

**The New**  
**INTERNATIONAL**

**U. S. DILEMMA IN KOREA**

By Jack Brad

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**Stalinism in East Germany**

By B. Ess

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**Western Totalitarianism**

By Albert Gates

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ARCHIVE:

**IS RUSSIA A WORKERS STATE?**

By Max Shachtman

**35¢**

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**January-February 1952**

# MEMO

## THE NEW INTERNATIONAL

A Marxist Review

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JANUARY-FEBRUARY 1952

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## U. S. Dilemma in Korea

*The War and the Problems of Asia*

It is impossible to get at the actual facts behind the claims of either side in the Korean stalemate. One of Ridgway's first acts upon taking MacArthur's place was to impose full-fledged wartime censorship on all news. Most dispatches now emanate from Tokyo and those sent from Korea are so carefully checked that news is sometimes delayed for days. Thus it has apparently become common practice for correspondents to listen to the North Korean and Peiping radio for information which they may not, however, transmit. It goes without saying, that no free reporting is permitted from behind the Stalinist lines.

Inside the U. S., Korea is a political issue and as such is hardly susceptible to reason. The atmosphere here is scarcely conducive to rational solutions where Stalinism is concerned, yet there is little desire to bog down in Korea indefinitely. But Korea serves major political purposes for Truman-Acheson as well as for Taft-Hoover. Newsweek magazine points out that Truman's fabulous military budget would have little chance of adoption if a truce were achieved in the coming months. Re-armament is the very heart of the administration's foreign policy as frequently expressed in Acheson's "situations of strength" objective. To what extent do such considerations determine the nature

of the directives issued by the Pentagon and the State Department to Ridgway? Are ultimata from the Dai Ichi Building, intended to threaten the Stalinists or Americans? There is no way of knowing, but there is certainly considerable reason to hesitate before accepting as gospel the many statements which almost daily claim to represent the very final offer or final rejection of either side.

The fact of the stalemate itself is by far the most significant event in Korea. Neither side has devised a formula for breaking out of its impasse without precipitating events fraught with even greater dangers. Korea is the site of a sitzkrieg, an unstable equilibrium which, for the moment, suits the needs of both sides.

Peiping-Moscow cannot undertake a military offensive aimed at throwing the Americans off the peninsula, as was the original war objective of the Chinese. Having attempted this twice they have found the cost too high, more than they can afford. The Chinese tacitly admit this in the negotiations by their insistence on the right to build unlimited airfields in the North. They are saying that until they have air superiority they cannot go further in making concessions. And for this same reason the UN negotiators have been adamant in refusing Chinese demands.

Inside China, the Peiping regime

The NEW INTERNATIONAL needs money, and it needs it badly. There is really no way of putting this hard fact to our readers gently, or of dressing it up so that it will look like something else. And in any event, we have no desire to resort to the sugar-coating techniques which have been developed so expertly by the professional fund raisers.

Our magazine costs far more money to produce than we can hope to get from subscriptions and sales. That means that it has always relied on the contributions of its readers and supporters who have subsidized it because they are convinced that it fills a crying need. We advisedly refrain from using the word "generosity" in describing these contributions. For by contributing financially to the NI our readers have been helping primarily themselves.

The Independent Socialist League is now running its annual fund drive. It is appealing to all its members, friends and sympathizers to contribute heavily. We want to take this opportunity to make a special appeal to those readers of the NI who will not be reached by other means.

Part of the ISL's annual deficit is built up by its contributions to the NI. As the money comes in during this fund drive, it will have to be distributed among all our creditors. If there is not quite enough to go around, our financial situation will move from its "normal" state of crisis to one of real desperation.

That puts the matter squarely up to those who are not intimidated or shaken. We are convinced that the vast majority of the present readers of the NI fall in the above group. You

has conducted a vigorous campaign of forced subscriptions for the purchase of airplanes. The official claim is that "donations" have been made for over 2,000 planes. Mao is thereby proclaiming, beside the patriotism of his Chinese subjects, that he has to pay, and pay plenty and in advance, for his purchases of planes and other war materiel from his ally in Moscow. While it has not been too difficult to exact contributions for planes from the Chinese, Mao is silent on how many he has managed to obtain from the Russians. There are other indications, too, that Stalin has not been exactly open-handed about distributing warplanes.

An intensified struggle in Korea must assume losses in materiel on a large scale, including aircraft. To launch such an all-out struggle, Mao would need two things he does not have: planes, and the fields from which to launch them. In other words, China suffers from the technical inferiority of its economy and from the hesitancy of its ally, which is not now ready to broaden the military struggle in Asia and raise the curtain on the traditional Russian bugbear of a two-front war.

There are other reasons, equally potent, for this hesitation to take the final plunge. Peiping does not underestimate the seriousness of Washington's threats to bombard the continent and clamp a blockade on the coast and to level Manchuria's vital industries by air bombing. In such a struggle, China would be just as bogged down in Korea as the United States. Its freedom of action in other parts of Asia would be ended.

The entire Stalinist empire would have to reorient toward such an eventuality and reorganize itself on a war footing. Events would no longer be controllable but subject to the uncer-

tainties of war. Russia would at least have to gear its industries and transport for this Eastern conflict, even if it were fought with Chinese soldiers exclusively. All this would happen at a time when Stalinism has once again, after a lapse of several years, begun to advance by political means in South Asia and the Middle East. Such a war might prove much harder to "contain" than the present limited engagement in Korea. Fortunately the time for such ultimate folly is not yet.

America may have the physical means to make a big advance in Korea. (We say, may, because not being military experts, we have no way of knowing what commitments this would require and what other commitments have already been made for other parts of the world.) Having twice traversed almost the full length of the peninsula, it is not surprising that Washington should be reluctant to undertake another such adventure.

Any sharp advance by U. S. troops would widen the already deep disagreements among its allies. Every advance creates more problems than it solves and a "complete" victory, such as MacArthur desired, would really put the fat in the fire. MacArthur's strong point was his assertion that the object of war is to win and his charge that the administration did not have this goal hit home and was never answered directly. The weakness in his plan was that it was purely military. If Truman could give no satisfactory reply to MacArthur's query on the military objective of the struggle, neither could MacArthur say what should be done with a victory.

The purpose of a military advance would be at least doubtful. Could it be to follow through on Syngman Rhee's desire to "unify" Korea? Or to drive the Stalinists out? Or the more limited objective of forcing the Chinese

to sue for peace? The trouble with all these aims is that their achievement would hardly solve the present quandary.

Americans troops on the Yalu would mean an even larger military force permanently stationed on this untenable and destroyed land, which yields nothing of its own and must receive every tiny item from across the Pacific. Military government would have to remain indefinitely, as no one, least of all the military, trust Rhee to govern. (MacArthur proved this point succinctly when he rejected a Washington offer to arm larger South Korean forces.) Complete American occupation would broaden the area of civil war behind the lines. So long as the U. S. does not have any native base on which to rely it will remain committed in Korea to maintaining a large armed force capable of coping with an irremovable Stalinist cancer.

The initiative would remain with Stalinism in any case, which could at will create new situations behind the lines, in South Asia, or anywhere along the vast perimeter of its power. The entire U. S. position would remain defensive, as it has been, not in a military sense alone, but equally in a political sense.

Even if the objective were limited, as many have proposed, to just a large enough effort to force the Chinese to become more amenable to American truce terms, and if this object were achieved, the result would only ratify what is already an accomplished fact—an unstable equilibrium along the front. The principle underlying America's limited military aims have been repeatedly stated by government spokesmen and most recently in his State of the Union address, President Truman declared: "We must and we will keep up the fight there (Korea)

until we get the kind of armistice that will put an end to the aggression and protect the safety of our forces and the security of the Republic of Korea. Beyond that we shall continue to work for a settlement in Korea that upholds the principles of the United Nations. . . . These are our aims. We will not give up until we attain them." The possibilities can then be reduced to this: there is still little likelihood of any change in the present situation until the Stalinists agree to an armistice and what America wants in Korea is a truce and not a victory. Basically this means that the Stalinists must agree not to use a truce to rearm for a renewal of the war ("protect the safety of our forces"). The U. S. will expect some kind of guarantee as assurance of good faith. The Chinese can have this kind of a peace at any time by asking for it.

"The principles of the UN" were spelled out subsequently by Washington as "united, democratic and independent Korea." With past experience in mind, i.e., before the cold war and in the honeymoon period among the wartime allies which ended finally in a tragically divided Korea, it seems unlikely that the discussion stage of this subject will ever be reached. If it is, the discussion can hardly have a happier ending than the first time. In the long run the U. S. must decide either to continue indefinitely to squat in Korea waiting for the Third World War when the peninsula can be properly declared untenable, or, what is less probable, leave before then as a result of a complete global agreement with Stalinism. There remains also a possibility desired by some political circles here to simply abandon Korea. But all this is to come much later, if at all.

The reluctance of both parties to break off current negotiations despite

frequent charges of bad faith and worse, is, under the circumstances, rooted in the reality that there is no way out. Since outside of testing the relative combat efficiency of each other's jets and occasional patrol actions, there is little activity on the front. There is also no overwhelming pressure to achieve a formal truce. At the same time, a truce always remains a possibility. Renewal of the war, however, would mean that new, over-riding considerations had become determining factors.

Adding irony to the Korean tragedy is this: that for both sides original war objectives have been by-passed by events. The Stalinists launched their invasion and the Chinese entered the war to clear Korea of the last American continental base in Northern Asia. In this way they also sought to nullify, or at least minimize, the effects of a re-armed Japan. Stalinist might, poised at Pusan, would have been a great threat to the Japanese, strengthening their reluctance to become a floating aircraft carrier. The entire power relationship in the Northern Pacific would have been altered. Mao thought, in addition, to gain Formosa and acceptance into the UN.

On their face these aims are no longer meaningful. While Japan's position is far from firmly jelled into the fixed American mold constructed by J. F. Dulles, it is no longer susceptible, at least for the time being, to the kind of pressures the Stalinists were prepared to exert. Formosa and the UN seat are further removed than ever from Mao's grasp. To this negative degree, Truman has successfully realized his own aims in Korea. Stalinism has not succeeded—that's what needs to be recognized as the limit of the Truman-Acheson accomplishment.

## II

If Stalinism, however, has been frustrated, it has been at great cost and without tangible or permanent results in the great world struggle, and in Asia particularly. If Stalinism, too, has suffered tremendous losses in Korea, it has made great political strides in Asia, and retains the favorable opinion of most Asians on its own acts in Korea.

Washington's responses remain defensive with regard to Asia. They are retaliatory, after-the-fact reactions, rather than actions taken from prepared political positions. Entry into the Korean war was itself the best example of this. The fundamental difficulty that undermines the best American intentions remains its inability to achieve an identification with Asia's social aims and achievements, whereas Stalinism does achieve some measure of it in a tyrannical and destructive fashion. All the gnashing of teeth and frustration which occurs in the State Department's policy-making sessions, the feeling that pervades there that whatever one does somehow turns out wrong or is misinterpreted even by friends (whether Point Four Aid is granted or refused, whether wheat is shipped or not, whether a firm stand is taken to repel Stalinist invasion or a hands-off policy is announced, whether support is given to Chiang or not) arises from the fact that in Asian eyes the United States is opposed to or does not understand the profound needs of Asia for a new civilization based on democratized social relations, which can be the lever for emancipation from poverty.

The struggle for Asia, and that now means South Asia, has become one of the decisive factors in the Korean conflict. While the Korean war has reached a stalemate in the broadest

sense, a new factor has now entered, however, which far outweighs any of the obsolete considerations which caused the war in the first place. That is Southeast Asia.

For the time being, Washington has succeeded in, strategically stabilizing the Pacific through the series of interlocking pacts around the Japanese treaty. Japan itself, the Philippines, Formosa, New Zealand and Australia have been tied in with American military, naval and air power and are not now susceptible to Stalinist attack from without, although Stalinism is a powerful force inside the Philippines could become one on Formosa.

In order to get acceptance of these agreements among its friends, the U. S. studiously separated out the many serious problems over which there are conflicts and differences. The pacts ignore the question of what is China, the mainland or Formosa, and the Japanese treaty actually leaves determination of this to Japan, China's former enemy. The fate of Formosa is put over to an indefinite future date. Japanese reparations are granted under circumstances which will almost certainly never arise. Japanese rearmament remains a question mark, while in all of Asia Japan alone is to have permanent U. S. bases. China and Russia were carefully excluded from the treaties which are actually military alliances. In establishing a Pacific policy, the U. S. carefully and unmistakably directed it against Russia and China, ignored the desires of its own allies, postponed all political and economic questions as matters to be dealt with separately and piecemeal, and limited the objectives of its international relations in the region to its own strategic necessity. This is hardly a clarion call to the oppressed and scarcely conducive to convincing Asia of our peaceful intentions.

