the advancing Social Revolution, and the present day when monopoly capitalism is seeking to attack and undermine parliamentary democracy; attempts to show that the building up of an anti-Fascist People's Front to resist the drive of monopoly capitalism to Fascism is a betrayal similar to that of those Socialist parties which at the end of



the war co-operated with capitalism to defeat the advancing social revolution – such are the principal arguments in the arsenal of Trotskyism.

The practical activities of the Trotskyist organisations vary from country to country. In Spain they have spied for Franco and stabbed the People's Army in the back. In France they have played the role of disruptors of the industrial and political struggles, seeking to provoke the workers to courses which would have resulted in overwhelming defeat; in Britain and the U.S.A. their principal role is disruption of the Labour movement – in Britain, in the Labour Party and Labour League of Youth, and in the U.S.A. the Socialist Party. And of course in every country in the world they seek to alienate support from the People's Government in Spain by denouncing it as an enemy of the working class.

The disruptive attitude of the Trotskyists is admitted by people who are often quite prepared to employ the arguments of Trotskyism in controversy with the Communist Party. Writing of Trotskyist, near-Trotskyist and ultra-Trotskyist organisations, Mr. Brockway says:

“Their minds are dominated by the ‘crimes of Stalinism’ to such an extent that all their vitality goes into negative criticism; such groups are mentally and emotionally incapable of building anything, and they would merely be a wrecking influence within a united revolutionary movement. Most of these groups are cantankerous offshoots from Trotskyist organisations. They are worse than their original associates, but the same characteristics of negation and disruption also apply in large part to the sections of the ‘Fourth International’. I regard what has happened to Leon Trotsky as a great tragedy. He has a brilliant mind, but inevitably his experiences have concentrated it upon the wrongs committed by the heads of Soviet Russia and the Communist International. Among his followers are men and women of great intellectual capacity and courage, but too often they have the mental attitude of their leader, and the merely divisive influence of the Trotskyist groups wherever they are to be found is the reflection of this” (*Workers' Front*, pp. 204-5).

Here is an attitude typical of many of those who doubt the guilt

of Trotsky. They admit that the policy of the Trotskyists as it is operated in their own organisation is insanely disruptive. But that it could be insanely disruptive inside the Soviet Union they venture to doubt. Such people also separate the divisive activities of Trotskyism from Trotskyist criticism of the Soviet Union or the Communist International, not seeing that they are all of one piece. Thus it is possible to find them repeating typical Trotskyist divisive arguments against the Communist Party policy of united front and people's front, while expelling the open Trotskyists from their own organisation. The spectacle of the *New Leader* relaying Trotskyist arguments week after week, while seeking to protect the I.L.P. from divisive Trotskyist activity, is in itself an outstanding example of political contortionism.

The lessons of the 1917 revolution, and of the subsequent revolutionary period in Europe, belong to the basic capital of the working class, and to neglect them is to commit political suicide. But those lessons cannot be applied to the present day unless one takes into account the difference in the situation to-day as compared with that of 1917-20.

In 1917 the capitalist world was deep in the Great War, and when the February revolution broke out the Imperialists, immersed in their gigantic struggle, could not actively intervene to bar the advance to the proletarian revolution. The revolution in Russia was accompanied by, and at the same time accelerated, the maturing of a revolutionary situation in Central and Eastern Europe. In countries like Britain, France and the United States of America, there was the development of great Labour unrest. In Great Britain it was clear that the old property franchise was obsolete and must be replaced by the most complete democratic franchise.

In this period the tactic of the capitalist class was to rally all the reactionary elements of society round the slogan of democracy, to use this slogan against the advancing Socialist revolution, to buy off the working class with concessions that did not undermine the fundamental basis of the capitalist system, and to gather their forces for the counter-offensive. In these tactics the capitalist class were helped by Right-Wing Socialism which saw, or pretended to see, in the new democratic rights that had been won, the means of advancing peacefully to Socialism. It was under such conditions that Communists sought as part of their effort to lead the people forward to a higher order of democracy – Soviet Democracy – to reveal the

class essence of parliamentary democracy.

Clearly there is a much different situation in the world to-day. In Germany the Labour movement has been driven underground, and workers and petty middle class alike are squeezed to the limit of endurance in order to provide resources for the insatiable Fascist war-machine. In some European countries, Governments of a semi-authoritarian character are being drawn into the orbit of the main Fascist powers. In every country, the growth of Fascist tendencies amongst the capitalist class is palpable. A rich crop of repressive law's is put on the Statute Book.

In these circumstances the working class is not in the position in which it was in Central Europe in 1919 – to put the question of the seizure of power on the order of the day. This does not mean that power is a long way off, but it does mean that the issues which must be fought out in order to lead up to the seizure of power are different from those of 1917-20. In 1917, the Bolsheviks put forward the slogan of peace, whose concrete application was the ending of the European war on the basis of no annexation, and no indemnities; through the seizure of power by the working class. To-day we put forward the slogan of peace, which means concretely the creation of a bloc of Socialist and democratic Governments which will force Fascism to keep the peace, and enable us to prepare the forces for Socialist advance.

In 1917-20 capitalism was defending parliamentary democracy against the drive of the Socialist revolution, seeking to establish Soviet Democracy. To-day, capitalism, in order to maintain itself, is seeking to undermine and destroy parliamentary democracy and to dissolve the organisations of the working class. To defend democracy in 1917-20 was to defend capitalism against the revolution. To defend democracy in 1938 is to frustrate the capitalist attack on the working class, and is the starting point of any working-class advance to power.

The drive of monopoly capitalism to Fascism and War, menaces not only the working class but all the intermediate sections of society. This makes possible the creation of a common front of all those who are menaced by monopoly capitalism run amok.

But if this is to be done, it is necessary to annihilate the fatalist ideas spread by the Trotskyists with a view to impeding the development of the anti-Fascist People's Front.

"During the decline of capitalism," explains the American Trotskyist James Burnham, "the bourgeoisie finds greater and greater difficulty in keeping the deepening social conflicts within the basic framework of democratic parliamentarism. Democracy becomes too awkward, too clumsy, slow, inefficient, unreliable, as a mechanism for class rule. Consequently, manipulating middle-class discontent through a demagogic pseudo-radicalism, the bourgeoisie is compelled to resort to the iron straight-jacket of Fascism to ensure its continuance in power.

"Fascism, that is to say, is not a conspiracy or plot on the part of anybody. It is nothing accidental; nothing that results from any peculiar ill-will or viciousness.

"Fascism, or a Fascist type of government, is, on the contrary, a wholly normal development: the normal (though not necessarily universal) mechanism for capitalist rule as the decline and disintegration of the capitalist order deepens, just as bourgeois democracy, parliamentarism, is the normal (though not necessarily universal) mechanism during the progressive phase of capitalism.

"It may thus be seen that there is no basic *social* conflict between bourgeois democracy and Fascism. If we examine social questions historically, as Marxism does, we find in a sense the contrary: Fascism is the resultant of bourgeois democracy in the period of capitalist decline; bourgeois democracy is the precursor of and the preparation for Fascism" (*The People's Front*, pp. 16-17).

Here is an excellent example of fatalism. Undoubtedly bourgeois democracy was the form of class rule in the expanding period of capitalism, but all the rights possessed by the people under bourgeois democracy (the right to vote, the right of free speech, an uncensored press, the mass of laws protecting the individual from arbitrary action on the part of the State power, the rights of working-class organisations) were wrested from the capitalist class by struggle. The capitalist class undoubtedly is developing Fascist tendencies. Nevertheless it can only wrest from the people the rights which they have won in the period of ascending capitalism when it is supported by a mass movement as well as by the forces of the State.

"Manipulating middle-class discontent through a demagogic

pseudo-radicalism," declares Burnham, "the bourgeoisie is compelled to resort to the iron straight-jacket of Fascism to insure its continuance of power." But if the bourgeoisie is unable to manipulate middle-class discontent what then? Why cannot the working class form an alliance with the middle-class on the basis of "middle-class discontent" in order to *prevent* the resort to the straight-jacket?

"There is no basic social conflict between bourgeois democracy and Fascism," cries this fervent apostle of Trotsky. Is there not? In order to pass from bourgeois democracy to Fascism, the capitalist class has to rob the working class and middle class of all their dearly-won civil liberties, and break up the mass organisations of the working class. Is there no basic social conflict here? Is the drive to strip the working class of its rights not the sharpest form of social conflict and of class struggle? And if the working class is able to unite its forces and make an alliance with the middle class also menaced by Fascism, it can rob the capitalist class of the possibilities of victory and open the way for an overwhelming counter-attack.

We have not however a whole historic epoch before us in which to organise all the people who are menaced by the capitalist drive to Fascism. For unless reaction can be checked and war postponed the people of the world will face years of reaction. "Unless the Socialist cause can organise its forces rapidly and effectively to meet those evils and dangers, the prospect is that the peoples will go down to hunger, massacre and slavery," says Mr. Fenner Brockway. True, but that involves more than organising the "forces of the Socialist cause", it means organising all the working class who are menaced by "hunger, massacre and slavery", whether they are Socialists or not, around a series of immediate demands. It means the united front of the working class, seeking allies from those middle sections of the population who are also threatened with "hunger, massacre and slavery", building a mass people's movement to drive the Fascist bands off the streets and to secure the resignation and defeat of the reactionary Governments which are preparing the way for Fascism, and that movement is the People's Front.

The People's Front tactic has a twofold aim: (1) It seeks to build an alliance of the working class and the intermediate sections of the population to defend democracy and preserve peace, and to achieve Labour and Democratic government as a means to this end; and it seeks (2) to enable the revolutionary workers to win the

whole working class and considerable sections of the “middle classes” for the complete Socialist programme.

The Trotskyists, and the “Left” Socialists who broadcast Trotskyist views, declare that such alliances are opposed to all the experience gained by the working-class movement throughout its existence, and are particularly opposed to all the fundamentals of Bolshevism. It may therefore be worth while to find what Lenin said with regard to the party of the working class compromising with the representatives of other sections of society.

“‘To reject most decisively all compromise with other parties... all policy of manoeuvring and compromise’, write the German Lefts in the Frankfort pamphlet. A wonder that, holding such views, these Lefts do not decisively condemn Bolshevism! Surely, the German Lefts cannot but know that the whole history of Bolshevism, both before and after the October Revolution, is *full* of instances of manoeuvring, temporising, and compromising with other parties, bourgeois parties included!...