The strategic weakness in this arrangement is that it is an off-shore alignment pitted against a continent on which Stalinism remains entrenched and as such the new Pacific pacts do not come to grips with the power problems of Asia, let alone the basic social and political ones. Even within the military and strategic framework which determines American foreign policy Washington has yet to devise a formula for the prevention of Stalinist aggression in Asia. That it has not been able to do so goes back to its fatal Achilles heel of being alien to all the new aspirations which now moves Asia.

America's allies in Asia are Chiang's Formosa, Rhee's rump state, Bao Dai and the French in Indo-China, the British in Malaya, and undoubtedly Pibul Songraam in Thailand can be bought. Hardly an impressive array, particularly since the first four are already heavily engaged on their own and could hardly add strength to the U. S. but require considerable reinforcement themselves. The independent nations of the area remain reluctant to align themselves in this world struggle and view the U. S. off-shore strategy with mingled fear and misgivings.

Two tests have already been made of this new strategic orientation. One is the war in Indo-China and Stalinist guerrilla wars elsewhere in the region. The new alliances have not affected these in any manner. Second, the danger of a Chinese invasion of South Asia through Indo-China. The U. S. did not and cannot activate its grand Pacific design to meet this immediate threat.

Washington acts in South Asia with the conception that any change in existing regimes creates a vacuum; that vacuums are abhorrent equally to nature, Stalinism and to itself; therefore

it must prevent any change in the *status quo* so that no opportunity will be created for Stalinism which would require American intervention. The present states, regardless of their nature, are preferable to any change. A date has been drawn across the calendar: after Indonesian independence no more. That was the last national movement Washington deigned to recognize. This idea is hardly acceptable to Asians.

In this vast and populous area, with few allies among the people and dependent on foreign troops to hold the dike, Washington's recourse, in case of Stalinist attack whether from within or without, would probably be the same as in Korea: intervention by full scale military means although it would prefer to do this through its allies. That is precisely what the United States has stated it will do in the United Nations Assembly.

That is why South Asia is the new shadow that looms over the Korean battlefield. Regardless of the on-the-spot outcome of the Korean war, Northern Asia is lost to the U. S. The prize for all contenders is now in the South, the only region that remains as yet outside both camps. The fate of Korea may very well be decided here and not in the frozen mountains of the peninsula. Korea was a pawn to begin with; it now becomes a pawn twice removed. Both parties will determine their attitudes toward a truce in Korea by their needs in the South. And conversely, the Chinese may determine whether or not to march in Indo-China on the basis of their needs in Korea. Korea and Southeast Asia are increasingly parts of an integrated picture, with their futures dynamically interrelated.

III

Two problems now dominate Asian

international politics: how to end the Korean war and how to prevent Stalinism from advancing. We have seen that any projection of American policy into the future in this area indicates the same type of ineffectual and destructive outcome as has been true since the end of the Second World War. The American answer remains limited to the application of its superiority of force with a dash of Point Four dollars. Without Washington's support British and French imperialism could hardly retain their remaining holds. It is also apparent that neither the West nor Stalinism can bring peace to Korea.

If a truce is finally achieved in that battered land Korea will remain divided, occupied, and militarized. Peace will remain a remote hope. And as long as there is no peace in Korea all Asia is threatened with extension of the war. Asia's independent nations cannot hope to hold on to their Third Camp attitude by keeping aloof from this problem, for the problem is palpable and threatening. It must be said frankly that Free Asia's Third Camp diplomacy is akin to an ostrich-like avoidance of the Korean reality, leaving the fate of that nation to its destroyers. India's greatest contribution to the Korean situation, outside of some backstage work, has consisted of deploring — most often correctly — Washington's actions. But India has yet to state clearly what it would like to work for in Korea. It is doubtful if avoidance of problems will suffice, since both sides in Korea eye South Asia as the next target.

When Nehru organized the last Asian Conference in Delhi he "solved" the question of whom to invite from Indo-China by inviting no one. The sum of India's expressed feelings about *la guerre salue* in that colony is that France should get out and let

Asians solve Asia's problems, although even this idea finds only unofficial and *sotto voce* expression. In this respect, Truman is more alert to the realities of Stalinism than Nehru is willing to be. Free Asia correctly rejects the West's formulation of the Stalinist problem as one of repelling it by force. This remains solely a negative attitude unless it is accompanied by an alternative. The threat of Stalinism to South Asia's independence is just as real as Washington's military imperialism, but realization of this fact is not pres-

ent, nor does it appear to be emerging as yet. In truth, the new governments of South Asia are all thereby mired down in domestic problems with which they have shown slight capacity to cope. From this base they are unable as yet to lead internationally, despite the implicit catastrophe. The Third Camp of South Asian nations is still inert and afraid, not yet a dynamic force. In the meantime, Mao's voice claims to speak for all Asia, with growing effectiveness.

Jack BRAD

## Stalinism in East Germany

### Observations on the Bureaucratic Society

*Whoever has Germany has Europe.—Lenin.*

I

### Four Stages of the Russian Occupation Policy

At Potsdam, in 1945, the victorious nations divided Germany into zones of influence; this was the expression of a new balance between the powers. Today—a dialectical rounding of the circle—it is acknowledged on every hand that there cannot be any European balance without German unity.

Meanwhile six years have elapsed. Each of the victorious armies brought along with it the political and social system of its country. Now, to the left of the Elbe flourishes a classical bourgeois democracy, while to the right the few hundred thousand capitalists and Junkers, who once gave the country its physiognomy, have been eliminated. In their place, a new ruling stratum has arisen with characteristics of its own, making immense efforts to impress them upon the whole of society.

In these conditions, what has become of the workers, the peasants, the bourgeoisie of the Eastern zone?

What is this new stratum? It does not seem possible to us to put the problem of German unity concretely without giving an answer to these questions, without giving due weight to the accomplished facts of the past six years.

The state of Eastern Germany was born thanks to the balancing-game between the powers; the entire political and social evolution of this half of the country has unfolded under the same auspices. Unable to come to an agreement with the native capitalism, the Russians imported their own system; the Westerners did all they could to prevent them; under the pressure of the struggle, the Russians took measures which they probably would not have taken if their hands had been free.

### THE FOUR STAGES OF RUSSIAN POLICY IN GERMANY

When the Russians entered Berlin in April 1945, there was no economic

life left in the city, razed as it was by the bombings. The inhabitants had already been living in cellars for a week. Water, gas and electricity were no longer working. In most of the districts the baking of bread had been suspended. As a rule, the dead were no longer buried.

In the midst of this atmosphere arrived the soldiers of the Zhukov army, most of them natives of the backward regions of the USSR. Blinded by an understandable desire for vengeance they had been given a free hand by most official quarters. A period of terror followed which lasted a fortnight. Six years afterward the idea of a Russian soldier is still linked in the minds of the Berliners to two expressions: "*Uri! Uri!*" and "*Frau komm!*" ("The watch! The watch!" and "Come, woman!")

The same image holds, except for minor variations, for all the other large cities of Eastern Germany.

At the same time the military authorities undertook the dismantling of the factories. There was a logic in the conduct of the Red Army and, just about the same way that the soldiers thought of watches, the reaction of the leaders was to pick up the machines and bring them to Russia. However, there was more than an instinctive reaction involved: according to former Secretary of State Byrnes, the Russians had been demanding, since the Yalta conference, the transfer of 80 per cent of German industry on account of reparations.

The first year of the Russian occupation constituted what we shall call the stage of dismantling. It was carried out in the first few months in a veritably frenzied manner. Valuable machines lay in the rain in uncovered cars; there were cases where precision instruments which had to be kept at constant temperature were left for

three or four months on station platforms.

The misfortune of the social reforms of Eastern Germany was that they were carried out in this atmosphere. What good was the nationalization of the factories when the best machines had been carried off? It could even be asked, oftentimes, what good was the land given to the "new peasants" (*Neubauern*) when the equipment had been taken away, when industry could not supply replacements, when there were neither houses nor stables, nor even the means of building them, when there was no assurance that the land given you by an alien and hated army would not bring you trouble later on. . . .

To be sure, the dismantlings corresponded to an imperious necessity for devastated Russia, and yet, looking backward, it seems certain that they could have proceeded differently: 75 per cent of the "objects" dismantled were lost. Above all the workers of Eastern Germany, no matter how "Prussianized" they were, were not hostile, out of principle, either to the reforms or to the USSR. Among the Berlin workers, during the months of March and April 1945, there was a sort of well-meant wait-and-see attitude: "The Russians are workers," they would say, "they won't do any harm to us." Six months later there was not even a trace left of this state of mind.

It is essential to bear these circumstances in mind if the unfoldings of political life in the Russian zone is to be understood. The regime installed by the Red Army? There is a void all around it. All its measures had to be carried out in the face of apathy, antagonism, general ill-will. Even when intentions were good, everything was perverted at the level of practical application. Police measures, control, re-

control and super-control became a daily affair.

In June 1946, the Soviet command declared that it was abandoning dismantlings. At the same time, it proclaimed as "Soviet corporations" (SAG) two hundred plants, including the largest, the most modern and the most profitable. We are now in the second stage of the occupation: the dismantlings stop (more or less); levies are made on current production. In the Soviet zone there remained some 40 per cent of pre-war production capacity; 25 per cent had been destroyed by bombs, 35 per cent had been dismantled.

About this period that we set—necessarily in a somewhat arbitrary way—between the middle of 1946 and the end of 1948, we will say only that it was marked by a great effort at reconstruction and by a permanent state of famine among the population. The Soviet zone was the only land in Europe where deaths exceeded births: 10.7 births (per thousand of the population) against 22.8 deaths in 1946; 13.3 births against 18.9 deaths in 1947; 12.7 births against 15.1 deaths in 1948. Allowing for the population difference, there were, between 1945 and 1949, 400,000 more deaths in the Russian zone than in Western Germany and 200,000 fewer births. (The figures are from Western sources. Demographic statistics are not published in the Eastern zone.)

The third stage of the Soviet occupation we set in 1949-1950: the two-year plan. The SAG continue to subsist. Levies are still made on current production, but everything has become less severe: reparations are reduced by 50 per cent; 74 SAG are turned back, and then 32 others. Reinvestment is begun again in industry and in agriculture. There is almost enough to eat, and in the last months

of 1950 the 1936 level of industrial production is reached.

The present period is the fourth. Eastern Germany has formally been a sovereign state since the end of 1949; in reality, the occupation continues, but equality with the other "People's Democracies" is now in effect. The USSR has realized that it is better not to kill the goose that lays the golden eggs, that it is more profitable to let Germany produce. Impoverished as it is, the industrial production of the Soviet zone exceeds by some 50 per cent the value of the production of Poland or of Czechoslovakia, which are fairly close to each other.

The five-year plan which has gone into effect this year provides for the creation of a large steel-making combine on the Oder. The steel produced will be transformed into heavy machinery. The plan seeks to make Eastern Germany the supply center of this key product for the whole Soviet bloc.

Certain signs already indicate a fifth stage: one in which Eastern Germany would be the first among the "People's Democracies." Doesn't this third of Germany already play the same role in the Balkans that Germany always had? Doesn't it send machines and specialists from East Berlin to Bucharest and Sofia? The terrible blunder of the first years of the occupation by the USSR was not to realize the accomplished fact constituted by several centuries of industrial civilization. The productivity of labor in Eastern Germany has not yet reached the pre-war level, but it is certain that it is already the highest there is in the whole of the Soviet world.

#### THE WESTERN PRESSURE

It is out of a realization of this fact that the USSR has, from one stage to another, transformed its Eastern German policy. Another factor, certainly

much more important, has been its desire to influence the country as a whole.

Actually, it was impossible to continue the dismantlings or the huge levies upon production when Western Germany was staging a comeback or simply when there were no dismantlings on the other side of the Elbe. There is a striking correspondence between the stages of the Russian policy in the Eastern zone and the international events. Were not the first measures for the creation of the bi-zone taken in 1946? Was it not in March 1946 that the conflict began between the USSR and the Western powers over the level of German production? (The USSR then proposed three million tons of steel and England eleven!) Is not 1948 the year of the Marshall Plan, of the monetary reform in Germany, of the blockade and the counter-blockade? Is not 1950, finally, the year when the rearmament of Western Germany is put on the agenda?

There is still another way in which the West exerts an influence on the life of the Eastern zone. The existence of a capitalist Germany, even still more perhaps the existence of a bourgeois Berlin, vulnerable in appearance, in the middle of the "People's Democracy" which is being built up, reminds people that the political systems are relative, that their situation is the product of an equilibrium that cannot last indefinitely.

We will have occasion to come back to the question of the influence of West Berlin, an alien element in the midst of the Soviet zone. At this point let us remember only this: that after the monetary reform, in spite of unemployment, the people there lived better than anyone in the Soviet zone; that everyone wanted to sell or buy something in West Berlin; that there

was relative freedom there for the press and even for books; and that, at least as much as East Berlin, West Berlin remained the capital and the window on the world of Eastern Germany.

It was the leader of the Potsdam Communist organization who best of all expressed the feeling of the leading circles of the Russian zone: "What's to be done when any saboteur whatsoever can sit down on a train and be in the American sector in ten minutes?" And there was the Soviet officer who said during the blockade: "West Berlin is a dangerous blemish on the body of the Soviet zone; it's a matter of squeezing it in order to dry it up."

The social development of Eastern Germany in the course of the years has been complicated and hectic: 150 years of capitalism in its feudal-Prussian form, twelve years of Hitlerism, on which now is superimposed, without popular participation, a Communist regime—very combative, to be sure, and holding many trump-cards, but shaken, hectic, undermined by proximity of the bourgeois democracies, which in a thousand ways makes contact with the still-warm lava of the old world, underneath the Popular Democracy outside shell.

## II

### **The German Bourgeoisie Under the Communist Regime**

*If one seeks to build socialism upon poverty, all the old crap comes back.—Marx.*

*The resistance of the bourgeoisie has multiplied by its fall and its power rests upon the force of habit.—Lenin, 1920.*

At the end of six years of the Stalinist regime in Eastern Germany, pri-

vate property still participates to the extent of some 20 per cent in industrial production, and what is even more important, some 50 per cent of the workers still work in private enterprises—a situation that is unique in the world of the People's Democracies of Europe. Eastern Germany is not, to be sure, a People's Democracy, but rather an "Anti-Fascist Democratic Regime." Ask a Communist to explain to you what this sociological novelty is; he cannot. An "anti-fascist regime" really has no significance.

But listen attentively to the language of the Communists of Berlin and then to that of their comrades of Prague or of Budapest, for example, and you will understand. There the bourgeoisie is detrimental as such; here there are good bourgeois and bad ones those who were Nazis and those who were not. From this standpoint, the SED (the name of the Stalinist party in Germany) is three years behind its brother parties. As a matter of fact, back in 1948—the year of the complete break with the West—Dimitroff defined the People's Democracy as a form of the dictatorship of the proletariat. Up to that time it had been a category as vague as the "Anti-Fascist Regime."

But for Eastern Germany the situation is different. They want to influence the capitalist West of the country and to act on a national basis. The expropriations which are undertaken are justified because the owners were "bad Germans," because they led the country to ruin. After every wave of expropriations, the SED takes good care to say that it is not against private property in principle, on the contrary, it is its best defender if it is honestly acquired.

In sum, there was no clear ideological break, beyond the Elbe, between the old Germany and the new. They

fought the bourgeoisie but not with weapons from the Marxian arsenal; they did it on the eminently bourgeois ground of patriotism. They did it, too, by confusing terms, without wishing to define the fronts, without mobilizing the masses, thanks to administrative measures.

To be sure, the regime can boast at the moment that, while remaining on national grounds, it reduced the powerful (and very reactionary!) bourgeoisie of this part of the country to a shadow, to a caricature of what it was. But it is precisely this lack of clear break with the past, this lack of revolution, that the regime is paying for, because the bourgeois spirit has not been broken with, either; and it is more alive than ever in the heart of the nation.

### **THE "UTILIZATION OF THE BOURGEOISIE"**

The expropriations were carried out in waves: the banks right after the occupation, industry in December 1945; fourteen months later, in February 1947, an entirely new series of industrial enterprises. Then, one after the other, the Saxon-Anhalt mines, the movies of the whole zone, wholesale trade, a number of textile enterprises in Saxony, etc. It was easy to find a reason for the expropriation; most of the big German industrialists and merchants had supported the Nazi regime or made war profits.

The remaining private enterprises have been grouped together under the aegis of Regional Bureaus for Industry and Commerce, directed on a parity basis by the administration and by the enterprisers. It was the intention, on the one hand, to control, and, on the other, to integrate the private sector into the plan. The means was to be the distribution of commodities according to the requirements of indus-

trialists or merchants.

This idea of "neutralizing" a hostile social class, of utilizing it by means of propaganda and organization, was not new in the Stalinist ideology; the "Popular Fronts" of the 1930s as well as the colonial tactics of the 1920s were connected with it. To be sure, the methods utilized were more important now. They sufficed to shatter the political strength of capitalism, but as for making it serve the regime, as for "utilizing" it, they were as much a failure as ever.

### CAPITALISM'S REVENGE

The country was living in dire need. An editor attached to a ministry would get from three to four hundred marks per month while the smallest industrialist, before the monetary reform, would juggle hundreds of thousands. Cadres devoted to the regime were rare. The distribution bureaus, aimed at controlling the private enterprisers, very quickly became transformed into their tools: they allocated more raw materials to them than they needed, they closed their eyes while industrialists and merchants directed the flow of production to the black market or while they sold to West Berlin.

Naturally, severe sanctions were often taken. The distribution bureaus were replaced by contract bureaus (*Vertragskontore*) between private and nationalized enterprises. But the results were not much better. Last year, the Saxony government organized at Dresden an exposition of "gifts" offered by private enterprisers to functionaries to buy their good will. The modest package of cigarettes could be seen there alongside the bundle of banknotes. Involuntarily one asked himself: What were the "gifts" accepted which did not figure in the exposition?

In reality, the spirit of personal and group "wangling" [*debrouillage*] is general in the Soviet zone, and at the beginning of the occupation necessity caused it to penetrate up to the summits of the administration. Thus, Saxony-Anhalt was for some time exploited by its Soviet zone neighbors, which had coal, textile raw materials and chemical products delivered to them without supplying anything in exchange. Could that have been because Saxony-Anhalt was the only land in Eastern Germany with a Liberal-Democratic president of the Council? But between governments ruled by the SED the procedure was the same: in the spring of 1947 Thuringia sent Saxony spinning yarn; the latter, instead of returning it in the form of cloth, turned the finished product over to the Russians as reparations and thus saved itself the levy on its own properties.

Neither was it rare for a private enterprise to be torn apart among, for example, the association for peasants' mutual aid (V.d.g.B.), the cooperatives, and a municipality, on the theory that it would favorably round out the respective domains.

Like the private enterprises the nationalized enterprises also dealt with the black market and with "matters of compensation" which were strictly forbidden: at the beginning they were forced to do it simply in order to live, in order thereby to fulfill or surpass the plan. Often these operations were undertaken to satisfy a tragic necessity: "Those who are in the administration ought to imagine what it means to fill a blast furnace by the light of a flashlight"—this is what one could read at the end of 1947 in the Communist journal of Thuringia under the signature of a "Workers' Correspondent." And the letter ends with

an urgent appeal to provide electric bulbs.

The lot of a manager of a nationalized enterprise was not the most enviable one in the first years of the occupation: he had to make shift to feed and clothe his workers, for otherwise they could not produce; he had to obtain raw materials and equipment, official deliveries often being defective or late. He could do so only through the black or gray market and often indeed in West Berlin; and for that matter, he also had to sell his products on the black market. But if he was discovered, these operations cost him his job and often enough meant jail; if he did not accomplish these things, it was almost impossible for him to fulfill the plan, and the consequences for him could be the same. Naturally, these "compensation operations" were accompanied by a great deal of corruption in the administrative and economic cadres.

Thus the individualistic spirit of capitalism largely militated against the official collectivist spirit in the very heart of the nationalized sector. The bourgeoisie had, of course, suffered a serious defeat, and politically it meant almost nothing any more. But, in its own way, it was taking its revenge. The situation in the Eastern zone once more confirmed the idea that poverty lends itself to planning very badly and that it naturally gives birth to individualism.

Since 1949-50, the situation has certainly been less tragic. The workers nearly manage to satisfy their hunger; there are no more "cold wars" between provincial governments; "business egoism," as it is called, has also become less dramatic, but nevertheless it exists; it is the frenetic race to surpass the plan which is now the cause.

They hide reserves if the enterprise possesses any, they falsify the accounts

for this purpose, they falsify the profits, they do not turn them over at the request of their administrative superiors but reinvest them in the plant in accordance with their own plan. They hide surplus machines rather than lend them to a plant in the same branch of industry which needs them: glory and material advantages are assured to the plant which comes out first in the competitive race.

These individualistic faults are so important that they are called the main danger to the plan. Some months ago, the East Berlin Council of Ministers solemnly gave the Ministry of the Interior the task of taking legal action against all investments outside of the plan in the nationalized enterprises.

Recently *Morgen*, the journal of the Liberal Democratic Party of the Soviet zone, which represents whatever still remains of private capitalism, wrote, with the somber satisfaction of the conquered who see their own principles being adopted by the conqueror, that the latter is taking a leaf out of the book of the capitalist system of distribution by giving rewards to shock workers, to plant managers who distinguish themselves, by assigning to their personal account a part of the economies in materials which they make in the course of production, etc.

In spite of all, one should not get a false conception of the situation in the Soviet zone. Capitalism suffered a serious defeat there: politically it counts for very little, and economically scarcely more. In its place a collectivist-type economy continually expands and in spite of everything becomes a little more stabilized each year. But because of the poverty, because capitalism was not combated as such, because some of its methods were adopted, the capitalist *mores* and spirit live on among the masses, and



penetrate into and undermine the nationalized sector. There is still in the Soviet zone, we must not forget, a wide stratum of small businessmen and artisans and a whole peasant class of individual procedures.

Finally, the people are aware that the last word has not been said; they do not believe in the stability of their situation; within their immediate range of vision is capitalist Western Germany and West Berlin, with many faults certainly, but also many advantages, and above all the advantage of being richer and also closer to what the mass of average Germans have always known. This is still the greatest appeal of the bourgeois spirit.

### III

## The German Workers Under the Communist Regime

*The cadres decide everything.*—Stalin.

The working class is certainly the key social category in Eastern Germany. In the last analysis, the regime will succeed or fail depending upon the attitude of the workers.

It is not a question of a passing sympathy or antagonism to the government as in the Western democracies but of something deeper: Does the worker consider the nationalized factory to be his own, does the laborer have "a new attitude toward his labor," as the regime (sometimes) asserts? Or does he rather simply try to sell his labor power as dearly as possible? A decisive question, if there is any, for a collectivist-type regime.

Now, the fact is that up to the present the majority of the workers have had the second attitude, as everywhere else. There is, however, an essential difference from the situation in the

capitalist West: there, the working class constitutes the opposition *par excellence*, it is the other possibility; here, everyone knows that the other alternative is capitalism.

From this flows an extremely complex situation: on the one hand, the working class maintains its own identity: as elsewhere, down deep it maintains its hope in the "coming of the workers' rule"; on the other hand it is, in its majority, ready to ally itself with the capitalists against the regime, and does so in fact whenever it is profitable to do so. Finally, from various motives, a gradually increasing minority of workers who support the regime tend to move toward the summits of society, whereas at the opposite pole (a serious argument against the regime) another section of workers is in the process of sinking lower, of making up a veritable category of sub-proletarians.

### WORKERS AND MANAGEMENT BUREAUCRACY

With the retreat, the relations between workers and Communist managers in Eastern Germany appear to be really under an evil sign. When the Russians came in April-May 1945, there were many old Communists and Socialists who greeted them with flags waving. In Berlin, in the workers' sections, one could often see the red flag side by side with the white flag of surrender.

As soon as the early days of terror had passed, the workers gathered at their factories which had been abandoned by the owners, and spontaneously, without being paid, set about to put them back into shape. In spite of everything, among the working class lived the hope that a new life was possible. Often the skill and tenacity of the German worker performed wonders. But the dismantlings had been

too sweeping and too senseless. Often a factory which had been restored with great pain by the workers was dismantled by the Red Army.

From the winter of 1945-6 on, there was a complete reversal in the workers' attitude: all turned toward the methods of individual "wangling." Up to 50 per cent of the population of the cities lived by the black market. In the factories the workers now stole everything, including the doors and windows, in order to use them as firewood.

The Communist regime installed by the Red Army not only approved the dismantlings but (Stalinist logic) displayed enthusiasm for them. Buchwitz, leading Communist in Saxony, declared: "I am happy about every machine and every carload of goods which goes out to the USSR, since that strengthens the fatherland of socialism." Since then, the attitude of the workers toward the regime has changed little, basically. Certainly they operate less on the black market, but the large majority have turned away from public affairs to occupy themselves, as usual, exclusively with their own.

However, since 1945 the Communist leaders have made unceasing efforts to reinterest the workers in public life, to link the regime with the masses, to convince the workers that there was something new in the relations of production. A study ought to be written on this question, for the episodes are rich in lessons on the sociology of the popular democracies.