“Before the downfall of Tsarism, the Russian revolutionary Social Democrats repeatedly utilised the services of the bourgeois Liberals, *i.e.*, concluded numerous practical compromises with them. In 1901-2, prior to the rise of Bolshevism, the old Editorial Board of *Iskra* (comprising Plekhanov, Axelrod, Zasulich, Martov, Potresov and myself) concluded – it is true, not for long – a formal political alliance with Struve, the political leader of bourgeois Liberalism, while it was able at the same time to carry on an unceasing and merciless ideological and political struggle against bourgeois Liberalism and against the slightest manifestation of its influence in the working-class movement. The Bolsheviks always adhered to this policy. Since 1905 they systematically defended the alliance between the working class and the peasantry against the liberal bourgeoisie and Tsarism, never, however, refusing to support the bourgeoisie against Tsarism (for instance, during the second stage of elections or second ballots), and never ceasing their irreconcilable ideological and political struggle against the bourgeois revolutionary peasant party, the Socialist Revolutionaries, exposing them as petty bourgeois

democrats falsely masquerading as Socialists. During the Duma elections in 1907, the Bolsheviks for a brief period entered into a formal political *bloc* with the Socialist Revolutionaries. Between 1903 and 1912 there were periods of several years when we were formally united with the Mensheviks in a single Party, the Social Democratic Party, but we *never* ceased our ideological and political struggle against them as opportunists and carriers of bourgeois influence among the proletariat. During the war we compromised to a certain extent with the Kautskyists, with the Left Mensheviks (Martov), and with a section of the Socialist Revolutionaries (Chernov and Natanson); we had meetings with them at Zimmerwald and Kienthal and issued joint manifestoes; but we never ceased and never relaxed our ideological-political struggles against the Kautskyists, against Martov and Chernov.... At the very outbreak of the October Revolution we entered into an informal, but very important, and highly successful political *bloc* with the petty-bourgeois peasantry, and adopted the *Socialist-Revolutionary* agrarian programme in its *entirely*, without a single alteration – that is, we entered into what was undoubtedly a compromise in order to prove to the peasants that we did not want to ‘steam-roller’ them but to come to an agreement with them. At the same time, we proposed (and soon effected) a formal, political *bloc*, including participation in the Government, to the ‘Left Socialist-Revolutionaries’. The latter broke up this *bloc* after the conclusion of the Brest-Litovsk peace, and then in July 1918, rose in armed rebellion and later waged an armed struggle against us” (*Left-Wing Communism*, pp. 51-4).

“Capitalism would not be capitalism, if the ‘pure’ proletariat were not surrounded by a large number of extremely varied transitional types, from the proletarian to the semi-proletarian (who earns half his livelihood by the sale of his labour power), from the semi-proletarian to the small peasant (and petty craftsman, handicraft worker and small proprietor in general) from the small peasant to the middle peasant, and so on.... And all this makes it necessary – absolutely necessary – for the vanguard of the proletariat, for its class-conscious section, the Communist Party, to resort

to manoeuvres and compromises with the various groups of proletarians, with the various parties of the workers and small proprietors. The whole point lies in *knowing how* to apply these tactics, in such a way as to *raise* and not lower the *general* level of proletarian class consciousness, revolutionary spirit and ability to fight and to conquer' (*Left-Wing Communism*, p. 56).

A whole series of arguments is brought forward by the Trotskyists to convince the workers that the People's Front policy is a betrayal of their deepest interests, and that no greater crime can be committed than to defend bourgeois democracy. Now whether defence of bourgeois democracy is a betrayal of the best interests of the working class is dependent on concrete circumstances, such as who is defending bourgeois democracy and for what purpose. When in 1919 German reaction defended bourgeois democracy from Socialist revolution it was a crime of Social Democracy to co-operate with German reaction. But when in 1937 the most reactionary, chauvinistic and war-making sections of monopoly capitalism are attacking bourgeois democracy, whom are they attacking? They are attacking the democratic rights of the working class, they are seeking to break up the mass organisations of the workers, to massacre tens of thousands of local leaders, to imprison hundreds of thousands in concentration camps. And the Trotskyists tell us that there is no social conflict here!

"Marxism," we are told by the same Burnham, "is unalterably opposed to bourgeois democracy." This is the grotesque nonsense of one who imagines that Marxism consists of a series of fixed rules that can be applied to all situations. Was not the Democratic Republic the central slogan of the Bolsheviks up to February 1917? And even when the Bolsheviks, after the February revolution, were steering for the proletarian dictatorship, they did not mechanically counterpose bourgeois democracy to Soviet democracy in the stupid way that Trotskyists and near-Trotskyists do.

"The Bolsheviks began their victorious struggle against the Parliamentary (in reality) bourgeois republic and against the Mensheviks very cautiously, and, contrary to the views now often met with in Europe and America, the preparations for it were by no means a simple matter. We did *not* call for the overthrow of the Government at the be-



ginning of the period indicated, but explained that it was impossible to overthrow it until the composition and the mood of the Soviets had been changed.

“We did not proclaim a boycott of the bourgeois Parliament, of the Constituent Assembly, but declared – after the April (1917) Conference of our Party – officially declared in the name of the Party that a bourgeois republic with a Constituent Assembly is better than one without a Constituent Assembly, but that a ‘Workers’ and Peasants’ Republic, a Soviet Republic, is better than any bourgeois – democratic, parliamentary republic. Without such careful, thorough, elaborate and prolonged preparation we could not have obtained victory in October 1917, nor have maintained this victory” (*Left-Wing Communism*, p. 16).

Now, however, when the capitalist class is everywhere passing to the attack on bourgeois democracy, when indeed the attack on bourgeois democracy is the outstanding method of developing the class war against the working class, we are told that Marxism is unalterably opposed to bourgeois democracy, as if society were torn asunder by a struggle of abstract concepts, instead of living social classes.

Equally amazing is the conception that the building of an anti-Fascist People's Front is a return to the policy of co-operation with the capitalist class. In Spain that Front was built up in resistance to the main body of the capitalist class who were moving to a Fascist dictatorship, and who are now behind Franco. In France the powerful Employers' Federation proceeds officially to break up the People's Front Government, with, the support of the City of London and amidst the plaudits of the British capitalist class. And we are told in face of the attack of the main body of the capitalist class against the People's Front Governments everywhere, that the People's Front is merely a policy of class co-operation.

The American Trotskyist Burnham observing the situation in France at the beginning of 1934, says:

“The bourgeoisie drew appropriate conclusions, and began carefully and systematically to prepare for the transition to Fascism, just as the German bourgeoisie had done before them; began to take steps to take the Fascist movement out of the hands of the students and light-minded aris-

tocrats, and to search for a serious mass base; and began to make ready the arms, the pistols and clubs and machine guns and airplanes through which the issue would be finally decided" (*The People's Front*, p. 40).

Fenner Brockway says:

"These democratic features of the capitalist State were all very well so long as the workers were prepared to accept capitalism; when, however, the class conflict reaches the point of a struggle for power between the working class and the capitalist class, then democracy becomes a danger to capitalist society and must be destroyed. And not only the State democratic institutions. So long as self-governing, self-reliant working-class organisations remain they will be a danger. Accordingly advantage must be taken of divisions or weaknesses in the working class to destroy their organisations before they achieve the unity and purpose capable of overthrowing capitalism. That is the capitalist *raison d'être* of Fascism" (*Workers' Front*, pp. 33-4).

Yet the same people tell us that for the working class to unite its forces, and to seek an understanding with those middle sections of society which, while not Socialist or Communist, are prepared to resist the capitalist attack on democracy – is nothing more nor less than class cooperation. It is class co-operation to struggle to prevent the middle class falling under capitalist influence; it is class co-operation to seek to isolate the monopoly capitalists who are driving to Fascism. The Spanish civil war is a wicked example of class co-operation.

These arguments are backed by a lot of pseudo-scientific arguments about Fascism being the product of monopoly capitalism in decay and that therefore it can only be finally defeated by the workers' revolution. All of which is true but irrelevant.

Unemployment is a product of capitalism, but we do not therefore abandon the struggle for a higher scale of benefits; wage cuts are a product of capitalism, but no Socialist argues that the worker should accept wage cuts. Faced with an attack on wages and unemployed relief, we do not merely go about with propaganda shouting that capitalism is the cause of all the trouble.

We organise the mass struggle for wages and relief, and in the

course of the struggle we explain how capitalism is the enemy and must be got rid of before unemployment can be ended and attacks on wages stopped.

So with Fascism. We have to organise the fight to defend democracy in all its aspects, and in the course of the struggle to defend democracy we will succeed in demonstrating that the capitalist system is the enemy of democracy.

The capitalist class, according to our Trotskyists, is attacking democracy. It is seeking to manipulate "middle- class discontent through a demagogic pseudo-radicalism", in order to obtain the necessary mass basis for installing Fascism.

What, in these circumstances, can the working class do in order to frustrate the designs of the capitalist class?

"The 'alliance between the working class and the middle class,' says Burnham, "can be formed only if the working class holds the leading position in that alliance, only if the alliance is founded on the clear, frank, unafraid assertion of the *proletarian* programme for workers' power and for Socialism....

"Marxism insists that this alliance can be formed only on the basis of the independent leadership of the working class, on the basis of the class struggle and the proletarian programme for workers' power and for Socialism" (*The Peoples Front*, pp, 27-8, 30).

As "Workers' Power" is a synonym for the dictatorship of the proletariat, the basis of an alliance between the working class and the middle class, according to Trotskyism, is the dictatorship of the proletariat.

The stupidity of this is more than evident. Neither in France nor Spain in 1936 did a majority even of the working class accept the dictatorship of the proletariat. This is even more evident in Britain and America. You cannot get an alliance even of the various sections of the working class on the basis of "Workers' Power and Socialism" – let alone an alliance of the working class with the middle class.

"If, in Russia to-day," wrote Lenin in 1920, "after two and a half years of unprecedented victories over the bourgeoisie of Russia, and the Entente, we were to make the

‘recognition of the dictatorship’ a condition of membership in the trade unions, we should be doing a stupid thing, we should damage our influence over the masses, we should be helping the Mensheviks. For the whole task of the Communists is to be able to *convince* the backward elements, to be able to work *among* them, and not to *fence themselves off* from them by artificial and childish ‘Left-Wing’ slogans” (*Left-Wing Communism*, pp. 37-8).

What Lenin would have said about people posing as his disciples who insisted on “Workers’ Power and Socialism” being the basis of a compromise between middle-class democrats and the workers can easily be imagined.

The basis for a working-class united front against Fascism at this stage can only be a programme of action on which the reformist organisations are prepared to fight. If we desire to extend that United Front to bring in the middle sections of capitalist society we cannot say to them “come to us on our terms”. We must take into account what are their grievances, what are they prepared to fight for, and if a basis for joint struggle against the Fascist or reactionary tendencies of the capitalist class can be arrived at – that, and not the programme of the revolutionary section of the working class, must be the basis of the alliance between the working class and the middle class at this stage.

“The duty of the Revolutionary Socialists is to attract the middle class behind the banner of Socialism,” cries Mr. Brockway with the air of one who has discovered a truth that has hitherto been concealed from mortal man. True, and we have a similar duty to the backward sections of the working class; and, as Lenin pointed out, we cannot do it by propaganda alone.

“To throw the vanguard alone into the decisive battle when the whole class, when the broad masses have not yet taken up a position either of direct support of the vanguard, or at least of benevolent neutrality towards it and one in which they cannot possibly support the enemy, would not merely be folly, but a crime. And in order that actually the whole class, that actually the broad masses of toilers and those oppressed by capital may take up such a position, propaganda and agitation alone are not sufficient. For this the masses must have their own political experience....

"The immediate task that confronts the class-conscious vanguard of the international labour movement, *i.e.*, the Communist Parties, groups and trends, is to be able to *lead* the broad masses (now, for the most part, slumbering, apathetic, hidebound, inert and dormant) to their new position, or, rather, to be able to lead *not only* their own Party but also the masses during the course of their approach, their transition to the new position" (*Left-Wing Communism*, pp. 72-3).