The first big attempt was the *Betriebsräte* (works councils): they were elected by the workers; they were to manage the factory on the same level as management; in the view of the regime, they were to link the workers with the policies of the party. The workers did not oppose the regime directly or on general questions. But

in daily practise, they were able to transform the *Betriebsräte* into their own instruments and into a regular tool for the sabotage of planning. The councils occupied themselves almost exclusively in obtaining food supplies for the workers, and, to this end, engaged in barter and black-market operations with the products of the enterprise. Therefore, on the initiative of the Party, they dissolved works councils in November 1948, after arranging for the adoption of thousands of workers' resolutions demanding this step.

Their role was handed to the trade-union committees of the plants, which the party controlled much better. But under the pressure of the workers, the latter most often took the same road as the *Betriebsräte*. Or, when they united with the plant management to raise the norms, to make the workers work more, the latter made a void around them. Still, after having proclaimed that the workers' right to management was more than ever in effect, through the plant trade-union committees, the central organ of the Party (*Neuer Weg*), in March 1950, warned them in the following words: "Let them understand that the responsibility for the realization of the plan and of production is in the hands of management." They thus returned to the tested principles of individual management of the factory.

Henceforth, the orientation changed. To make the workers produce, they oriented themselves more and more toward the system of bonuses and sought to create a Stakhanovist movement. To tie the workers to the regime, collective contracts were discussed and put into operation in the plants—first, between the factory management and the union representing the workers; since last June-July, between the factory as a whole, management included, and the given branch

of nationalized industry.

To be sure, thanks to bonuses and the Stakhanovists, the regime was able to register an appreciable increase in the productivity of labor. But the collective contracts were not taken seriously by the workers. Or rather, especially for the latter, they were taken seriously only from the standpoint of each individual's commitment. But as for creating new relations in the factory and a new attitude by the worker to his labor, everything remained as before.

However, production had increased in the Eastern zone. Soviet reparations decreased, the two-year plan was successfully accomplished, poverty was no longer so tragic. Hand in hand with this, a process of crystallization set in among the working masses: on the one hand, a minority of adult workers (the Stakhanovists) and a very important section of the youth oriented toward the regime; on the other hand, the majority of factory workers adopted a clearer and clearer attitude of opposition.

We will return to the question of the Stakhanovists and the youth in another article. With regard to the working-class opposition, let us make clear here that, since about the beginning of 1950, there has been a change in factory trade-union meetings: as in the past, the workers keep their mouths shut when friendship for the USSR, national front, etc., are under discussion, but they now intervene vigorously whenever it is a question of norms, bonuses or wages. For the first time, last Christmas, there was a real general movement of protest in the factories of the Eastern zone—the regime had made known its intention not to pay the traditional holiday bonuses: it had to retreat. The same movement was repeated on May Day. Last June the largest chemical plant

in the Soviet zone saw a three-day strike over discussions on the norms and wages to be written into the collective contracts.

### THE WORKING CLASS AND THE CAPITALIST OPPOSITION

Nearly half the workers of Eastern Germany still work in private enterprises; these are small and medium factories in light industry using much labor but little invested capital in machines or buildings.

Labor relations between capitalists and workers, right in the middle of the Soviet world, present a very interesting picture: it is a case of "superimposed" relations, where the old relations between social categories live on, deep down, with their contradictions; they are only covered up and modified by the new ones.

Talking to workers in the nationalized or private sector of Germany, you discover that, if in general they are hostile to the new regime, they likewise regard a return to the old state of affairs with very mixed sentiments. In this respect they differ essentially from the capitalists who still exist in their country.

However, in the private sector, there is often a real *union sacrée* against the regime between bosses and workers. Thus in autumn 1946 when a referendum to approve the nationalizations took place in Saxony, the *Betriebsräte* of the Daimler-Benz factories demanded that their enterprises be stricken from the nationalization lists and they prepared to hold a conference for this purpose. In numerous cases, when a meeting of the personnel of a factory was asked to vote for nationalization, the great majority abstained. Again, lastly, there were repeated cases in East Berlin where nationalizations were put through later: at the meeting of Kodak factory per-

sonnel, which has a tradition of trade-union struggle, only 7 out of several hundred workers and employees present raised their hands in favor of nationalization; the others kept still.

Although the regime gives advantages to nationalized enterprises, very often the workers prefer to work for a boss. In fact, what happens is that the latter gives his workers something "under the table" which doubles their legal wages. In turn, the boss "wangles": he routes his products to the black market or he sells them secretly in West Berlin, and the trade-union committee which is supposed to watch him shuts its eyes and, if necessary, covers up for him. There were cases of clear agreements between trade-union committees and bosses to deceive the Communist authorities: the trade union declared, for example, that the enterprise needed a new canteen or nursery; the boss built it in exchange for help from the trade-union committee in "proving" that he was therefore not making profits and he thus avoided paying taxes.

In its resistance to the regime in Eastern Germany, the working-class, then, could rarely resort to its own methods of struggle—the strike, collective forms of struggle. Much more usually, it resorted to individual or group "wangling," and it is on these grounds that it comes into collision with the system in power. Necessity imposes these forms of struggle on the working class. Here it finds an ally, the bourgeoisie. Finally, the working class—"the negation of capitalism," to use a term from the Marxist vocabulary—was itself a product of bourgeois society; and individualism—"elbowing" and "wangling"—was as close to it as the strike, for example. After having been on the verge of being integrated into the system for several months in 1945, the basic nucleus of

the workers has become an alien element in it.

In fact, the working masses have fallen back to the attitude of watchful waiting. Deep down, it maintains its individuality, its hopes and its reservations for the future; in the present it tries to live. Like the bulk of the population, the working masses do not have the impression that the last word has been said, that its situation is definitive. For the present, however, the alliance with the bourgeoisie against the Communist regime in power superficially blurs its individuality, gives the impression that there is a national union against the regime. The regime, however, indefatigably tries to corrode the working class, to reattach it to itself, to convince it that its hopes are being realized; and in the case of the Stakhanovist movement and, above all, of the youth movement, it has had an appreciable success.

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# Western Totalitarianism

## Judgment of an Era—II

In our first article, we gave a summary of what we believed totalitarianism to be. It was sufficient to indicate the direction of our thoughts on the subject, to show that in the very approach of this modern phenomenon, we proceeded from premises considerably at variance with those used by Hannah Arendt in her *Origins of Totalitarianism*. We cannot adequately and thoroughly review every conception of her book, contradictory and otherwise (there are literally dozens of them presented dogmatically, in thesis style, as "fundamental" ideas). However, we shall consider the highlights of her theories as we direct our brief inquiry into what we believe are truly the *origins* of totalitarian scourge.

Arendt does not present a unified definition of what the totalitarian dictatorship is. It is therefore impossible to say on the basis of her theories and terminology: *This* is totalitarianism.

She erects a certain structure in her book that enables her to present what in her mind is a continuity of historical process which led inevitably to totalitarianism. The book begins with a long discussion of the origins, rise and development of anti-Semitism, and ends with the Dreyfus case at the close of the last century. The second section of the book, "Imperialism," deals with the rise of the "nation-state," a world-wide imperialism, the decline of the nation-state and the "end of the Rights of Man." It portrays the progressive deterioration of modern civilization and prepares for the discussion in the third section called "Totalitarianism." The latter stage of social development is marked by the breakdown

of class society; the disappearance of classes into masses; the "denationalization" of people and their expulsion from human communities; and the rise of the totalitarian movements.

The author considers the effects of social causes as primary phenomena, and raises them to the level of principle. We have already quoted to show that for her the "Jewish question" was the catalyst for all that happened in Germany during the past thirty years. And it is from her that we learn that "totalitarian regimes establish a functioning world of no-sense," and that totalitarianism expands only to prove that its "respective supersense (!) has been right." (The dangling "respective" is one of many grammatical ambiguities, traceable, we believe, not to faulty editing but rather to her mystical predilections.)

Though Arendt is not guilty of the simplistic view so widely current years ago, and still held today, that fascist totalitarianism is the product of "mass neurosis," that its leaders were all lunatics requiring clinical assistance, and that it could not be understood except in these terms, she also contends that "commonsense trained in utilitarian thinking is helpless" against the movement. While it might be said that her views are presented with more subtlety and considerable erudition, her method of inquiry is compounded of idealism and mysticism.

Historical methodology is of the highest importance in trying to understand social events. Arendt has no genuine methodology. She considers man and his movements as an absolute, outside of history and nature,

abstracted from his social environment, propelled by certain moral values or the lack of them. In the case of totalitarianism, it is a product of the negative influences of the French Enlightenment, of materialism, science and Marxism, for these have produced a "decline of religious faith." The decline of religious faith is then one of the greatest factors in the rise of totalitarian nihilism. As she reasons from such subjective observations, we can understand why it is possible for her to say:

Today we consider both history and nature to be alien (!) to the essence of man. Neither any longer offer us that comprehensive whole in which we feel spiritually at home.

Contrast this view to scientific-materialist methodology of Marxism. In his introduction to *Karl Marx*, Living Thoughts Library, Trotsky summarizes it in the following way:

For economic science the decisive significance is what and how people act, not what they themselves think about their actions. At the base of society is not religion or morality, but nature and labor. Marx's method is *materialistic*, because it proceeds from existence to consciousness, not the other way around. Marx's method is *dialectic*, because it regards both nature and society as they evolve, and evolution itself as the constant struggle of conflicting forces.

Franz Neuman, in *Behemoth*, still the finest book on Hitler Germany, although written ten years ago, dealt with this same question, for he met with it often in the many philosophical attempts to explain the German people as inherently evil and immoral. He wrote:

If we believe man to be essentially wicked, if egoism is the sole incentive of man, the prospects are black. But man is neither bad nor good, he will be molded by his cultural and political experience.

This cultural and political experience accrues to man against the back-

ground of a specific social order and he takes his own history not in accordance with any "eternal laws" but on the basis of conditions which exist in society. History and nature are not alien to man, but part of the essence of man.

There is no doubt that elements of lunacy were present in all fascist movements, more so in Germany than in Italy or Spain. A measure of madness could be found in the movement which Hitler led to power and irrationality appeared to be its hallmark. But it is shortsighted and disorienting to describe the totalitarian movement primarily in such terms. Even such an inconclusive affair as the Nuremberg Trials revealed that beside the "madmen" were men of considerable intelligence, measured by ordinary standards, rational men of firm conviction who knew what they wanted, where they were going and how they would achieve their aims. However useful a clinical analysis of the fascist-totalitarian movements might then be, for they did incorporate aberrations of one kind or another, it could never substitute for a fundamental understanding of the social causes of this phenomenon which emerged from the complex economic, political and social matrix of German capitalism in the same way as the other fascist movements mirrored the traditions, cultural and social conditions of their respective nations.

In *School for Dictators*, Ignazio Silone says quite aptly:

You know there are many people who maintain that Hitler and Mussolini, for example, are mad, mad in the clinical sense. That is a thoroughly intelligible thing for normal, useful and decent people to believe. . . . But if democratic politicians and socialists hold the same opinion of the dictators, it only proves that they themselves are amateurs and intruders on the political scene.

Trotsky, in a similar vein, tried years ago to dispel these notions about Hitler. In *What Hitler Wants* he wrote:

It is most dangerous to underestimate an enemy just because his system goes beyond the limits of routine. Simply to say that Hitler is a demagogue, an hysterical person and an actor is to shut one's eyes so as not to face the danger! It takes more than hysteria to seize power, and method there must be in the Nazi madness.

To many who live in the dream world of a happy society of the past—the sunshine of a peaceful, ever-progressing capitalism of the 19th Century; the fascist and Stalinist totalitarian movements with their abrupt, direct and violent approach to the economic and political problems of modern times, are so shocking as to elicit reactions of horror, accompanied by a loss of ability to think clearly and logically on what has happened in recent years and why.

TROTSKY AND THE MARXISTS attributed the rise of reactionary fascism to the crisis of bourgeois society which depresses the conditions of all the lower classes to the point where life becomes unbearable. The crisis of capitalism is world-wide, therefore the movements of reactionary totalitarianism are world-wide and assume similar organizational and ideological form. Where the crisis of capitalism is prolonged without a progressive, i.e., a socialist solution, said Trotsky, "the crisis can bring in its trail only the pauperization of the petty-bourgeoisie and the transformation of ever-increasing groups of workers into the lumpenproletariat."

In *What Next*, dealing specifically with German fascism during the period of its imminent rise to power, Trotsky wrote:

In order to try to find a way out, the bourgeoisie must absolutely rid itself of the pressure exerted by the workers' organizations. These must needs be eliminated, destroyed, utterly crushed.