The capitalist class is everywhere becoming hostile to parliamentary democracy. In some cases it is beginning the preliminary sapping and undermining. In others it is passing to the direct attack. And democracy, we are told by the Trotskyists and the near Trotskyists, is not merely parliamentary institutions, but the democratic rights of the workers, the right of their mass organisations, the unions, the co-operatives and the political parties. In other words, the capitalist class is attacking institutions and rights valued by millions who are not yet Socialists. Is there here the basis for the commencement of a great struggle against the capitalist class? The Trotskyists and their jackals answer in the negative: Burnham writes:

"To defend democracy in the sense of defending the capitalist State is simply to defend the class enemy" (*The People's Front*, p. 34).

Note the trickery here. The Fascist State is also a capitalist State. No one proposes to defend it. But what Burnham means is "to defend the parliamentary democratic institutions of the capitalist State in the period when the capitalist class is engaged in undermining or directly attacking them is helping the class enemy". This nonsense is supported by the argument that in order to realise Socialism the working class must smash the capitalist State. Of course it must. But if a revolutionary party of the working class which is out for Socialism finds that the capitalist class is trying to make the attainment of this aim more difficult by attacking parliamentary institutions, is it in the interests of this party, if it is not in a position to seize power, to try and beat back the capitalist attacks on these institutions?

"The last way to win the middle class is to compromise with capitalism," announces Fenner Brockway. "To en-

courage them to associate with the working class by surrendering Socialism for 'democratic capitalism' – that is by throwing over the distinctive creative programme of the working class and adopting the dying philosophy of the middle class – this course may win the support of a certain section of the middle class for a time, and as the crisis develops such allies will prove worthless in the struggle because they have not been steered to its true character. The only way to bring reliable middle-class recruits into the working-class movement is by convincing them of the necessity not merely to associate with the working class in the defence of democracy, but to identify themselves with the working class in the class struggle. A merely defensive compromising policy will thrust the middle class on the Fascist side, because there they will see boldness, initiative and dynamic power. The boldness, initiative and dynamic power of Revolutionary Socialism can alone stand up to Fascism."

Every concrete problem of the struggle is submerged beneath this cataract of empty phrases. We are told that if the main body of the capitalist class is attacking democracy, it is an impermissible compromise with capitalism for the working class to join with other democratic sections of the population in bearing off the attack. To resist legislation that is clearing the way for Fascism, to fight for the immediate demands of the toiling middle class is to "throw over the distinctive programme of the working class and adopt the dying philosophy of the middle class"; as if an agreement for a struggle round a series of concrete demands means throwing over one's own distinctive programme. The question is posed as if the problem were *to win reliable middle-class recruits* for the working-class movement and not the more pressing and immediate problem of rendering large masses of the middle class immune from Fascist propaganda and bringing them into action against the Fascist tendencies of the capitalist class. We are told that this course may win a certain section of the middle class for a time, but as the crisis develops such allies will prove worthless. But even on this hypothesis, to win certain sections of the middle class for a time is to delay the attainment of a mass basis for Fascism. And what is to prevent the working class, having won them for a time on the basis of a policy of resis-

tance to Fascism, cementing the alliance on a still higher level with more definite anti-capitalist objectives?

Such middle-class allies, argues Brockway, will prove worthless in the struggle because they have not been steeled to its true character. So the conception is that people are steeled to the struggle by propaganda and then enter it and give displays of their steelness. Surely it is evident that people most speedily acquire a fundamental understanding of the forces at work through the experience gained in the actual struggle? They are steeled in the process of struggle and not by propaganda divorced from struggle.

Behind all this noisy clamour of the Trotskyists and near-Trotskyists is an evasion of the struggle. They do not want anti-Fascist alliance now on the basis which is possible. They do not want to set the masses in motion now in the struggle for their immediate demands, because at the outset the masses will confine themselves to aims which do not involve the replacement of capitalism by Socialism, or parliamentary democracy by workers' power. They tell the middle classes that they must come into association with the workers only on the basis of the programme of revolutionary Socialism – “the distinctive creative programme of the working class” – and if they don't they may go their own way, or that of the Fascists. Thus under a display of swagger and bluff the Trotskyists and their ideological fellow travellers advocate *desertion from the present-day battle*, with much loud talk of what they will do in the battle of the future, if the class enemy will be gracious enough to fight on their ground and if the mass of the people will be gracious enough to follow them into battle. The ideology of Trotskyism in relation to the People's Front is thus a cover for desertion and sabotage.

### THE PEOPLE'S FRONT IN FRANCE

We have now had experience of the People's Front for over two years in France and in Spain. Has it accomplished anything? Does it give great hopes for the future?

Let us remember the situation in which the People's Front developed in those countries. Fascism had spread from Germany to Austria and Spain. It was becoming increasingly bold in France. The world press was full of the rapidly growing movement of De La Rocque. How soon he would come to power was being discussed on all hands.

In France a left radical government under Daladier had been driven out of office by the forces of Big Business, utilising not only the reactionaries in the army, but also the Fascist bands. Not ten per cent of the workers were in the Unions, and sweeping wage cuts were on the order of the day.

Trotsky estimated this situation as follows:

“All of Europe has entered an era of economic and political counter-reforms. The policy of despoiling and suffocating the masses stems not from the caprices of the reaction but from the decomposition of the capitalist system. That is the fundamental fact that must be assimilated by every worker if he is not to be duped by hollow phrases.”

“If the political evolution is compared with that of Germany, the Doumergue government and its possible successors correspond to Brüning, Papen and Schleicher governments which filled in the gap between Weimar and Hitler. There is a difference which politically can assume enormous importance.... French Fascism does not yet represent a mass force. On the other hand Bonapartism finds support neither very sure nor very stable, but nevertheless a mass support, in the Radicals. Between these two factors there is an inner link. By the social character of its base Radicalism is the party of the petty bourgeoisie. In other words Fascism can develop in France, above all at the expense of the Radicals. This process is already under way although still in the early stages” (L. Trotsky, *Whither France?*).

Eighteen months later Trotsky, surveying the great strike movement, was shouting:

“This is a strike. This is the open rallying of the oppressed against the oppressors. This is the classic beginning of a revolution” (L. Trotsky, *Whither France?*).

The stupid pessimism of the first estimation is only equalled by the senseless exaggeration of the second. But there was a basis for the change in the estimation, because within eighteen months the whole relation of forces between the Fascist bourgeoisie on the one hand and the working class on the other had changed to the advantage of the working class. Trade union unity had united the indus-



trial workers; gigantic strikes were taking place instead of submission to wage cuts; instead of Radicalism losing to the Fascists, to the extent that it was losing at all it was losing to the Socialists and the Communists. The forty-hour week and holidays with pay were put on the Statute Book.

What had brought about the change? Obviously the policy pursued by the working-class movement since the middle of 1934 – the policy of the United Front and the Popular Front.

This is admitted by opponents of the Popular Front itself:

“The reality of the Spanish experience – reinforced later, as we shall see, in France – is that the Popular Front electoral alliance recreated working-class hope, confidence and militancy. When such feeling stirs the working class into action it is absurd for Revolutionary Socialists to ignore it because of a theoretical objection to the Popular Front. It is a first revolutionary duty to be scrupulous in facing realities. Our duty is to analyse the objective conditions and to draw the correct revolutionary lesson.

“It is not enough to retort that the fact of working-class unity, apart from the alliance with the Liberals, was in itself responsible for the action of the workers and peasants. The new confidence of spirit and practice came also from the consciousness of a strength not before realised, the formidable and wide character of the alliance against the reactionaries which the Popular Front represented. It should not be forgotten that the capitalist liberals formed numerically the strongest unit in the alliance (*i.e.*, in Spain. *J.R.C.*).

“Nor is it enough to place all the emphasis on the fact that it was the action of the workers and peasants prior to the formal decrees of the Government which achieved the demands dominant in their minds. The opportunity favourable to such action would not have come without the Popular Front victory; such action would not have been subsequently legalised (and therefore allowed to operate without suppression by the State forces) had there been no Popular Front Government” (Brockway, *Workers' Front*, pp. 76-7).

“The Popular Front (in France) came to be regarded as having an almost mythical and magical power. It swept the country. When the General Election of June, 1936, came,

the Socialist Party was returned as the largest Party, and the Communist Party doubled its vote... The election victory created the same sense of elation and strength amongst the French workers as it had done amongst the Spanish workers.... In France their new sense of power led the workers immediately and generally to demand big improvements in conditions from their employers. There have been few occurrences in working-class history more remarkable than the stay-in-strike movement which swept practically every worker within its scope in and about Paris, and which spread to many other French towns as well" (*Workers' Front*, pp. 152-3).

Here in a nutshell is the case for the Popular Front. It gives the workers a sense of power that the united front of the workers alone could not give; it leads to the setting up of governments which do not seek to impede the advance of the workers; it leads to a change in the relation of forces to the advantage of the working class as against the Fascist bourgeoisie.

The Trotskyists, wiser than Mr. Brockway, are not prepared to concede those victories to the Popular Front. The victories achieved by the workers, the complete change of the situation between 1934 and 1936, are, according to the Trotskyists, due entirely to the spontaneous advance of the workers, which the Popular Front is hemming in! How the workers changed from spontaneous retreat to spontaneous advance, the Trotskyists do not say. Better, they think, leave it as an unexplained miracle, rather than admit that it is a product of the Popular Front policy, which the Trotskyists have tried to wreck from its inception. But why invoke miracles? The Trotskyists, when considering the defeats in Germany and Austria, blame the policy pursued by the working-class organisations. When they are forced to recognise that the relation of forces in France and Spain has changed in favour of the working class, they will not admit that this change is a product of the changed policy pursued by the working-class organisations. No, it is a miracle not to be explained.

What were the Trotskyists advocating as an alternative to the Popular Front in 1934? Would that alternative policy have brought greater results than the Popular Front policy, or was it a policy of organised disruption concealed by Left phases? True, the Trotsky-

ists advocate a "united front", but it was a "united front" without the great masses of the reformist workers.

"The political campaign of the united front must base itself upon a well-elaborated transition programme. *i.e.*, on a system of measures with which a workers' and peasants' government can assure the transition from capitalism to socialism" (L. Trotsky, *Whither France?*).

In other words, the Trotskyists asked the revolutionary section of the working class to propose a united front to the other sections of the working class on the basis of a full-blooded revolutionary programme, a proposal which would have led to the revolutionary section isolating itself from the rest of the working class.

In addition to this policy of revolutionary self-isolation, the Trotskyists clamoured for the working class to form an armed workers' militia to attack and destroy the organisations of the Fascists. This meant that the revolutionary vanguard of the working class was first to isolate itself by a caricature of a united front policy, and then it was to plunge into a policy of senseless adventurism which would have invited an attack from the reactionary government then in office.

Now in the struggle against Fascism the formation of an armed workers' militia may be necessary when appropriate conditions for it exist. The Communist Party of Spain was foremost in the formation of such a militia in the spring and early summer of 1936. But to pursue a policy of isolating the revolutionary sections of the working class, and then to seek prematurely to create an armed militia, is lunacy when indulged in by immature young workers, but is calculated disruption when recommended by experienced politicians.

As to what the workers should have done in relation to the elections in France and in Spain, we are told by Trotsky:

"Had revolutionary working-class candidates been run on the second ballot in all electoral districts in which the Socialists and Communists withdrew in favour of the Radicals they would no doubt have obtained a considerable number of votes. It is unfortunate that not a single organisation was to be found capable of such initiative" (*Whither France?*).

In other words, Trotsky wanted the workers to pursue a policy

that would have let the reaction in on the second ballot and involved a parliament much further to the Right than that actually elected. Thus under the guise of Left phrases the Trotskyists would have disrupted the struggle against Fascism.

The alternative policy, which the other critic of the Popular-Front, Mr. Fenner Brockway, would have adopted, can be seen from a study of the *New Leader* during 1935 and 1936. It was a policy of the United Front without the Popular Front. To-day, Mr. Brockway has to admit, as we have shown, that the United Front alone could not itself have created the enthusiasm and activity of the workers and the peasants. "The new confidence of spirit and practice came also from a consciousness of strength not before realised, the formidable and wide character of the alliance against the reactionaries which the Popular Front represented."

We thank Mr. Brockway for the admission that the policy which he advocated in 1935 and 1936 could not have achieved the results that the Popular Front policy did. True, Mr. Brockway in 1938 advocates a new policy which he declares will have all the advantages and none of the disadvantages of the Popular Front policy, but that is wisdom after the event – after the Popular Front tactic has transformed the situation to the advantage of the working class.

Let us now return to the situation in France and Spain after the Popular Front electoral victories, and see the role that Trotskyism played there.

Immediately after the electoral victory in France there occurred the great wave of stay-in-strikes for improved conditions and recognition of the Unions. The stay-in-strikes had purely economic objectives, and were first tried out by the workers in the aircraft industry, who adopted this method because they feared that the unemployed would take their place if they left the factories. Between the aircraft strike and the start of a general wave of stay-in-strikes there was the mighty demonstration of one million people to the wall of the Communards on May 16th, 1936. A few days later the tidal wave of stay-in-strikes commenced. The whole movement was helped by the fact that the Blum Government which resulted from the Popular Front election victory did not clear the factories by force, as was demanded by the reactionaries and as a Right-Wing Government would certainly have done. In this situation the Trotskyists played the role of *provocateurs*. It was the declared policy of

the workers, while occupying the factories, to take care of the machinery and ensure that no damage was done. If there had been the slightest tendency to sabotage, public opinion would have turned sharply against the strikers. Yet in quite a number of factories the Trotskyists had to be restrained by the workers from committing senseless and criminal acts of sabotage. They further attempted on many occasions to keep a strike going when the workers had been granted their full demands and all justification for continuing the struggle had ceased. The Trotskyists, who, wherever they appeared, were being actively restrained by the workers, declared that "the French Revolution is here", and advocated the setting up of Soviets and the seizure of power. The British Trotskyist, James, outlining the Trotskyist policy of what should be done, said:

"Breaking at once with the Popular Front the Communist Party could even then have called for the formation of Soviets. The response would have been instantaneous. 'Les Soviets partout.' The words were ringing through all France as Liberté, Egalité, Fraternité had resounded in the days of July 1789.

"Still more easy would it have been to demand the expulsion of the bourgeois from the Government. The Soviets could have dealt with the economic demands as a whole, and linked with them political demands, the immediate arrest of the leaders and the disarming of the Fascist Leagues, the dismissal of the most reactionary officers, the improvement of the living conditions of the soldiers, and the democratisation of the army, which would have split it for and against the workers at one stroke. The Government was powerless.... In France in June 1936, the particular method of attack chosen by the workers, seizure of the factories, had made the situation absolutely impossible for the bourgeois. They could not send the soldiers into the factories to shoot a million workers out of them. How many factories would have survived the wreck? And in such circumstances no army can be trusted" (James, *World Revolution*, pp. 393-4).

The policy was clear. The Trotskyists were calling the workers to transform the economic strikes into civil war, for the purpose of setting up a Workers' Government. Now no Communist would for a moment object to a revolutionary struggle to set up a Workers'

Government given reasonable possibilities of success in that struggle. There can be no question that a Workers' Government in France would make such a difference to the entire European situation that, given the possibilities of setting up and maintaining such a Government, there should be no hesitation. But what was the actual situation in France in 1936? The Communist and the official Socialist Parties combined had polled 3,341,132 votes out of a total of 9,838,943 votes cast (in the first ballot). They had polled those votes not on the perspective of an early seizure of power by the working class, but on the basis of the perspective of a Popular Front Government. There was no section of the working class that showed by its words or its actions that it believed that an immediate seizure of power was possible, and there was still less indication of any support for that policy amongst the fighting forces. What the Trotskyists were urging was a mad adventure which would have split the Popular Front, split the workers from the petty bourgeoisie, split the vanguard of the workers from the rest of the class, and led to an easy triumph for reaction. Was this simply the advocacy of a few young fools who were overestimating the situation, or were there besides the fools a few people who knew exactly what they were doing? That these latter people expected anyone to follow their advice it is impossible to believe. Their purpose was not Soviets, but disorganisation. By advocating the transformation of the economic strikes into civil war, they hoped to alienate public sympathy, to drive the middle class away from support of the strike movement, to drive the radicals into the arms of the Right, and to sow hesitations in the ranks of the backward workers who were coming wholeheartedly into the strike as an economic movement, but who were certainly far from ready to participate in civil war. No clearer example of an attempt to sabotage a great popular movement by "Left" trickery could possibly be given. Right in the midst of the great wave of economic strikes the Trotskyists sought to split the movement and facilitate the counter-offensive of the employers.

Now for the strategy of Mr. Brockway – not, we repeat, the strategy that he advocated in 1936, but the strategy that he evolved after the event – in short: how Napoleon could have won the battle of Waterloo.

Mr. Brockway's alternative strategy to that of the Popular Front has two aspects, an electoral aspect and a mass struggle aspect.

The electoral policy he proscribes for France is as follows:

“The experience of France strengthens the arguments used in an earlier chapter from the experience of Spain – a Popular Front was a correct temporary tactic for election purposes, it was a wrong tactic as a permanent alliance. Suppose this had been the tactic adopted; *first*, a Workers’ Front alliance between all the working-class forces, Socialist, Communist and Trade Union, with a challenging Socialist programme; *second*, an electoral understanding with the Radical-Socialist Party on certain specific agreed issues, with the arrangement that the Workers’ Front parties should support in the second ballot Radical-Socialist candidates against the reactionaries in constituencies where the Radical-Socialists were above the Workers’ Front candidates in the first ballot – and vice versa; *third*, that this arrangement should be made for the common object of defeating the reactionaries and overcoming the Fascist menace and in the interest of the Parties concerned, but that the parties to it should have freedom to review the situation after the election, and would not be committed to a long-term alliance limiting their liberty of action on issues where they differed” (*Workers’ Front*, pp. 154-5).

Now let us look at this strategy. The Popular Front, instead of being an attempt to construct a class alliance of the working class with the petty bourgeoisie, is to be, on Mr. Brockway’s advice, a purely electoral expedient in which the Socialist, Communist and Radical-Socialist parties agreed to support each other at the second ballot in the elections. If Mr. Brockway thinks that this is something new, he should study the tactics of the Left Bloc current in French politics for many years. He will find he is reviving an old and outworn reformist policy. The essence of the People’s Front was that it was not merely an electoral arrangement. It led mighty mass demonstrations, it brought mass pressure on the reactionary governments which were preparing the war for Fascism, it carried out united actions against the Fascist bands when they appeared in the streets. It is because the People’s Front was a mass movement and not a mere electoral alliance that it was able to bring about that profound shifting of class forces that led to the electoral victory of May 1936. A mere electoral agreement could not have led to this result. The first part of Mr. Brockway’s plan would, on the contrary, have

stopped the shift of the forces of the French people to the Left.

Then the organisations of the working class were to go forward with two immediate programmes and two perspectives; the challenging revolutionary Socialist programme and the agreement with the Radicals on certain "specific agreed issues"; they were to advocate as immediately practical the Revolutionary Workers' Government based on Soviets and a Left Parliamentary Government with working-class support. The workers' organisations were to tell the Radicals beforehand that whether they co-operated together in Parliament on the agreed specific issues or whether the workers' organisations went forward alone to a Revolutionary Workers' Government would depend on the outcome of the election; but they would make it clear to the Radicals that wherever their vote was higher than that of the workers' candidates in the first round, they would receive the votes of the workers' organisation in the second round. Mr. Brockway says: "There is no doubt that the Radical-Socialists would have accepted such a proposal." We do not see why they should not, for all the advantage of such a proposal is on their side. This Smart Alec electoral amalgam if adopted would certainly give the Radical candidates in the second round the votes of those who followed the working-class organisations. But it would at the same time have driven Radical votes away from the working-class candidates. For the essence of this proposal is that it leaves the petty bourgeois Radicals completely in the dark as to the intentions of the working-class parties. It is neither a short-term alliance in which the workers say to the petty bourgeoisie: "We will go together with you to the attainment of certain limited objectives", nor a long-term alliance in which an agreement for co-operation in the carrying through of an extended programme is put forward. It is an agreement on nothing but mutual support during an election the workers' parties saying in effect to the Radicals: "As to what we propose to do after the election, you had better wait and see." No proposal could be better calculated to prevent the Radicals from voting for the candidates of the workers' parties in the second round. The second part of Mr. Brockway's plan is, in fact, one for securing a Chamber of Deputies on the right of the one that was actually elected.

What a spectacle of a workers' party would have been presented to the world if such proposals had been adopted! The leadership of the party is depicted as asking itself: will we make a revolu-



tion, or will we co-operate with the Radicals in securing the passing of certain items of legislation directed against the reaction? And it finds an answer to this question not on the basis of an analysis of the class forces and of the class aims, but on the basis of election results. Lenin told the leaders of the working class operating in a revolutionary situation:

“...In these circumstances one must count, not up to a thousand – as is really done by the propagandist who belongs to a small group which does not yet lead the masses – but one must count in millions and tens of millions. In these circumstances one must not only ask oneself whether the vanguard of the revolutionary class has been convinced but also whether the historically effective forces of *all* classes – positively of all the classes in the given society without exception – are aligned in such a way that the decisive battle is fully matured, in such a way that (1) all the class forces hostile to us have become sufficiently confused, are sufficiently at loggerheads with each other, have sufficiently weakened themselves in a struggle beyond their capacities; that (2) all the vacillating, wavering, unstable, intermediate elements – the petty bourgeoisie and the petty-bourgeois democracy as distinct from the bourgeoisie – have sufficiently exposed themselves before the people and have sufficiently disgraced themselves through their practical bankruptcy; and that (3) among the proletariat a mass mood in favour of supporting the most determined, unreservedly bold, revolutionary action against the bourgeoisie has arisen and begins to grow powerfully. Then, indeed, revolution is ripe; then, indeed, if we have correctly gauged all the conditions outlined above and if we have chosen the moment rightly, our victory is assured” (Lenin, *Left-Wing Communism*, pp. 73-4).

But the French working-class leaders, following the Brockway plan, would have dispensed with such an analysis, and would have waited on the results of the election to tell them whether to have a revolution or co-operation with the Radicals. How closely Right-Wing cretinism interweaves with Left adventurist nonsense in the synthetic strategy of those who have somersaulted from reformism into ultra-Left phrase-mongering!