At this juncture, the historic role of Fascism begins. It sets on its feet those classes that are immediately above the proletariat and who are ever in dread of being forced down into its ranks; it organizes and militarizes them at the expense of finance capital, under the cover of the official government and it directs them to the extirpation of proletarian organizations, from the most revolutionary to the most conservative.

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

Through the Fascist agency, capitalism sets in motion the masses of the *crazed petty bourgeoisie, and the bands of declassed and demoralized lumpen-proletariat; all the countless human beings whom finance capital itself has brought to desperation and frenzy*. . . . When a state turns fascist, it doesn't only mean that the forms and methods of government are changed in accordance with the patterns set by Mussolini—the changes, in this sphere ultimately play a minor role—but it means, first of all for the most part, that the workers organizations are annihilated; that the proletariat is reduced to an amorphous state; and that a system of administration is created which penetrates deeply into the masses and which serves to frustrate the independent crystallization of the proletariat. Therein precisely is the gist of Fascism. . . .

It has been objected that this view is entirely too narrow since it "confines" the description of this totali-

tarian phenomenon to the "sectarian" struggle of the workers and does not take into consideration society as a whole. That would be true only if one understands the above in purely mechanical terms and does not see the dynamics of the analysis made by Trotsky, i.e., the involvement of the whole society, every segment of it.

Neuman stated the problem of German society more specifically to explain the forces which gave strength to reaction in the form of fascism.

The Weimar democracy proceeded in a different direction (from the constitutional monarchy, the *Reichstaat*). It had to rebuild an impoverished and exhausted country in which class antagonisms had become polarized. It attempted to merge three elements: the heritage of the past (especially the civil service), parliamentary democracy modelled after Western European and American patterns and a pluralistic collectivism, the incorporation of powerful social and economic organizations directly into the political system. What it actually produced, however, were sharpened social antagonisms, the breakdown of voluntary collaboration, the destruction of parliamentary institutions, the suspension of political liberties, the growth of a ruling bureaucracy and the renaissance of the army as a decisive political factor.

Why?

In an impoverished, yet highly industrialized, country, pluralism\* could work only under the following different conditions. In the first place, it could rebuild Germany with foreign assistance, expanding its markets by peaceful means to the level of its high industrial capacity. The Weimar Republic's foreign policy tended in this direction. . . . The attempt failed. It was supported neither by German industry and large landowners nor by the Western powers. The year 1932 found Germany in a catastrophic political, economic and social crisis.

The system could also operate if the ruling groups made concessions voluntarily or under compulsion by the state.

\*The concept of the democratic state in which government, church, social and economic organizations, etc. rule together and equally without the state being the sole sovereign ruler.

That would have led to a better life for the mass of the German workers and security for the middle classes at the expense of the profits and power of big business. German industry was decidedly not amenable, however, and the state sided with it more and more.

The third possibility was the transformation into a socialist state, and that had become completely unrealistic in 1932, since the Social Democratic party was socialist only in name.

The crisis of 1932 demonstrated that political democracy alone without a fuller utilization of the potentialities inherent in Germany's industrial system, that is, without the abolition of unemployment and an improvement in living standards, remained a hollow shell.

The fourth choice was the return to imperialist expansion. Imperialist ventures could not be organized within the traditional democratic form, however, for there would have been too serious an opposition. Nor could it take the form of the restoration of the monarchy. An industrial society that has passed through a democratic phase cannot exclude the masses from consideration. Expansionism therefore took the form of National Socialism, a totalitarian dictatorship that has been able to transform some of its victims into supporters and to organize the entire country into an armed camp under iron discipline.

The bourgeois economist, John C. DeWilde, wrote voluminously over an extended period of time on Germany's "controlled economy," showing through an examination of production, property relations, profits, wages, and other economic facts that while the economy was controlled, it was still, in a fundamental sense, a capitalist economy.

Hermann Rauschning, Nazi apostate, who was intimately acquainted with the "theories" of his erstwhile companions, wrote that the anti-capitalism of the National Socialists was "just a bargain counter, like almost everything else." In *The Revolution of Nihilism* he added: "The movement has no fixed aim, either economic or political." What he is really

saying is that it did not have a new ideology in the sense of new social and economic doctrine, or that it in any way sought to create a new social system. This fact will be well worth bearing in mind as we will shortly deal with other conceptions of Arendt in this context which contribute so much to her overall appreciation of totalitarianism.

Economic study of the German fascist-totalitarian state revealed the strongest pro-monopoly-capitalist bias on the part of Hitler's regime. The whole German economy was revived under that regime as a war economy in which the monopolists enriched themselves. All other sections of the capitalists did as well, since the profit and dividend structure of economy improved beyond the fondest hopes of the bourgeoisie. Sectors of the economy which had been nationalized during the Weimar Republic were denationalized and privatized by the new regime. The exploitation of the Jews became a means of enrichment of Nazi Party members—not on the basis of the nationalization of Jewish property, but by a change of ownership—on a capitalist basis. The new regime strengthened monopoly capitalism since it was this sector of the economy which largely made possible war preparation and the rebuilding of Germany as a military power. All of this was accomplished without a change in the most important characteristic of capitalism: ownership of the means of production which remained private under monopolistic organization.

In *Fascism and Big Business*, Guerin provides irrefutable material to prove that the Nazi conspiracy, like all other fascist-totalitarian movements, developed in the closest ideological and physical relationship with the decisive sections of big business and finance.

Back in 1938, in his introduction to

Daniel Guerin's *Fascism and Big Business*, Dwight Macdonald found it necessary to write against the superficial and simplistic thinking which was then so popular on the subject of fascism, and to which we have already made reference in this article. In the opening paragraph of this introduction, he wrote:

Americans have a tendency (not only Americans, it should be added—AG) to look on fascism as a mass neurosis which mysteriously seizes on entire people. According to this view, the German and Italian peoples are possessed of the Devil, and, like the Gadarene swine similarly afflicted, are rushing down a steep place to perish in the sea. This moralistic approach has been reinforced by the recent anti-Jewish atrocities in Germany. All sections of American public opinion, from John L. Lewis and William Green through the *Nation*, the Communist Party and Franklin D. Roosevelt, to Bishop Manning and the presidents of Yale, Harvard and Princeton, all have united in an uproar of indignation whose dominant note is: how can such things be in a civilized world? There is, of course, as the Nazi press has not failed to point out, a good deal of hypocrisy in such denunciations. . . . German fascism is not the twin of American capitalism. But it is its older brother. . . . Looked at from the viewpoint of society as a whole, and especially of the workers, fascism unquestionably appears to be insane. But, and this is what the liberals forget, fascism makes excellent sense from the standpoint of the ruling class.

This showed what a powerful weapon Marxism can be, even in the hands of a Macdonald. Now is it true that in 1941 he changed his views a little. Startled, surprised, and overwhelmed by the Blitzkrieg of the well-organized and prepared German military machine, he discovered that Germany under Hitler had become a bureaucratic collectivist state, which for the sake of distinction from the Russian model, he called Black Socialism. The notion which drove him to an investigation of the new eco-

nomy was the belief that only a new, collectivistic economy could produce such military victories as the easy conquest of France in 1940.

Even though he was mistaken about the German state and its economy then as he is now in his enchantment with Arendt's work, he at least had the merit of trying to understand this totalitarian state on fundamental grounds, the social and economic nature of a society which could produce such military power. He believed that Hitler had violated the basic laws of capitalism and arrived at the conclusion that Russian and German societies were identical.

THE READER WILL REMEMBER that Arendt dismisses entirely the question of the kind of society which existed in Germany and all the other totalitarian states, that totalitarianism is neither capitalist nor socialist, since these terms apply only to "Western welfare economies." As you see, capitalism, too, is a welfare economy! However, if neither capitalism nor socialism existed in Nazi Germany, what kind of an economy did exist? Her view is obvious: she is not concerned with economics; that is why she regards all totalitarian states as identical interiorly and in the case of Russia and Germany "growing constantly more alike in exterior forms." To those who wrote as Arendt does in other years Neuman asked whether it was possible to have "an economy without economics?" He answered this, naturally, in the negative, and went on to prove that this "economy without economics" was capitalist.

But let us proceed on the basis of Arendt's views. Since she affirms that totalitarian states are neither capitalist nor socialist, what economic order replaced the old? Bureaucratic col-

lectivism? A slave economy? Feudal? One which has never been heard of? She has no answer.

Yet an answer must be made to understand the phenomenon of fascist totalitarianism. How do such countries exist? Germany was a nation of 70 million people, even after the Jews and other opponents were either liquidated or neutralized, defeated, atomized, etc. Did the economy cease to exist? It seems silly to ask such a question, for obviously an organized economy had to exist, otherwise no war economy would have been possible and Germany would have been unable to fight a war. Then who owned the vast German industries and how were they organized? By and through the state? Did the bourgeoisie or some other class own the economy as private property? These are not idle questions, for we shall soon come upon the central feature of Arendt's theory of totalitarianism, insofar as she has one.

As a matter of fact, all the evidence adduced over the years shows that Hitler Germany was a capitalist society in all its essential forms. For that country to have been transformed into a classless society as Emil Lederer contended in 1940 and as Arendt does now, would have meant that the private ownership of the means of production had ceased. We know today that this never happened in Germany, or in any other fascist totalitarian state in the West.

That this is no idle discussion is indicated by what we believe is Arendt's central thesis and from which flows so many other of her "central" ideas.

Totalitarian movements we are told "aim at and succeed in organizing masses—not classes, like the old interest parties of the Continental nation-states; not citizens with opinions

about, and interests in, the handling of public affairs, like the parties of Anglo-Saxon countries." And this, because there has been "a breakdown of the class system [which] meant automatically the breakdown of the party system, chiefly because these parties being interest parties, could no longer represent class interests."

Now, "a breakdown of the class system" may mean the automatic breakdown "of the party system," but this could stand up, as we have said, only if the creator or creators of this theory could establish what should follow from this breakdown: the end of the existing economic order based on the private ownership of the means of production. It is this which has determined the nature of capitalist production and the class system as we have known it. The breakdown of the class system would presuppose the end of capitalist property relations. Arendt literally ignores this.

That isn't all that is wrong with the above. Does she really mean that because "these parties [are] interest parties" they really "could no longer represent class interests?" It would seem ridiculous on the face of it, wouldn't it? Well, it is, and we consider it a waste of time to cite proof that the "parties being interest parties" did and do represent class interests.

Or is it true, that the totalitarian movements succeed in organizing "not citizens with opinions about, and interests in, the handling of public affairs, like the parties of Anglo-Saxon countries?" We think that this is nonsense too. We agree with Arendt that the democratic states often are ruled through the support of only a minority of the population and that the majority of the people in a given country often abstain from participation in the affairs of that

nation. But that does not mean, nor does not follow logically, that totalitarianism organizes an amorphous mass of *opinionless* and *interestless* people.

ON SUCH A FOUNDATION, Arendt builds the structure of her broader theory. The premise being unsound, the structure is shaky. It is not supported by the real history of the recent past.

Once the class society has been liquidated and replaced by the mass society, something has to be said about these masses and why they became the basis for modern totalitarianism. Bear in mind, however, that Arendt rejects everything in the Marxist analysis.

Before the "economies without economics" are established, they must have been preceded by the mass movements. The latter are organizable because they have acquired an "appetite for political organization" presupposes a certain consciousness, for it indicates a measure of understanding and choice, and, as a result, an "interest." But she denies all that when she writes:

Masses are *not* held together by a consciousness of *common interests* and they *lack specific class articulateness* which is expressed in *determined, limited obtainable goals*. The term masses applies *only* where we deal with people who either because of *sheer numbers*; or *indifference*, or a *combination of both*, cannot be integrated into any organization based on common interest, into political parties or municipal governments, or professional organizations or trade unions. (Emphasis mine—A. G.)

This view, which contradicts the real world in every respect, is possible only because Arendt and those who think like her, ignore what is important in trying to understand totalitarianism and fix upon the dazzling but superficial (not in the sense of unim-

portant, but rather secondary) factors and features.

First we have had an arbitrary liquidation of class society and classes by the author. Thus, she accomplished with the stroke of a pen what even the socialist movement has never yet achieved. The society of masses replaces class society. But it does not follow, if we accept her theory of a society of masses for the moment, that the living masses of the totalitarian movements fit her description. The masses of the fascist movement did in fact have momentary common interests, a certain middle class articulateness, determined, limited and obtainable goals, and above all, they were not indifferent. Otherwise it would have been impossible to create the totalitarian movements. The real life of these movements, their conflicts, especially against the working class movements, their alternating periods of rise and decline, and finally their victories on the basis of organized political parties tell us that they were authentic expressions of a rapidly changing objective situation of which they were an integral part, and represented, not the total interests of society, but at least a definite and economically important section of it.