The next step in the Brockway strategy is:

“Immediately after the election the Workers’ Front would have formed a government and would have had control of the army and the police” (*Workers’ Front*, p. 155).

It is clear by the context that Mr. Brockway is thinking of the workers’ front forming a parliamentary government. But whoa! How does it get into a position to be able to do so? The Communist Party and the official Socialist Party had 218 deputies out of a total of 618. How were they in a position to form such a government? Mr. Brockway does not and cannot tell us. And when did revolutionary Socialists (and Mr. Brockway lays claim to this title) imagine that they could, by virtue of a parliamentary majority, control the army and police for working-class purposes? In a previous chapter in his book Mr. Brockway says:

“The hope that capitalism can be transformed to Socialism through the means of the capitalist State – its Parliament, civil services, armed forces and judiciary – is an illusion.”

Very true, and it is an illusion for the very important reason, among others, that a working-class majority in Parliament cannot by that fact control the army and the police for its own purposes.

But Mr. Brockway sets up a Government of the United Front on the basis of a parliamentary minority, which in some mysterious manner gets control of the army and the police for working-class purposes.

“Instead of urging the evacuation of the work-places by the workers... the Workers’ Front, strong both industrially and politically, could have seized the opportunity to secure permanent control over the work-places in the interests of the workers – in a sentence, could have carried through the essential change of the social revolution” (*Workers’ Front*, pp. 155-6).

Thus is Lenin outdistanced. He thought it was a matter of considerable complexity and difficulty to lead the mass of the people up to the point of storming capitalism. With Mr. Brockway it is ever so easy. A minority of workers’ deputies becomes in some unexplained way the government. Are they, in spite of their minority

position, sent for by the President of the Republic? Do they submit their programme to the Chamber and is it approved? We don't know. Substituting wishful thinking for an examination of the actual situation, Mr. Brockway makes them the government, and they immediately proceed, evidently without consulting the Chamber of Deputies (for this is a parliamentary government operating in dreamland), to make the Social Revolution. Of course Mr. Brockway says the capitalists would have resisted, but a section of the army and a section of the middle class was ready for the Social Revolution and things would have gone all right, and "the whole history of these years might have been changed".

Here is the new version of the legend that there was a revolutionary situation in France in May 1936 and the wicked Popular Front held it back. Not a single one of the "Revolutionaries" who are now shouting about a revolutionary situation in France in 1936 and the possibilities of a successful workers' rising at that period were then making the political or technical preparations for the seizure of power. Mr. Brockway's French colleague, M. Marceau Pivert, was not organising the combat squads of the working class, nor was Mr. Brockway organising the British working class to support the impending French revolution. On the contrary, the I.L.P. press was more concerned in 1935 and early 1936 with the advance of Fascism than with the impending revolution. But when the victories of the People's Front in France and Spain changed the relation of forces to the advantage of the working class, those who had all along opposed the tactics which had brought about this change come out and shout: "If it had not been for the People's Front we would have made a revolution." Thus is Trotskyist sabotage and "Left" Socialist political bankruptcy covered by resounding revolutionary phrases.

### THE PEOPLE'S FRONT IN SPAIN

The story of Spain is even more striking. Following the defeat of the General Strike and the Asturias rising at the end of 1934, the working-class movement is driven underground. There are 60,000 working-class prisoners, including some of the best known leaders; there is widespread victimisation of leading militants, and wages and working conditions are worsened all round. It is under these circumstances that, on the initiative of the Communist Party, the

workers' front is broadened out into a People's Front by an agreement with the workers' parties and the Left Republicans. "The idea of a Left alliance of the working class and the Liberal Parties swept all before it," says Mr. Brockway. The result was that when the growing crisis in the ranks of the reaction led to a general election a Popular Front victory was achieved.

The working class, seizing its opportunity, proceeded to release the prisoners and to build up the trade-union organisations, while the peasants in many parts of the country proceeded to seize the land. Never was there such a transformation in the opportunities of a working-class movement in a capitalist country as between January and March 1936 in Spain, and it was the Popular Front, sweeping all before it, which had brought about the change.

What was the role of the Trotskyists and the followers of Mr. Brockway with regard to this movement? What has been their subsequent role in the Civil War? Our researches will be simplified somewhat, for we will find both sections in the same political party – the P.O.U.M. – the "party of Marxist unity". This party was led by Joaquin Maurin, who had parted with the Communist Party on Right-Wing and nationalist grounds, and Andreas Nin, one of the closest colleagues of Trotsky in the Soviet Union between 1925 and 1927.

It is denied both by the I.L.P. and the Trotskyists that the P.O.U.M. was a Trotskyist party. Formally they were correct. The P.O.U.M. was associated not with the Fourth International of Trotsky, but with the International Bureau for Revolutionary Socialist Unity whose headquarters are in London and whose secretary is Mr. Fenner Brockway. Indeed it appears that the Spanish Trotskyists were roundly denounced by Trotsky when they preferred to unite with Maurin's group to form the P.O.U.M. rather than enter the Socialist Party of Spain. Still it is one of the privileges of Trotskyists to be roundly denounced by Trotsky at some time or other. Quarrels between Trotsky and his followers and between rival Trotskyist sects are by no means infrequent. On all essentials, however, the P.O.U.M. was Trotskyist – in its attitude to the Soviet Union, to the Popular Front, to the problems of the Spanish Revolution, it was infinitely closer to Trotsky than it was to any of the parties in Mr. Brockway's group. Within it there was a group called the "Bolshevik-Leninists" who were for every dot and comma in the Revelation of Trotsky.

This party was at first hostile to the tactic of the Popular- Front, denouncing it in unmeasured terms and strengthening the opposition of the Anarchists and the Anarcho-Syndicalists to the Popular Front, but as the idea of a Left alliance swept all before it, the P.O.U.M. consented to enter the alliance for electoral purposes and benefited accordingly. Immediately after the election was over it announced that it had resumed its freedom of action and it commenced sharply to denounce the Popular Front. When, however, the date for the municipal elections drew near it drew close to the Popular Front again; but on the elections being postponed it promptly returned to its anti-Popular Front standpoint.

The tasks confronting the workers after the February parliamentary elections were to build up and extend their organisations, to secure an agreement on the main lines of advance, and to exert the full pressure of the working class within and without the Popular Front on the lines agreed upon. This was necessary in order that the great fighting spirit manifesting itself amongst the workers and peasants should be fully organised and that it should not be allowed to dissipate itself in sporadic revolts. It was necessary to lead the masses not only to obtain immediate improvements from the capitalists but to struggle for a government more to the Left than the Republican Government which emerged from the February elections.

Some advances in this direction were undoubtedly achieved. The Red Unions under Communist influence went into the U.C.T. (The Socialist Trade Union Federation); Socialist and Communist youth came together in a united organisation; relations between the Anarchist and Socialist trade union federations improved, and negotiations were opened for the unity of the Socialist and Communist Parties.

The 99 per cent and 100 per cent Trotskyists of the P.O.U.M. hampered this growing unity in every possible way, and instead of co-operating in the effort to organise the mass movement so that the maximum results could be obtained with the minimum of sacrifice, they encouraged every excess on the part of the angry peasants and workers. Attempts to organise and discipline this spontaneous movement were dubbed counter-revolutionary.

The American Trotskyist Morrow writes:

“The hated clergy, rulers of the ‘black two years’, were

also dealt with in the time-honoured manner of oppressed peasants. Especially after it was clear the Government would not touch the clergy, the masses took matters into their own hands. This consisted not only of burning churches, but of ordering the priests to leave the villages under sentence of death if they returned. Out of abject loyalty to the Government, the Stalinists vilified the struggle against the clergy: 'Remember that the setting fire to churches and monasteries brings support to the counter-revolution' (*International Press Correspondence*, August 1st, 1936). They were listened to no more than was Azana. In the province of Valencia, where the workers have now smashed the counter-revolution so decisively, there was scarcely a functioning church in June" (Felix Morrow, *Civil War in Spain*, pp. 42-3).

The latter assertion is worthy of General Franco's propaganda department, but we need not linger over it. Instead of revolutionary tactics, the Trotskyists ask the revolutionary movement to follow behind and endorse excesses because they are in "the time-honoured manner of oppressed peasants". The efforts of the Communist Party to explain that such activity has nothing in common with revolutionary tactics are spat upon. Yet one of the most important problems facing the Spanish workers was to win religious-minded peasants for the Popular Front. Church burning hindered this vital task and helped the counter-revolution. So much so that in various parts of the country, before the Fascist rebellion, Fascist groups were caught red-handed burning churches. They were under no illusion as to the use they could make of the burning of churches "in the time-honoured manner of oppressed peasants". The resistance of the mass of Catholic workers outside Spain to the organisation of effective solidarity action is but part of the price paid for the burning of churches.

Another method of Fascist and bourgeois provocation was to exhaust the workers by prolonging strikes after all the realisable gains had been obtained.

"The construction workers of Madrid, over 80,000 strong, went on strike, their main demand being a 36-hour week. The government ordered the workers to arbitrate; and decided on a 40-hour week. The U.G.T. and the Com-

munists agreed and instructed their followers to return to work. The C.N.T., however, refused to accept the Government settlement and, what is more, the U.G.T. workers followed the Anarchists" (Morrow, *Civil War in Spain*, p. 40).

Here is an example of how to bleed a strike white. The workers win a 40-hour week, and Anarchists and Trotskyists call for its prolongation in order to secure the 36-hour week by a district sectional strike. In all such struggles the Trotskyists fished in troubled waters, attacking the Government, seeking to drive a wedge between the two union federations, and to divide the Socialists and the Communists.

The employing class sought to reply to the great wave of strikes and peasant unrest by stimulating the Fascist organisations to launch a murder campaign against the workers' leaders, similar to that launched by the Italian Fascists in 1921 and 1922. The Fascist bands were however worsted in the conflicts with the workers and the Government suppressed the Fascist organisations, and at the same time proceeded to the cleansing of the police. It proceeded more cautiously and slowly to deal with the army, as it feared to precipitate a rebellion; for notwithstanding the assertion made by Mr. Fenner Brockway, the possession of a parliamentary majority does not give control of the armed forces. This does not mean that the Government could not have done more than it did, but it is foolish to criticise it as if the cleansing of the officers' corps could be accomplished easily, by a simple administrative act. The real case against the Government is that when the approaching rebellion loomed large in the days immediately before the outbreak of July 19th, the Government did not take all the appropriate emergency measures that should have been taken.

The workers' organisations did. There was a situation when the workers' militia was not a nonsensical slogan but a vital necessity, and all the workers' organisations pressed ahead with their plans for meeting a Fascist rising. Their preparations were not in vain, and when the military rebellion broke out, the workers, co-operating with the police, crushed it in most of the main towns in Spain. The capitalists and landlords fled, the workers seized the factories, the peasants occupied the land, the militias of the political parties and the unions were built up and the defence of the people against the rebels commenced in earnest.

Soon the question of the policy to be pursued in order to obtain victory began to emerge. Had the People's Front outlived its usefulness, or was it still the best possible expression of the will of the Spanish people? Could the maximum of support both nationally and internationally be rallied behind a People's Front Government, or would the best results be obtained by the workers' organisations excluding all others from the Government and proceeding to rule alone?