If we follow the text of the book closely, we are not always certain whether we are in agreement with Arendt on the composition of the totalitarian movements. We have already written that there seemed to be agreement that the fascist movements were composed largely of the elements described before (bear in mind that we omit Stalinist Russia from this discussion because the Russian development was wholly different from the experience in the West).

However, as we watch Arendt's classless society, or society of the masses, emerge from the old capitalist

system, we see that there are no longer present the class struggles of the old order. Now, what we really have is a new society, and the totalitarians, as the founders of this new society, are therefore anti-bourgeois and anti-capitalist. She writes that as movements of "anti-individualism," "the totalitarian movements can rightly claim that they were the *first truly anti-bourgeois parties*." (Emphasis mine—A. G.)

At the same time that this assertion is made, Arendt also writes about the opposition of the working classes to the totalitarians. Does the working class exist as a class in the classless, mass society? On the basis of her theory of society this would be a contradiction. Does she merely resort to an old adjective in absence of new descriptive words? Even this does not follow, for the mass society has only rulers and ruled, not classes, and it would mean that all the old classes were merged into one common ruled-over population. If she has an explanation for the phenomenon of a working class in a classless society it is not made in the book. Given that contradiction, Arendt is driven into another one. For the fact is that the working classes did oppose and remained in opposition to the totalitarians. If the fascist totalitarians were truly anti-bourgeois and anti-capitalist, as the working classes of Europe certainly were, what kept these two anti-bourgeois, anti-capitalist forces apart? Why didn't they unite, since they had as a common aim nothing less than opposition to the ruling class of the old society. Remember, too, that many democrats and liberals appealed to the big bourgeoisie, if unsuccessfully, against the fascists precisely on the basis of the old fable about the latter's anti-capitalism.

Now it is true that a certain kind of "anti-capitalism" did characterize

these movements. But the anti-capitalism of the totalitarian movements reflected the fact that a large plebeian section of society made up its parties. These plebeian masses of the middle classes are "anti-capitalist" only in the sense that they are against the monopolism which has destroyed the base of the middle class in modern capitalist society. The limited struggle of these middle classes against capitalism is not to abolish capitalism and establish a new classless society, but to return to the 19th Century Utopia where they played a progressive, independent and powerful role. This kind of anti-capitalism has nothing in common with the program of the socialist working class.

Recalling German history there is no other way to explain why, despite Hitler's efforts to win them on the eve of his seizure of power through emphasis on the struggle against the bourgeoisie, almost the entire German working class remained anti-fascist.

To put it another way: if the totalitarian mass movements of the West were genuinely anti-bourgeois and anti-capitalist, it would be impossible to explain why monopoly capitalism supported them.

It was not true, as Arendt says, that "Actually the bourgeoisie was as much taken in by the Nazis as was the Roehm-Schleicher faction in the Reichswehr. . . ." The bourgeoisie knew what it was doing! the economic history of Germany since 1932 proves that it was not mistaken. Furthermore, as a revolutionary, anti-capitalist, anti-bourgeois movement, the fascist totalitarians should have developed an all-embracing, unified, ideological program. They did not. Neuman provided us with a far better understanding of this aspect of the totalitarian movement in *Behemoth* when he wrote:

Behind a mass of irrelevant jargon, banalities, distortions, and half truths, we can discern the relevant and decisive central theme of the ideology; that all traditional doctrines and values must be rejected, whether they stem from French rationalism or German idealism, from English empiricism or American pragmatism, whether liberal or absolutist, democratic or socialist. They are all hostile to the fundamental goal of National Socialism: *the resolution by imperialistic war of the discrepancy between the potentialities of Germany's industrial apparatus and the actuality that existed and continues to exist. . . .* The National Socialist doctrine may be called an "ideology" only because it competes in the world market of ideas, as it were, with other ideologies, though it is, of course, sovereign and single in the domestic market. . . . National Socialism has no theory of society as we understand it, no consistent picture of its operation, structure, and development. It has certain aims to carry through and adjusts its ideological pronouncements to a series of ever-changing goals. This absence of a basic theory is one difference between National Socialism and Bolshevism [add Stalinism]. (Emphasis mine—A. G.)

Before we finish with this point, we should like to return to Dwight Macdonald to show to what ludicrous lengths one can go in an uncritical appraisal of such a work as this. The reader has seen what his views were in 1938 and 1941.

Today, however, his rapture over Arendt's book is so great (he wrote five articles on it) that he has lost his critical faculties. The most amusing result has been that, whereas in 1941 Hitler and Himmler were the German prototypes of the bureaucratic collectivists Stalin and Molotov, today Stalin and Molotov are the Russian editions of the "dull, stolid, bourgeois, family" men, Hitler and Himmler. When Arendt used these quoted words, she used them in a general and symbolic sense. She did not mean that either Hitler or the whole gang of the Nazi hierarchy was dull and stolid.

Dull and stolid apply rather to the members of the Russian ruling class. But the term "bourgeois" is applicable to the whole Nazi movement, as well as the other capitalist totalitarians. Yet, in Arendt's scheme, this would make the totalitarian movement, composed of "dull, stolid, bourgeois, family" men, the first genuinely anti-bourgeois movement! That could only be made true by demonstrating that the aims of the totalitarians, especially the German (which country Arendt claims was the only genuine totalitarian state in the West) were consciously seeking a complete social overturn. Being such kind of revolutionaries would hardly make them dull or stolid, we think, though they could remain, as a result of tradition, habits, and culture, bourgeois of sorts. But if they were such revolutionaries, as Arendt insists, they would most certainly be in the process of breaking with bourgeois society ideologically and spiritually. But then, too, they would approach the Stalinist totalitarian in type, rather than the reverse, as Macdonald thinks.

We cite here portions of Hitler's will written days before his end in the Bunker, in the presence of his close associates, Goebbels, Bormann, Burgdorf and Krebs. It is reproduced as one illustration of what we mean when we say that the ideology of the Nazis and their main leader was essentially petty-bourgeois instead of anti-bourgeois. Hitler dictated the following:

Although during the years of struggle I believed that I could not undertake the responsibility of marriage, now, before the end of my life, I have decided to take as my wife, the woman who, after many years of true friendship, came to this town, already almost besieged, of her own free will, in order to share my fate. . . . My possessions, in so far as they are worth anything, belong to the Party, or if this no longer exists, to the State.

If the State too is destroyed, there is no need for any further instructions. . . . As executor, I appoint my most faithful Party comrade, Martin Bormann. He is given full legal authority to make all decisions. He is permitted to hand over to my relatives everything which is of worth as a personal memento, or is necessary to maintain a petty-bourgeois (sic!) standard of living, especially to my wife's mother and my faithful fellow workers of both sexes who are well known to him. . . .

Could Stalin, or Molotov, or any other Russian leader dictate such a will, or conceive of one like it, even under conditions of defeat in a war? We hardly think so.

It is true that Trotsky once called Stalin a bourgeois. But it should be remembered that Trotsky held the view that Stalin was preparing the capitalist restoration in Russia. Trotsky precluded any social alternative to capitalism or socialism almost until his end, when he admitted the possibility of a "third" alternative, such as bureaucratic collectivism, if the working class did not take power during World War II.

ARENDT'S LACK of historical and social method is responsible, too, for another disingenuous theory of "numbers," by which she tries to establish that there were really only two totalitarian states, Russia and Germany. The later became totalitarian only during the war, because prior to it, the country just did not have enough superfluous people to establish the true totalitarian state. She wrote:

Totalitarianism strives *not* toward despotic rule over men, but toward a system in which men are superfluous. . . . As long as all men have not been made equally superfluous—and this has been accomplished *only* in concentration camps—the ideal of totalitarian domination has not been achieved. . . .

Only where great masses are superfluous or can be spared without disastrous results of depopulation is totalitarian

rule, as distinguished from a totalitarian movement, at all possible. (Emphasis mine—A. G.)

She categorically asserts that neither Italy nor Spain were or are totalitarian countries, but merely dictatorships under one-party rule and adds that the small states before the war (linked together are Italy, Spain, Hungary, Roumania, etc.):

simply did not control enough human material to allow for total domination and its inherent great losses in population.

Even Mussolini:

did not attempt to establish a full-fledged totalitarian regime and contented himself with dictatorships and one-party rule . . . so that it appeared that totalitarianism was too ambitious an aim, that although it had served well enough to organize the masses until the movement seized power, the absolute size of the country then forced the would-be totalitarian ruler of masses into the more familiar patterns of *class* or *party* dictatorship. (Emphasis mine—A. G.)

How this "would-be totalitarian ruler of masses" could in the period of the "breakdown of the class system . . . the breakdown of the party system," establish a "class or party dictatorship," is difficult to understand if you follow Arendt's thoughts, and especially if you would like to know what class she has in mind.

The superfluosity of population is not an integral characteristic of the totalitarian system. Quite the contrary, to carry out its aggressive program, its population is not superfluous but indispensable for industrial and military purposes. To the totalitarian, it is not his own nationals who are superfluous (except in Stalin's Russia, where we are dealing with a considerably different kind of totalitarianism), but the nationals of other countries. There was not in Germany, Italy, Spain or any other totalitarian capitalist country "a system in which men are super-

fluous." Individuals, yes; man, no. The concentration camp makes a man superfluous, but not man, not humanity. The purpose of the concentration camp is not to depopulate one's own nation.

Proceeding from her theory, is there a basic minimum number of people necessary before totalitarian rule is possible? The semi-totalitarian regime of Dolfuss in Austria governed over a population of 7,000,000. Fascism came to power in Italy with a population of 40,000,000; in Spain with 27,000,000; in Germany with 65 to 70,000,000. Japanese totalitarianism ruled over 70,000,000 and the Russian rules over 160,000,000. Which country has enough masses to be spared, assuming for the moment that this is *the crucial* precondition for totalitarian rule? A discussion of this sort could not help but reach a nonsensical level. It would reduce the study of the most complex problem of modern society to an absurd and simple plane but it would not enhance our understanding of the problem.

Along with Italy and Spain, Arendt mentions Roumania, Poland, Hungary, part of Czechoslovakia, etc., as countries which demonstrated that lack of numbers made totalitarian regimes impossible. We have already quoted from her on Italy, so that the reader is familiar with the theory.

The smaller states were not really totalitarian but dictatorial. But then no one seriously contended that they were totalitarian. They were called dictatorships of one type or another. The reason for that, however, has nothing to do with numbers. In these countries, prior to Hitler's victory and his sweep of Europe, the preconditions which produced the totalitarian phenomenon elsewhere were not precisely present. At best they reflected the external pressure of the Nazi state and

tried to mold themselves in the image of that great and threatening power. Although there is a qualitative difference between a totalitarian and dictatorial regime, in the extent of the police regime and the totality of the state power, the dictatorial regime, nevertheless, is a direct forerunner of the totalitarian, and the transition from one to the other is quite easy. Such a transition would certainly not be accompanied by the tremendous social upheavals which attended the transformation of a democratic state into a totalitarian (Germany, Italy and Spain).

Mussolini's regime was not just a mere dictatorship, but a genuine totalitarian state in all essential respects; that of Franco is likewise totalitarian. The differences among the Italian, Spanish, German and the Russian, must be expressed in degree. The basis for the differences lies not in which country had "superfluous" masses but in the nature of the capitalism in the Western European countries. Germany was the most highly developed industrial country in the world outside of the United States, and therefore the country with the most concentrated urban population in Europe. The "looseness" of the Italian and Spanish models is due to the specific character of their capitalisms, i.e., to their primarily agrarian

economy and dispersed populations, the secondary role of these countries in the world scene and their specific relations to the world market. They did not have the economic, and therefore, political problems which confronted Germany. Yet even the brutal German totalitarianism, far stronger than its axis allies, was a looser regime than the Russian. (Goebbels's diary supplies ample proof of this.)

Superfluous population does not determine the way a given national totalitarian state functions. If Stalin liquidated millions and if Hitler destroyed millions of Jews and foreigners (not "masses" of German nationals) the same cannot be said of Italy, Spain and Japan. The latter sought to solve their problems of "overpopulation" (this is the correct word, not "superfluous population.") as did, in fact, Germany, by imperialist ventures. Mussolini and Franco did not adopt Hitler's kind of anti-Jewish program because they were either not interested in it or had no "Jewish problems." This was not because they were only one-party dictatorships, as Arendt insists, but for other social and historical reasons. The fact that Poland and Roumania were not, either in Arendt's or our view, totalitarian, did not prevent their engaging in the most bestial pogroms against the Jews.

Albert GATES

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## ARCHIVE:

# Is Russia a Workers State?

(The following article first appeared in the NEW INTERNATIONAL of December 1940 as a contribution to a discussion on the "Russian Question" in the newly formed Workers Party. It states the reasons for the break with Trotsky in the evaluation of Stalin's state and categorically rejects the traditional view of the Trotskyist movement that Russia is a "degenerated Workers State.")

The conception of Russia as a bureaucratic collectivist state neither capitalist nor socialist evolved from the long discussion which began in the Socialist Workers Party even before the split. With the passage of the years and in light of the experiences of the war in its first years a further development of the views contained in Shachtman's occurred. The Workers Party and the press associated with it no longer referred to Stalin's state as the Soviet Union, but reemployed the more accurate and traditional name of Russia. No other reference was possible when the soviet system no longer existed in fact.

That the "Russian Question" should continue to occupy the attention of the revolutionary movement is anything but unusual. In the history of modern socialism, there is nothing that equals the Russian Revolution in importance. It is indeed no exaggeration to write—we shall seek to reaffirm and demonstrate it further on—that this revolution does not have its equal in importance throughout human history.

For us, the historical legitimacy of the Bolshevik revolution and the validity of the principles that made its triumph possible, are equally incontestable. Looking back over the quarter of a century that has elapsed, and subjecting all the evidence of events to a soberly critical reanalysis, we find only a confirmation of those fundamental principles of Marxism with which the names of Lenin and Trotsky are linked, and of their appraisal of the class character and historical significance of the revolution they organized. Both—the principles and the appraisal—

A similar evolution took place on the question of the conditions under which a defense of the so-called Soviet Union was justifiable. Although the view contained in the article, to-wit, a mass imperialist gang-up on Russia would justify its defense, was never adopted officially by the Workers Party, that view, too, changed. The Workers Party shortly thereafter did adopt the position that any war between Stalinist Russia and its subordinate states and a bourgeois coalition would be a conflict between two imperialist camps and did not warrant the support of socialists. In any case, during the war that did take place between 1939-45, the Workers Party did not, in contrast to the so-called orthodox Trotskyists of the 4th International, change its anti-war position and rejected any notion of support to Stalin's Russia in that war.

This archive is printed also because of many requests made for it. It is part of the material issued by our movement as a contribution to an understanding of the Russian state.—Ed.)

are and should remain incorporated in the program of our International.

Our investigation deals with something else. It aims to re-evaluate the character and significance of the period of the degeneration of the Russian revolution and the Soviet state, marked by the rise and triumph of the Stalinist bureaucracy. Its results call for a revision of the theory that the Soviet Union is a workers' state. The new analysis will be found to be, we believe, in closer harmony with the political program of the party and the International, fortifying it in its most important respects and eliminating from it only those points which, if they corresponded to a reality of yesterday, do not correspond to that of today.

In our analysis, we must necessarily take issue with Leon Trotsky; yet, at the same time, base ourselves largely upon his studies. Nobody has even approached him in the scope and depth of his contribution to understanding the problem of the Soviet Union. In a different way,

to be sure, but no less solidly, his work of analyzing the decay of the Soviet Republic is as significant as his work of creating that Republic. Most of what we learned about Russia, and can transmit to others, we learned from Trotsky. We learned from him, too, the necessity of critical re-examination at every important stage, of regaining, even in the realm of theory, what was once already gained, or, in the contrary case, of discarding what was once firmly established but proved to be vulnerable. The garden of theory requires critical cultivation, replanting, but also weeding out.

What new events, what fundamental changes in the situation, have taken place to warrant a corresponding change in our appraisal of the class character of the Soviet Union? The question, is, in a sense, irrelevant. Our new analysis and conclusions would have their objective merit or error regardless of the signature appended to them. In the case of the writer, if the question must be answered, the revision is the product of that careful re-studying of the problem urged upon him by both friends and adversaries in the recent dispute in the American section of the International. The outbreak of the second world war, while it produced no fundamental changes in the Soviet Union in itself, did awaken doubts as to the correctness of our traditional position. However, doubts and uncertainties cannot serve as a program, nor even as a fruitful subject for discussion. Therefore, while putting forward a position on those aspects of the disputed question on which he had firm opinions, the writer did not take part in what passed for a discussion on that aspect of the question which related to the class character of the Soviet Union. The founding convention of the Workers Party provided for the opening of a discussion on this point in due time, and under conditions free from the ugly atmosphere of baiting, ritualistic phrasemongering, pugnacious ignorance and factional fury that prevailed in the party before our expulsion and the split. The writer has, meanwhile, had the opportunity to examine and reflect upon the problem, if not as much as would be desirable, then at least sufficiently. "Theory is not a vote which you can present at any moment to reality for payment," wrote Trotsky. "If a theory proves mistaken we must revise it or fill out its gaps. We must find out those real social

forces which have given rise to the contrast between Soviet reality and the traditional Marxian conception." We must revise our theory that Russia is a workers' state. What has up to now been discussed informally and without order, should now be the subject of an ordered and serious discussion. This article aims to contribute to it.

## NATIONALIZED PROPERTY AND THE WORKERS STATE

Briefly stated, this has been our traditional view of the character of the Soviet Union:

The character of the social régime is determined first of all by the property relations. The nationalization of land, of the means of industrial production and exchange, with the monopoly of foreign trade in the hands of the state, constitute the bases of the social order in the U.S.S.R. The classes expropriated by the October revolution, as well as the elements of the bourgeoisie and the bourgeois section of the bureaucracy being newly formed, could reestablish private ownership of land, banks, factories, mills, railroads, etc., only by means of a counter-revolutionary overthrow. By these property relations, lying at the basis of the class relations, is determined for us the nature of the Soviet Union as a proletarian state. (Trotsky, *Problems of the Development of the U.S.S.R.*, p. 3, 1931.)

But it is not a workers' state in the abstract. It is a degenerated, a sick, an internally-imperilled workers' state. Its degeneration is represented by the usurpation of all political power in the state by a reactionary, totalitarian bureaucracy, headed by Stalin. But while *politically* you have an anti-Soviet Bonapartist dictatorship of the bureaucracy, according to Trotsky, it nevertheless defends, in its own and very bad way, the *social* rule of the working class. This rule is expressed in the preservation of nationalized property. In bourgeois society, we have had cases where the social rule of capitalism is preserved by all sorts of political régimes—democratic and dictatorial, parliamentary and monarchical, Bonapartist and fascist. Yes, even under fascism, the bureaucracy is not a separate ruling class, no matter how irritating to the bourgeoisie its rule may be. Similarly in the Soviet Union. The bureaucracy is a caste, not a class. It serves, as all bureaucracies do, a class. In this case, it serves—again, badly—to maintain the social rule of the proletariat. At the same time, however, it weakens and under-

mines this rule. To assure the sanitation and progress of the workers' state toward socialism, the bureaucracy must be overthrown. Its totalitarian régime excludes its removal by means of more or less peaceful reform. It can be eliminated, therefore, only by means of a revolution. The revolution, however, will be, in its decisive respects, not social but political. It will restore and extend workers' democracy, but it will not produce any fundamental social changes, no fundamental changes in property relations. Property will remain state property.

Omitting for the time being Trotsky's analysis of the origin and rise of the Stalinist bureaucracy, which is elaborated in detail in *The Revolution Betrayed*, we have given above a summary of the basic position held by us jointly up to now. So far as characterizing the class nature of the Soviet Union is concerned, this position might be summed up even more briefly as follows:

To guarantee progress towards socialism, the existence of nationalized property is necessary but not sufficient—a revolutionary proletarian régime is needed in the country, plus favorable international conditions (victory of the proletariat in more advanced capitalist countries). To characterize the Soviet Union as a workers' state, the existence of nationalized property is necessary and sufficient. The Stalinist bureaucracy is a caste. To become a ruling class, it must establish new property forms.

Except for the slogan of revolution, as against reform, which is only a few years old in our movement, this was substantially the position vigorously defended by Trotsky and the Trotskyist movement for more than fifteen years. The big article on Russia written by Trotsky right after the war broke out, marked, in our opinion, the first—and a truly enormous—contradiction of this position. Not that Trotsky abandoned the theory that the Soviet Union is a degenerated workers' state. Quite the contrary, he reaffirmed it. But at the same time, he advanced a theoretical possibility which fundamentally negated his theory—more accurately, the motivation for his theory—of the class character of the Soviet state.

If the proletariat does not come to power in the coming period, and civilization declines further, the imminent collectivist tendencies in capitalist society may be brought to fruition in the form

of a new exploiting society ruled by a new bureaucratic class—neither proletarian nor bourgeois. Or, if the proletariat takes power in a series of countries and then relinquishes it to a privileged bureaucracy, like the Stalinist, it will show that the proletariat cannot, congenitally, become a ruling class and then "it will be necessary in retrospect to establish that in its fundamental traits the present U.S.S.R. was the precursor of a new exploiting régime on an international scale."

The historic alternative, carried to the end, is as follows: either the Stalin régime is an abhorrent relapse in the process of transforming bourgeois society into a socialist society, or the Stalin régime is the first stage of a new exploiting society. If the second prognosis proves to be correct, then, of course, the bureaucracy will become a new exploiting class. However onerous the second perspective may be, if the world proletariat should actually prove incapable of fulfilling the mission placed upon it by the course of development, nothing else would remain except openly to recognize that the socialist program based on the internal contradictions of capitalist society, ended as a Utopia. It is self-evident that a new "minimum" program would be required—for the defense of the interests of the slaves of the totalitarian bureaucratic society.

But are there such incontrovertible or even impressive objective data as would compel us today to renounce the prospect of the socialist revolution? That is the whole question. (Trotsky, "The U.S.S.R. in War," *The New Internationalist*, Nov. 1939, p. 327.)

That is not the whole question. To that question, we give no less vigorously negative a reply as Trotsky. There is no data of sufficient weight to warrant abandoning the revolutionary socialist perspective. On that score, Trotsky was and remains quite correct. The essence of the question, however, relates not to the perspective, but to the theoretical characterization of the Soviet state and its bureaucracy.

Up to the time of this article, Trotsky insisted on the following two propositions: 1. Nationalized property, so long as it continues to be the economic basis of the Soviet Union, makes the latter a workers' state, regardless of the political régime in power; and, 2. So long as it does not create new property forms, unique to itself, and so long as it rests on nationalized property, the bureaucracy is not a new or an old ruling class, but a caste. In "The U.S.S.R. in War," Trotsky declared it *theoretically possible*

—we repeat: not probable, but nevertheless theoretically possible—1. for the property forms and relations now existing in the Soviet Union to continue existing and yet represent not a workers' state but a new exploiting society; and 2, for the bureaucracy now existing in the Soviet Union to become a new exploiting and ruling class without changing the property forms and relations it now rests upon.

To allow such a theoretical possibility, does not eliminate the revolutionary perspective, but it does destroy, at one blow, so to speak, the *theoretical* basis for our past characterization of Russia as a workers' state.

To argue that Trotsky considered this alternative a most unlikely perspective, that, indeed (and this is of course correct), he saw no reason at all for adopting it, is arbitrary and beside the point. At best, it is tantamount to saying: At bottom, Russia is a workers' state because it rests on nationalized property and . . . we still have a social-revolutionary world perspective; if we abandoned this perspective, it would cease being a workers' state even though its property forms remain fundamentally unaltered. Or more simply: it is not nationalized property that determines the working-class character of the Soviet state and the caste character of its bureaucracy; our perspective determines that.

If Trotsky's alternative perspective is accepted as a theoretical possibility (as we do, although not in quite the same way in which he puts it forward; but that is another matter), it is theoretically impossible any longer to hold that nationalized property is *sufficient* to determine the Soviet Union as a workers' state. That holds true, moreover, whether Trotsky's alternative perspective is accepted or not. The traditional view of the International on the class character of the U.S.S.R. rests upon a grievous theoretical error.

## PROPERTY FORMS AND PROPERTY RELATIONS

In his writings on the Soviet Union, and particularly in *The Revolution Betrayed*, Trotsky speaks interchangeably of the "property forms" and the "property relations" in the country as if he were referring to one and the same thing. Speaking of the new political revolution against the bureaucracy, he

says: "So far as concerns property relations, the new power would not have to resort to revolutionary measures." (P. 252.) Speaking of the capitalist counter-revolution, he says: "Notwithstanding that the Soviet bureaucracy has gone far toward preparing a bourgeois restoration, the new régime would have to introduce into the matter of forms of property and methods of industry not a reform, but a social revolution." (P. 253.)

When referring to property forms in the Soviet Union, Trotsky obviously means nationalized property, that is, state ownership of the means of production and exchange. It is just as obvious that, no matter what has been changed and how much it has been changed in the Soviet Union by Stalinism, state ownership of the means of production and exchange continues to exist. It is further obvious that no Marxist will deny that, when the proletariat takes the helm again in Russia, it will maintain state property.

However, what is crucial are not the property forms, *i.e.*, nationalized property, whose existence cannot be denied, but precisely the relations of the various social groups in the Soviet Union to this property, *i.e.*, *property relations!* If we can speak of nationalized property in the Soviet Union, this does not yet establish what the property relations are.