If the workers proceeded to rule alone, what would be the effect on the peasants and the town petty bourgeoisie? Would they regard the struggle with indifference and be even prepared to support Franco? Should the newly elected Parliament be overthrown by a *putsch* from the Left in reply to Franco's *putsch* from the Right, so that the struggle would appear to be one between two factions both equally hostile to the Parliament that the Spanish people had elected a few months before?

In replying to these questions not only the national but also the international situation had to be taken into account. It was fundamentally different from that of 1917, as we have seen in the previous chapters. The Communist Party, taking all the facts into account, declared that the Popular Front must remain, for the reason that any other policy would have narrowed the base of the Government inside Spain; narrowed support from outside and led to the defeat of the Government. Early in the Civil War the Communists put forward a programme which they believed would make for the maximum unity of the anti-Fascist forces. The programme called for:

Full power to the People's Front Government;

The formation of a People's Regular Army, under a single command, composed of those officers and rank and file soldiers who had proved themselves in the Civil War.

At the same time the Communist Party proceeded to build up the Fifth Regiment as the nucleus of a model army.

This programme met with furious opposition from the P.O.U.M., the Anarchists and even some Left Socialists. One of the saddest aspects of the popular struggle in Spain was the unnecessary waste of life caused by the division of the armed forces of the Government into party militias, whose jealousies and rivalries were the direct cause of many an unnecessary debacle. German observers



have described the situation outside Huesca in the early stages of the Civil War:

"Outside Huesca there were the Catalan militia, some centuries drawn from the Civil Guard, and others from the P.O.U.M., battalions of the F.A.I. and next to them the United Socialists.

"In all these groups there were brave fighters. But the various leaders had diametrically opposed notions of the correct tactics. Acting in concert the militia would have swamped Huesca. Each individual group operated separately and was separately defeated.

"The Socialist group put forward a joint plan of operations, but the neighbouring battalions said that this was superfluous.

"One of the next few days you will wake up and find black and red flags flying over Huesca" (Peter Marin, *Spain Between Death and Birth*).

The Left Socialists in control of *Claridad* met the demand for a People's Army with a unified command by declaring:

"To think that another type of army can be substituted for those actually fighting, and who in certain ways control their own revolutionary action, is to think in counter-revolutionary terms. This is what Lenin said (*State and Revolution*): 'Every revolution after the destruction of the State apparatus, shows us how the governing class tries to establish special bodies of armed men at its "service", and how the oppressed class attempts to create a new organisation of a type capable of serving not the exploiters but the exploited.'

"We are sure that this counter-revolutionary thought (the creation of a new People's Army, *J.R.C.*) which would be as impotent as it is inept has not passed through the Government's mind; but the working class and the petty bourgeoisie, who are saving the republic with their lives, must not forget these accurate words of Lenin and must take care that the masses and the leadership of the armed forces should not escape from our hands" (*Claridad*, August 20th. 1936).

The P.O.U.M. after a time declared that they wanted a united army and a united command; it must not, however, be a People's Army but a workers' army. It must not be subject to the Governments of the Republic or of Catalonia, but to a military council elected from the workers' organisations. In the meantime the P.O.U.M. carried on the most energetic propaganda against the Madrid and Barcelona Governments (in both of which, after September 1936, there was a majority of workers' representatives) being allowed to build up a People's Army. It declared that the soldiers of such an army would be like the "headless automatons who so efficiently click their heels and do or die for Hitler and Mussolini". It declared that the Communist proposal for a unified command comprising "the ablest soldiers and the best representatives of the parties and trade unions who enjoy the confidence of the masses" was equivalent to "the handing over of absolute control of the workers' army to professional militarists". The aim of the People's Army, according to the P.O.U.M., was to attack not Franco but the workers.

"Its aim is to defend the capitalist democratic regime which has utterly failed in Spain. This means that it will be controlled by the capitalist democratic politicians who will use the People's Army to crush all revolutionary activity of the workers. This means that military control, purely military, places itself above everything else, above the demands of the working class" (*La Batalla*).

The propaganda of the P.O.U.M. was aimed at convincing the Anarchist workers that to build a regular army under the Popular Front Government was counter-revolutionary, and this had some effect. When the Communists launched the slogan "Not one rifle idling in the rear", Garcia Oliver, the Anarchist leader, replied:

"We desire that our comrades, taking account of the situation, make an inventory of the war material they control and proceed to make a study of what is indispensable to them to assure the necessary safeguarding of the revolutionary order in the rear, sending on what they do not need."

All the time this debate was proceeding, Franco was winning battle after battle. All kinds of anarchist experiments were being undertaken in Catalonian industry, but the two vital necessities of

the Revolution, a People's Army and the development of a powerful war industry, were being neglected.

On the question of the economic policy of the People's Front, the Communist Party advocated that the main industries should be controlled by the State but that no attempt should be made to take possession of small shops or workshops. It was not only necessary for the State to control the factories, but also to transform them for war purposes. This was particularly important in Catalonia, which had been an important centre for the supply of munitions to the French Government during the war of 1914-18.

The actual situation confronting the Government was that most of the factories and workshops (large and small) were in the hands of committees of trade unions, and cases were known, such for example as on the Barcelona underground railway, where the Anarchist trade union dismissed the members of the Socialist-Communist trade union. The serious results of this were only too apparent. There was no proper co-ordination between the factories. A factory might slow down because it could not find a sale for the raw materials it was producing, while in another part of the country another factory was lacking such essential materials. The profits earned in the enterprises taken over by the unions went into union funds, thus depriving the State of resources necessary to conduct the war. Because it was more profitable for a factory to remain on the commercial work it was formerly doing than to undertake the supply of munitions for the Government, factories continued to make bath tubs and perambulators when they might have been making munitions of war. All the time this was taking place the P.O.U.M. was screaming that the Government of the Republic was deliberately withholding arms from the Aragon front. In actual fact the P.O.U.M. was supporting those who were preventing the transformation of Catalan industries to supply the needs of the Aragon front.

Every attempt to control large-scale industry by the State was denounced as an attempt to liquidate workers' control, undo the gains of the Revolution and restore the capitalist class.

On the question of the Government, the Communist Party declared in favour of a People's Front Government representing all the organisations of the working class, with full powers to carry on the struggle without referring each decision back to the various organisations for confirmation – in short that the representatives of the

parties and unions should act as responsible ministers and not as delegates with limited powers. This elementary prerequisite for winning the war was denounced by the P.O.U.M. as:

“Aiming to set up a government with dictatorial powers, a government in which the ministers are not responsible to their respective organisations, in short a strong Government which will direct all its efforts to crush the creative revolutionary instinct of the proletariat” (*La Batalla*, Dec. 16th, 1936).

The P.O.U.M. in effect told the Catalan workers that the Communists, Socialists and Left Republicans were for a strong Government, not in order to crush Franco but to crush the working class.

In the sphere of public order the Communists demanded a reorganised police force under the control of the Government, and the dissolution of the workers' patrols which had taken upon themselves the task of dealing with the Fascists in Government Spain after the July rising. These bodies began in Catalonia to behave in such an arbitrary manner that the U.G.T. – the Communist-Socialist Trade Union Federation – withdrew its representatives from them, and the Government of Catalonia (which included Anarchist ministers) ordered their dissolution. For weeks the Patrols resisted and were supported by the P.O.U.M. An example of what took place during the period of their existence is shown by the massacre of Faterellas. The peasants of this village were resisting forced collectivisation of agriculture, and in the course of the struggle shot two anarchists. A patrol mainly composed of Anarchists arrived from Barcelona and took a terrible revenge, killing half the men of the village. The demand arose for the suppression of such crimes and the P.O.U.M. declared:

“Now seizing upon the unfortunate events (sic) of La Faterellas a brazen offensive is being undertaken which assumes the form of the efforts of the P.S.U.C. (the Communist Party of Catalonia) to withdraw the representation of the U.G.T. from the patrols.... This offensive of the Stalinists cannot succeed and will not succeed. The forces of coercion are the armed basis of power, and these forces must be working-class forces”.

Of the Government of the Republic which was carrying out this

measure in all the areas outside of Catalonia, the P.O.U.M., declared:

“The Valencia Government, by suppressing the militia behind the lines and creating a single Security Corps through the fusion of the existing armed bodies, took a big step towards consolidating the bourgeois power, and a big step backwards as far as the interests of the Revolution were concerned” (*Spanish Revolution*, Feb. 17th, 1937).

In short the P.O.U.M. stood for: (1) an Army independent of the Government, and (2), a Police Force independent of the Government, as a preliminary to the overthrow of the Government by civil war.

The Communists were for giving the land to the peasants with the granting of State credits to individual and collective farms. They opposed all attempts to force collectivisation of agriculture, pointing out that collectivisation could only succeed (1) where it was voluntary, and (2) where a highly developed industry was in a position to support collectivisation by supplying up-to-date machinery and fertilisers. This careful policy was absolutely necessary, because to antagonise the peasantry was (1) to imperil the food supply by a peasant strike, and (2) to create disaffection amongst the peasants who would form an important section of the People's Army. The P.O.U.M. line, however, was for compulsory collectivisation.

It was clear that the P.O.U.M. sabotage of the policy needed to unite the Spanish people had to be broken, or the organisation of the struggle against Franco would be completely disorganised. And the first necessary step was to exclude the P.O.U.M. from the Government of Catalonia, so that this Government could pursue a united and consistent policy. Never was a Government in such a grotesque situation in war-time, for the P.O.U.M., one of the parties in the Government, was resolutely opposing all measures to strengthen the Government. Day after day the P.O.U.M. press was declaring that to give this Government control of the Army and Police, or of the economy of the country, was to be counter-revolutionary. Measures approved by the Government were fiercely denounced by the P.O.U.M., which was represented in the Government. The Minister of Justice in the Catalan Government, Andreas Nin, denounced the decisions of his own colleagues day after day. This situation, at once tragic and farcical, was ended by the P.S.U.C. (the united So-

cialist-Communist Party of Catalonia) precipitating a Government crisis by demanding the exclusion of the P.O.U.M. from the Government, and after a sharp internal struggle this was agreed to. This move of the Communists was denounced by the I.L.P. and the Trotskyists as breaking up the unity of the working class. On the contrary, it was the beginning of the adoption of a united policy in Government Spain, replacing a sham unity which only impeded resolute and united action by the Governments, which themselves represented the main organisations of the working class.

Ever since the military rebellion of July 19th, 1936, the P.O.U.M. had been the happy hunting ground of Fascist sympathisers who found its membership card an adequate cover for their anti-Government activities. It would be preposterous to assert that such elements did not penetrate into all the genuine working class organisations in Spain. But in the Communist and Socialist organisations, Fascist agents desiring to further their cause had to work *against the declared policy of the organisation*. But in the P.O.U.M. they could work *for the declared policy of the organisation*, because the more support this policy obtained, the greater would be the disorganisation amongst the popular forces. The leadership of the P.O.U.M. was accumulating a rank and file ready for any desperate enterprise against the People's Government in Spain and Catalonia. The reply of this leadership to its exclusion from the Government of Catalonia (the "Generalidad") was to begin preparing for a *putsch*, not in the hope of seizing and maintaining power, but in order to disorganise the rear of the people's resistance. The resolution of the Central Committee of the P.O.U.M. defining its attitude to exclusion from the Government states:

"The attempt to exclude the P.O.U.M. from the Generalidad, the first step of a comprehensive manoeuvre which will eventually result in the exclusion of the C.N.T. (the Anarchist Trade Union Federation) as well, was made in order to remove all obstacles in the way of curbing the revolution.

"Under the circumstances it is the opinion of P.O.U.M. that one of the most effective weapons to safeguard the achievements of the working class and to advance its revolutionary aims, will be the formation of suitable organs for the expression of the revolutionary aspirations of the work-

ing class, for the rallying of the masses, and to form the basis for its future regime. Parliament as an institution belongs to the period before July 19th. Neither its composition nor spirit can serve the present needs of the revolution. Only a 'constituent assembly' can create a new society which will be free of oppression from landlords and capitalists – a union of Socialist Republics of Iberia.

"The deputies of this Assembly will not be elected on the basis of universal suffrage, which is a remnant of bourgeois democracy, but by the workers, peasants and combatants, through their factory committees, women's auxiliaries and soldiers' delegates. This assembly must give rise to socialist reconstruction of the country, and to a workers' and peasants' government, representing the will of the masses fighting against fascism not merely for a democratic republic, but first and foremost for a society free from capitalist exploitation.

"The enlarged Central Committee of the P.O.U.M. is of the opinion that unless there is true workers' democracy which will prevent any and all attempts at dictatorial hegemony of one party, the proletariat cannot be victorious. Hence it is obligatory that factory committees are chosen directly, in general factory meetings, that the trade unions hold meetings and that, in short, the entire working class participate actively and directly in the discussions and decisions of all decisive questions which the civil war and the revolution have raised.

"Our basic slogans at present therefore must be:

"Dissolution of the bourgeois parliament:

"A constituent assembly of delegates from factory committees, from peasant committees and from the front;

"A workers' and peasants' government.

"Workers' Democracy" (*La Batalla*, Dec. 16th, 1936).

Readers will not fail to note that the Communist Party is accused in this resolution of (1) supporting a democratic republic and (2) aiming at a dictatorial "hegemony of one party". But the line of the resolution is clear, it is to create organisation which will aim at overthrowing the existing Government, dissolving Parliament, and becoming the basis of a new Government of Workers and Peasants.

In short the P.O.U.M., advocated creating organs of dual power alongside the existing Government with a view to its overthrow – *i.e.*, the preparation of civil war amongst the popular forces in spite of the fact that Franco was still advancing and winning battles.

This was but the “revolutionary” camouflage for a policy opposing every attempt to create a People’s Army and police under the existing Government, and for resisting, in the name of Socialism, Government control of the economy of Catalonia. As the Government advanced to these objectives the P.O.U.M. day after day reiterated that these measures were nothing more nor less than the taking away of the “gains of the revolution”, and would lead to the bringing back of the capitalists who had fled abroad and an attempt at an understanding with General Franco. The calls for an uprising against the Government became ever more insistent.

On March 22nd, 1937, *La Batalla* (the P.O.U.M. daily paper) said:

“Because of this our Party unceasingly shows the way; a revolutionary workers’ front which will enable us to reach the end of the present stage and install a Workers’ and Peasants’ Government through the conquest of power...”

In April, Andreas Nin wrote:

“No time must be lost. If we further passively watch the rebuilding of the bourgeois apparatus of power, the Spanish working class will have lost the most extraordinary opportunity that has been given for its emancipation.... Then it will be too late. We must strike the iron while it is hot.”

On May 1st, Nin declared in an article in *La Batalla*:

“The working class must cut the threads that bind it to the bourgeois democracy and decisively take the path of the conquest of power. There is still time. To-morrow it will be too late.”

Andrade, in the same number of *La Batalla*, declared:

“The revolutionary working-class organisations must regain their full economic and political independence; they



must abandon all kinds of confused co-operation with the fractions of the petty bourgeoisie and of reformism on the political field."

Another appeal in *La Batalla* on May 1st, 1937, said:

"For two days the working class has been mounting guard. The men in the factories and workshops are watching night and day over the welfare of the Revolution which has been endangered by the weak and crooked policy of the reformists. They are not uncontrollables and provocateurs. They are the conscious sentinels who are watching the rearguard. They are waiting with their rifles ready, for the working class has exhausted its patience. They are tired of so much feebleness on the part of cardboard governments formed on the basis of important compromises... we shall continue on guard henceforth, for we can no longer tolerate the lame policy of the Valencian and Catalan Governments. A policy of compromises. A policy against the working class. A policy of putting the brakes on the Revolution. A policy directed to a new upsurge of the bourgeoisie who were hurled down on July 19th."

On May 1st we also find this last-minute announcement:

"All members of our party belonging to the People's Military School who have been appointed to different places in Catalonia or to the fronts are earnestly requested to report to the Executive Military Committee, 10 Rambla Estadios, headquarters of the Executive Committee."

On May 2nd, *La Batalla* said:

"It is no longer a question of achieving immediate demands. To-day the task is different. It is the seizure of power by all the workers."

On May 2nd *La Batalla* printed a statement of the Executive of the P.O.U.M. which said:

"We are in agreement with one of the anarchist groups, which is at present in conflict with the Governmental C.N.T. leaders and has issued the following slogans: 'All power to the working class. All economic power to the

Trade Unions’.”

The Anarchist group referred to was the so-called “Friends of Durruti”. It was rotten with Fascist agents, and later was energetically repudiated by the C.N.T. itself. The P.O.U.M., having failed to win the Anarchist Unions for its “putsch” policy, was now moving to split them.

And on the following day, May 3rd, 1937, the insurrection that the P.O.U.M. had been clamouring for took place.

Before dealing with the insurrection let us quote an estimation of the activity of the P.O.U.M. in the months between its exclusion from the Government and the May insurrection as given in the *Neue Front*, the organ of the German Socialist Labour Party, a body associated with the P.O.U.M., which it describes as its brother party.

In an issue of June 1937 *Neue Front* discusses “Revolutionary Strategy in Spain”. After the usual criticisms of the Communist International, the *Neue Front* makes the following criticism of the P.O.U.M.:

“In the theses of Comrade Nin for the Party Congress there is hardly any mention of the question of the civil war with Franco. Yet victory over Franco will decide the possibilities of any further development. In those sentences in which the war is spoken of it is only dealt with in a polemic against the formula of the Communist Party ‘First the War, Then the Revolution’. In the same theses there is not a word about the international conditions of the Spanish Revolution. Some months ago Comrade Gorkin had already admitted that the P.O.U.M. had expected a swift victory in the civil war and that it had made a false estimation of the forces.

“We hoped that the necessary consequences would be drawn from this admission. If the P.O.U.M. does not rightly estimate the international conditions of the Spanish Revolution there must arise an all too optimistic perspective of the war and out of this much too great enthusiasm and insufficient stressing of the military necessities arising from a modern war. It is precisely on this front that the Communist Party, supported by Russian war supplies and military experts, has made itself the herald of mobilisation, the propagandist for the serious conduct of the war. Through this it

rapidly won influence.

"If the analysis does not arise from the general situation, but from Spain, we might almost say from Catalonia, then everything else must appear in incorrect perspective. 'In the course of a few hours, at the most of a few days, the workers and peasants solved the problems of the bourgeois revolution.' So Comrade Nin estimates, in his theses, the first days after the 19th of July. This is self-deception. In Russia Lenin himself regarded the democratic revolution as being completed three years after the seizure of power. Besides Comrade Nin saw Catalonia only. In the half of Spain occupied by Franco the democratic revolution has not been carried through. And in Left Spain where every thing is provisional? Out of such an estimation, there must arise a subjective optimistic conception of the class forces, and Comrade Nin can make a serious approximation of the Comintern formulations of the 'Third Period' by declaring that 'The Communist Party and the P.S.U.C. are more dangerous for the Revolution than the bourgeoisie itself'. Only from such a false analysis in a period in which above all one must 'patiently explain', can one strive for the united front with the Anarchists alone. This analysis has also determined the line of the P.O.U.M. in the May days" (*i.e.*, the days of the Barcelona insurrection, *J.R.C.*).

After making a number of quotations from the manifestoes issued by the P.O.U.M., the *Neue Front* continues:

"If in the Party manifestoes it is declared that the seizure of power (in a period of retrogression) can take place peacefully, there is here a complete misunderstanding of the forces. In the conception of Comrade Andrade that we have just quoted it appears as if the P.O.U.M. and the Anarchists (and the Left group of the most extreme Anarchists is treated as if it were the whole C.N.T.) were the majority inside the working-class movement in Left Spain. In order to be strong enough however to capture power peacefully against the Socialist Party, the Communist Party, the P.S.U.C. and the majority of the U.G.T. (the Socialist-Communist Trade Union Federation) and the petty bourgeoisie, the P.O.U.M. must have already conquered a ma-

jority of the working class. It hardly needs to be said that this estimation of the P.O.U.M. is a fatal error. The P.O.U.M. comes through this action in a difficult position, in which the whole development will be pushed to the Right, unless it quickly and decisively liquidates these mistakes. Not to speak of the fact that a civil war in Left Spain brings with it the danger of military collapse.”

Such is the estimation of the German brother party of the P.O.U.M. In common with other parties sympathising with the P.O.U.M. it is filled with an insensate hatred of the Communists. It is advising the P.O.U.M. not with a view to that body changing its fundamental policy, but with a view to the liquidation of errors which are hindering the development of this policy. What it tells us is therefore all the more significant.

It tells us that in the thesis of the P.O.U.M. Congress “there is hardly any mention of the civil war with Franco”; that “there is not a word about the international conditions of the Spanish Revolution”; that Comrade Gorkin “had already admitted that the P.O.U.M. had expected a swift victory in the civil war and that it had made a false estimation of the forces”; that its policy led to “an insufficient stressing of the military necessities arising from a modern war”; that the P.O.U.M. was claiming that the bourgeois revolution was over at the very moment that Franco was conquering parts of Left Spain; that it was declaring that “the Communist Party and the P.S.U.C. are more dangerous for the revolution than the bourgeoisie itself”; that it was pursuing a policy of “the United Front with the Anarchists alone”, and that in practice this meant the United Front with the most extreme sections of the Anarchists; that the P.O.U.M. is talking about the seizure of power and is pretending that this can take place comparatively peacefully although it is directed against the Socialists, Communists, Trade Unionists and lower middle class of Left Spain; and that it is necessary to remind it that a civil war in Left Spain can mean military collapse.

Even if every leader and member of the P.O.U.M. were free from the sinister influence of Fascism, the mere description of their policy in the months after they were expelled from the Government reveals them as working objectively for a Franco victory.

Their policy was to end in blood. For months they and the more extreme section of the Anarchists had been denouncing every at-

tempt to organise the popular forces for the successful conduct of the war as a move of the counter-revolution. Sections of the Anarchist workers, misled by this propaganda, prepared to resist. According to Mr. Fenner Brockway:

“In this situation of tension Fascist agent-provocateurs got to work. First one of the leaders of the Socialist-Communist Party, Roldan Cortada, was assassinated. Then an Anarchist leader Martin was assassinated.... The likelihood was that the Fascists directly provoked a conflict between the two sides in this manner.”

Perhaps they did. But it was the whole P.O.U.M. policy which had divided the workers and facilitated the action of the provocateurs. Did the P.O.U.M. expose the actions of the Fascist provocateurs who were deliberately seeking to provoke a conflict? On the contrary, it appealed to the workers under its influence to start that very conflict which, according to Brockway, the Fascists were deliberately seeking to provoke. The situation between April 25th and May 1st was so tense that the Government of Catalonia banned all May Day demonstrations. This the P.O.U.M. replied to by declaring through its spokesman Nin:

“The working class must cut the threads which bind it to the bourgeois democracy and decisively take the path of the conquest of power. *There is still time. Tomorrow it will be too late.*”

Is it any wonder that the Government, reading the incitements to an immediate seizure of power, seeing preparations for insurrection taking place all around it, decided to take action?

But it did not act early enough to stop the insurrection: the Fascist provocateurs got the conflict they had been working for. How fatuous to represent this insurrection as a spontaneous act of the workers! It was the culmination of months of incitement, of calls to immediate insurrection – for “to-morrow it will be too late”.

“Once the insurrection occurred,” explains Mr. Brockway, “the P.O.U.M. sought to give it direction.

“It immediately got in touch with the C.N.T. Committee but the C.N.T. was divided. It had representation in the Government and thus had a foot in both camps. For two days the

workers were on top. Bold and united action by the C.N.T. leadership could have overthrown the Government.”

So once the conflict that the Fascist provocateurs had been working for had broken out, the P.O.U.M. approached the leadership of the Anarchist Trade Unions to take “bold and resolute action to overthrow the Government”. In other words to spread civil war throughout all Catalonia if not throughout all Left Spain. The Anarchist leaders refused, and issued the slogan, “Peace, brothers”. This attitude condemned the revolt to an early defeat but the P.O.U.M. continued, alongside the two extreme Anarchist organisations, the Friends of Durruti and the Anarchist Youth, to prolong the useless bloodletting. On Tuesday evening, May 4th, the Anarchist and Socialist Unions after a prolonged conference issued the appeal to “cease fire”. But the P.O.U.M. and the anarchist uncontrollables continued to organise the street fighting. The Friends of Durruti and the 100 per cent Trotskyists in the P.O.U.M., the so-called “Bolshevik-Leninists”, issued a leaflet which screamed:

“Workers, form a revolutionary Council. Shoot those responsible. Disarm the armed forces. Dissolve all political parties who have turned against the workers. Don’t leave the streets.”

This appeal was published in the P.O.U.M. paper and endorsed. On the following day, Thursday, the workers who had been fighting under the leadership of the P.O.U.M. and the extreme Anarchists, began to desert them, but were for the moment rallied to the barricades under the slogans of “Withdraw the police. Retain the arms in the hands of the workers”. But the revolt was petering out. The Fascist provocateurs inside and outside the P.O.U.M. and the organisations of the Anarchist extremists had staged their greatest and most spectacular act of sabotage: but they were defeated.

The sane elements of the Spanish people at last realised that the rear had to be cleansed at all costs. The central Government led by Largo Caballero, which had tolerated the P.O.U.M. and the Anarchist Uncontrollables, was brought down, and replaced by a Government capable of concentrating the Popular Forces for the winning of the war.

Unfortunately Caballero was able for the moment to persuade the Socialist-Communist trade union federation to withdraw from

the Government and the Anarchist unions also withdrew.

The new Government began in no uncertain fashion to clean the rear. The anarchic "patrols" were disarmed and replaced by a responsible police in control of trusted Communists and Socialists. Requisitions on the peasantry, compulsory collectivisation of peasant holdings, interference with small shopkeepers, currency smuggling, importation of arms for political groups as distinct from the front, were stopped. The insane excesses that were disfiguring the Revolution and undermining its unity and purpose were ended. But the situation was such that these excesses could not be ended without supplementing persuasion by force. Individuals who were either provocateurs or had a vested interest in the maintenance of anarchy in the Government's rear had to be dealt with sternly. It is this process of securing a rear under one authority instead of under groups of squabbling committees, of ensuring that law shall rule and that individuals shall be protected from the arbitrary action of self-constituted "little governments", of ensuring the organisation of all available resources under one control for the winning of the war – this is what is described by the British Independent Labour Party as the "terror in Spain".

The commencement of a serious cleansing of the rear was timely. In the course of a raid on the Peruvian Embassy at Madrid, the police discovered the details of a well-organised Fascist espionage group in touch with agents at the headquarters of the General Staff, the military medical service, the information services of the War Ministry, the anti-aerial Defence Bureau of the Naval and Air Ministry and a number of Government organisations. In one of the documents discovered in the course of the unmasking of this organisation we read the following:

"On the other hand the grouping of our forces for a rearguard movement proceeds with a certain slowness. None the less we rely on four hundred men who are ready to act. These are well-armed and in favourable positions on the Madrid front; the infiltration of our men into the extremist Anarchist and P.O.U.M. ranks is being carried out successfully. We need a good propaganda chief who would carry on this work independently of ourselves so as to be able to act in greater safety.... In fulfilment of your order I went myself to Barcelona to interview a leading member of

the P.O.U.M. I communicated to him all you had indicated. The lack of communications between yourself and him is explained by the breakdown of the broadcasting station, which began to function again while I was still there. You will certainly have received an answer with regard to the fundamental problem. N. particularly requests you and the foreign friends that the person indicated to communicate with him should be myself alone and exclusively. He has promised me to send new people to Madrid to activate the P.O.U.M.'s work. With these reinforcements the P.O.U.M. will become, as in Barcelona, a firm and effective support for our movement."

Who is the N. referred to? None other than Andreas Nin, leader of the P.O.U.M. For that he was arrested but was later rescued by Fascists disguised in military uniforms, who took this measure in the hope of preventing the Spanish authorities securing new and fuller proofs of their crimes.

When these facts were exposed that section of the P.O.U.M., leadership which remained at large sought to ensure itself by declaring in the illegal *Batalla* of July 19th, 1937:

"If we accept as a hypothesis that the accusations of espionage and connivance with the enemy directed against our leaders were founded, the most natural thing in such a case would be the application of the most exemplary and the most public punishment of the criminals, never the punishment of the whole organisation."

That is hardly the language of outraged innocence. It suggests doubts in the mind of the writer, who is preparing the mind of the people for the day when the charges are proved.

On October 23rd the Chief of the Barcelona Police, Lieut.-Colonel Burillo, gave the representatives of the press a detailed account of the discovery of a similar P.O.U.M. plot in Catalonia. In a note handed to the representatives of the press the Chief of the police said:

"The search carried out in the domicile of Roca, one of the leading members of the organisation, led to the most important documents being discovered among the mattresses. These documents, together with the statement of



the aforesaid member of the organisation, prove that one of this organisation's most important nuclei was the large and well organised group of spies who were members of the P.O.U.M.

"This group was distinguished by the letter C, and each agent in this spy ring of the P.O.U.M. was known by the letter C and his corresponding individual number.

"In a letter found in the bookshop belonging to Roca's father, during a search made on September 18th, Franco's General Staff is informed of the following:

(1) On August 16th the Group directed by Agent C.16 had succeeded in putting out of action three pieces of artillery belonging to Division N and 4 belonging to Division M. All this was done at a decisive moment of the operations.

(2) Preparations were being made to blow up the bridges if the Ebro.

(3) A military train had arrived with armaments which were specified.

(4) Information about the artillery on the Aragon Front.

(5) The new forms of organisation of supplies had been utilised to incite the population to demonstrations of protest.

(6) The attempts against the lives of outstanding figures in the People's Army were still under consideration.

(7) In addition the organisation was being continued for the planned attempt against the life of a Minister of the Republic and it was thought that his passing of a particular spot on the outskirts could be taken advantage of for this purpose.

"Two cars with men armed with grenades were to follow the Minister's car with this object. Two terrorist members of the P.O.U.M. and known as C.18 and C.23 had been put in charge of the arrangements for the Minister's assassination.

"With the letter was the sketch of a P.O.U.M. workshop in which hand bombs were manufactured.

"The investigations conducted at the front have made it

possible to confirm the exactness of the information transmitted.

“In the letter quoted the P.O.U.M. espionage organisation complained that it was unable to use the whole network of its agents because the complete list of the trusted members of the P.O.U.M. was only known to two of the leading members and at present they are in the Valencia prison awaiting trial before the Tribunals.”

The activity of the Trotskyist and near Trotskyist organisations outside Spain is carried on in the same spirit and for the same objectives as those operating inside Spain. Is it an accident that in the months between October and December, 1937, when everyone was expecting a furious Fascist offensive against the Republican Government, the Trotskyists and their dupes redoubled their attacks against the People's Government?

Trotsky himself came out with a diatribe which was given the widest publicity in the pro-Franco capitalist press and in some of the more irresponsible Right-Wing Socialist papers. The theme of this outburst was that:

“It is necessary to pass to an international offensive against Stalinism.”

One of the centres of Stalinism against which it is necessary to develop an international offensive is – the People's Government in Spain!

“The events of recent months in Spain have demonstrated what crimes the Moscow bureaucracy, now completely degenerate, linked with its international mercenaries, are capable of.”

“In Spain where the so-called Republican Government serves as a screen for the criminal bands of Stalinism, the G.P.U. has found the most favourable arena for carrying out the directives of the Plenum” (“It is time to pass to an international offensive against Stalinism,” Nov. 1937).

An international offensive of the dupes of Trotskyism against the Spanish Government, to coincide with the offensive of Franco – such is the contribution of Trotskyism in the most critical period of the Spanish struggle! The experience of Spain confirms the experi-

ence of the Soviet Union as to the counter-revolutionary pro-Fascist character of Trotskyism. That is why every attack which this political degenerate makes against the Soviet Union is first-class "news" in the reactionary press of the world, that is why every enemy of the workers' united front in the Labour movement seizes upon Trotskyist slanders in order to keep the workers divided.

But the facts are indisputable. In the Soviet Union Trotsky pursued a course aiming at the destruction of Socialism, and was prepared to co-operate with Fascism to this end. In the democratic countries he urges that the working class should pursue a policy aiming at the driving of a wedge between the democratic countries and the Soviet Union, thus aiming at the destruction of both in the Fascist war that is now being prepared. Inside those countries he works to split the People's Front and open the way to Fascism.

He has collected as his agents and dupes all the refuse rejected by the revolutionary and reformist movements alike. But the working class is coming to realise the role of Trotskyism in the service of reaction and will not be deceived.

"The old participants in the Marxian movement in Russia knew Trotsky's personality very well, and it is not worth while talking to them about it,"

said Lenin in 1914.

But in this serious world crisis it is worth ensuring that the young participants shall not be deceived, and that they shall clearly understand the evolution of Trotskyism in recent years.

"Trotskyism is no longer what it was, let us say, seven or eight years ago.... Trotskyism and the Trotskyists have passed through a serious revolution in the period that has utterly changed the face of Trotskyism, and the methods of struggle against it must also be utterly changed. Our party comrades did not notice that Trotskyism has ceased to be a political trend in the working class, that it has changed from the political trend in the working class that it was seven or eight years ago into a frantic and unprincipled gang of wreckers, diversionists, spies and murderers, acting on the instructions of the intelligence services of foreign States" (Stalin).

If this book has contributed to explaining that evolution, to

keeping the young on the historic path of revolutionary Marxism, it will have accomplished its- purpose.

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