Under capitalism the ownership of land and the means of production and exchange is in private (individual or corporate) hands. The distribution of the means or instruments of production under capitalism puts the possessors of capital in command of society, and of the proletariat, which is divorced from property and has only its own labor power at its disposal. The relations to property of these classes, and consequently the social relations into which they necessarily enter in the process of production, are clear to all intelligent persons.

Now, the state is the product of irreconcilable social contradictions. Disposing of a force separate from the people, it intervenes in the raging struggle between the classes in order to prevent their mutual destruction and to preserve the social order. "But having arisen amid these conflicts, it is as a rule the state of the most powerful economic class that by force of its economic supremacy becomes also the ruling political class and thus acquires new means of subduing and exploiting the oppressed masses," writes

Engels. Under capitalism, "the most powerful economic class" is represented by its capitalist class state.

What is important to note here is that the social power of the capitalist class derives from its "economic supremacy," that is, from its direct ownership of the instruments of production; and that this power is reflected in or supplemented by its political rule of the state machine, of the "public power of coercion." The two are not identical, let it be noted further, for a Bonapartist or fascist régime may and has deprived the capitalist class of its political rule in order to leave its social rule, if not completely intact, then at least fundamentally unshaken.

Two other characteristics of bourgeois property relations and the bourgeois state are worth keeping in mind.

Bourgeois property relations and pre-capitalist property relations are not as incompatible with each other, as either of them are with socialist property relations. The first two not only have lived together in *relative* peace for long periods of time but, especially in the period of imperialism on a world scale, still live together today. An example of the first was the almost one-century-old cohabitation of the capitalist North and the Southern slaveocracy in the United States; an outstanding example of the second is British imperialism in India. But more important than this is a key distinction between the bourgeoisie and the proletariat. The capitalist class already has wide economic power before it overthrows feudal society and, by doing so, it acquires that necessary political and social power which establishes it as *the* ruling class.

Finally, the bourgeois state solemnly recognizes the right of private property, that is, it establishes juridically (and defends accordingly) that which is already established in fact by the bourgeoisie's ownership of capital. The social power of the capitalist class lies fundamentally in its actual ownership of the instruments of production, that is, in that which gives it its "economic supremacy," and *therefore* its control of the state.

How do matters stand with the proletariat, with its state, and the property forms and property relations unique to it? The young bourgeoisie was able to develop (within the objective limits established by feudalism) its specific property relations even under feudalism; at times,

as we have seen, it could even share political power with a pre-capitalist class. The proletariat cannot do anything of the kind under capitalism, unless you except those utopians who still dream of developing socialism right in the heart of capitalism by means of "producers' cooperatives." By its very position in the old society, the proletariat has no property under capitalism. The working class acquires economic supremacy *only after* it has seized political power.

We have already seen [*said the Communist Manifesto*] that the first step in the workers' revolution is to make the proletariat the ruling class, to establish democracy. The proletariat will use its political supremacy in order, by degrees, to wrest all capital from the bourgeoisie, to centralize all the means of production into the hands of the State (this meaning the proletariat organized as ruling class), and, as rapidly as possible, to increase the total mass of productive forces.

Thus, by its very position in the new society, the proletariat still has no property, that is, it does not own property in the sense that the feudal lord or the capitalist did. It was and remains a property-less class! It seizes state power. The new state is simply the proletariat organized as the ruling class. The state expropriates the private owners of land and capital, and ownership of land, and the means of production and exchange, becomes vested in the *state*. By its action, the state has established new property forms—nationalized or state-ified or collectivized property. It has also established new property relations. So far as the proletariat is concerned, it has a fundamentally new relationship to property. The essence of the change lies in the fact that the working class is in command of that state-owned property *because* the state is the proletariat organized as the ruling class (through its Soviets, its army, its courts and institutions like the party, the unions, the factory committees, *etc.*). There is the nub of the question.

The economic supremacy of the bourgeoisie under capitalism is based upon its ownership of the decisive instruments of production and exchange. Hence, its social power; hence, the bourgeois state. The social rule of the proletariat cannot express itself in private ownership of capital, but only in its "ownership" of the state in whose hands is concentrated all the decisive economic power. Hence, its social power lies in its political power. In bourgeois society, the two can be and

are divorced; in the proletarian state, they are inseparable. Much of the same thing is said by Trotsky when he points out that in contrast to private property, "the property relations which issued from the socialist revolution are indivisibly bound up with the new state as their repository" (*The Revolution Betrayed*, p. 250). But from this follows in reality, what does not follow in Trotsky's analysis. The proletariat's relations to property, to the new, collectivist property, are indivisibly bound up with its relations to the state, that is, to the political power.

We do not even begin to approach the heart of the problem by dealing with its juridical aspects, however. That suffices, more or less, in a bourgeois state. There, let us remember, the juridical acknowledgment by the state of private ownership corresponds exactly with the palpable economic and social reality. Ford and Dupont own their plants . . . and their congressmen; Krupp and Schroeder own their plants . . . and their Deputies. In the Soviet Union, the proletarian is master of property only if he is a master of the state which is its repository. That mastery alone can distinguish it as the ruling class. "The transfer of the factories to the state changed the situation of the worker only juridically," Trotsky points out quite aptly. (*Op. cit.*, p. 241.) And further: "From the point of view of property in the means of production, the differences between a marshal and a servant girl, the head of a trust and a day laborer, the son of a people's commissar and a homeless child, seem not to exist at all." (*Ibid.*, p. 238.) Precisely! And why not? Under capitalism, the difference in the relations to property of the trust head and the day laborer is determined and clearly evidenced by the fact that the former is the owner of capital and the latter owns merely his labor power. In the Soviet Union, the difference in the relations to property of the six persons Trotsky mentions is not determined or visible by virtue of ownership of basic property but precisely by the degree to which any and all of them "own" the state to which all social property belongs.

The state is a political institution, a weapon of organized coercion to uphold the supremacy of a class. It is not owned like a pair of socks or a factory; it is controlled. No class—no modern class—controls it directly, among other reasons

because the modern state is too complicated and all-pervading to manipulate like a 17th century New England town meeting. A class controls the state indirectly, through its representatives, its authorized delegates.

The Bolshevik revolution lifted the working class to the position of ruling class in the country. As Marx and Engels and Lenin had foreseen, the conquest of state power by the proletariat immediately revealed itself as "something which is no longer really a form of the State." In place of "special bodies of armed men" divorced from the people, there rose the armed people. In place of a corrupted and bureaucratized parliamentary machine, the democratic Soviets embracing tens of millions. In the most difficult days, in the rigorous period of War Communism, the state was the "proletariat organized as the ruling class"—organized through the Soviets, through the trade unions, through the living, revolutionary proletarian Communist party.

The Stalinist reaction, the causes and course of which have been traced so brilliantly by Trotsky above all others, meant the systematic hacking away of every finger of control the working class had over its state. And with the triumph of the bureaucratic counter-revolution came the end of rule of the working class. The Soviets were eviscerated and finally wiped out formally by decree. The trade unions were converted into slave-drivers cracking the whip over the working class. Workers' control in the factories went a dozen years ago. The people were forbidden to bear arms, even non-explosive weapons—it was the possession of arms by the people that Lenin qualified as the very essence of the question of the state! The militia system gave way decisively to the army separated from the people. The Communist Youth were formally prohibited from participating in politics, *i.e.*, from concerning themselves with state. The Communist party was gutted, all the Bolsheviks in it broken in two, imprisoned, exiled and finally shot. How absurd are all the social-democratic lamentations about the "one-party dictatorship" in light of this analysis! It was precisely this party, while it lived, which was the last channel through which the Soviet working class exercised its political power.

"The recognition of the present Soviet state as a workers' state" [wrote Trotsky in his thesis on Russia in 1931] not only

signifies that the bourgeoisie can conquer power in no other way than by an armed uprising but also that the proletariat of the U.S.S.R. has not forfeited the possibility of submitting the bureaucracy to it, of reviving the party again and of mending the régime of the dictatorship—without a new revolution, with the methods and on the road of reform. (Op. cit., p. 36.)

Quite right. And conversely, when the Soviet proletariat finally lost the possibility of submitting the bureaucracy to itself by methods of reform, and was left with the weapon of revolution, we should have abandoned our characterization of the U.S.S.R. as a workers' state. Even if belatedly, it is necessary to do that now.

That political expropriation of the proletariat about which the International has spoken, following Trotsky's analysis—that is nothing more nor less than the destruction of the class rule of the workers, the end of the Soviet Union as a workers' state. In point of time—the Stalinist counter-revolution has not been as cataclysmic as to dates or as dramatic in symbols as was the French Revolution or the Bolshevik insurrection—the destruction of the old class rule may be said to have culminated with the physical annihilation of the last Bolsheviks.

A change in class rule, a revolution or counter-revolution, without violence, without civil war, gradually? Trotsky has reproached defenders of such a conception with "reformism-in-reverse." The reproach might hold in our case, too, but for the fact that the Stalinist counter-revolution was violent and bloody enough. The seizure of power by the Bolsheviks was virtually bloodless and non-violent. The breadth and duration of the civil war that followed were determined by the strength, the virility, and not least of all by the international imperialist aid furnished to the overturned classes. The comparative *one-sidedness* of the civil war attending the Stalinist counter-revolution was determined by the oft-noted passivity of the masses, their weariness, their failure to receive international support. In spite of this, Stalin's road to power lay through rivers of blood and over a mountain of skulls. Neither the Stalinist counter-revolution nor the Bolshevik revolution was effected by Fabian gradualist reforms.

The conquest of state power by the bureaucracy spelled the destruction of the property relations established by the Bolshevik revolution.

## THE BUREAUCRACY: CASTE OR CLASS

If the workers are no longer the ruling class and the Soviet Union no longer a workers' state, and if there is no private-property-owning capitalist class ruling Russia, what is the class nature of the state and what exactly is the bureaucracy that dominates it?

Hitherto we called the Stalinist bureaucracy a caste, and denied it the attributes of a class. Yet, Trotsky admitted September a year ago, the definition as a caste has not "a strictly scientific character. Its relative superiority lies in this, that the makeshift character of the term is clear to everybody, since it would enter nobody's mind to identify the Moscow oligarchy with the Hindu caste of Brahmins." In resumé, it is called a caste not because it is a caste—the old Marxian definition of a caste would scarcely fit Stalin & Co.—but because it is not a class. Without letting the dispute "degenerate into sterile toying with words," let us see if we cannot come closer to a scientific characterization than we have in the past

The late Bukharin defined a class as "the aggregate of persons playing the same part in production, standing in the same relation toward other persons in the production process, these relations being also expressed in things (instruments of labor)." According to Trotsky, a class is defined "by its independent rôle in the general structure of economy and by its independent roots in the economic foundation of society. Each class . . . works out its own special forms of property. The bureaucracy lacks all these social traits."

In general, either definition would serve. But not as an absolutely unailing test for all classes in all class societies.\*

\*Although, for example, the merchants would fail to pass either of the two tests given above, Engels qualified them as a class. "A third division of labor was added by civilization: it created a class that did not take part in production, but occupied itself merely with the exchange of products—the merchants. All former attempts at class formation were exclusively concerned with production. They divided the producers into directors and directed, or into producers on a more or less extensive scale. But here a class appears for the first time that captures the control of production in general and subjugates the producers of its rule, without taking the least part in production. A class that makes

itself the indispensable mediator between two producers and exploits them both under the pretext of saving them the trouble and risk of exchange, of extending the markets for their products to distant regions, and of thus becoming the most useful class in society; a class of parasites, genuine social ichneumons, that skim the cream of production at home and abroad as a reward for very insignificant services; that rapidly amass enormous wealth and gain social influence accordingly; that for this reason reap ever new horrors and ever greater control of production during the period of civilization, until they at last bring to light a product of their own—periodical crises in industry." (Engels, *The Origin of the Family*, p. 201.)

The Marxian definition of a class is obviously widened by Engels (*see footnote*) to include a social group "that did not take part in production" but which made itself "the indispensable mediator between two producers," exploiting them both. The merchants characterized by Engels as a class are neither more nor less encompassed in Trotsky's definition, given above, or in Bukharin's, than is the Stalinist bureaucracy (except in so far as this bureaucracy most definitely takes part in the process of production). But the indubitable fact that the bureaucracy has not abolished state property is not sufficient ground for withholding from it the qualification of a class, although, as we shall see, within certain limits. But, it has been objected:

If the Bonapartist riffraff is a class this means that it is not an abortion but a viable child of history. If its marauding parasitism is "exploitation" in the scientific sense of the term, this means that the bureaucracy possesses a historical future as the ruling class indispensable to the given system of economy. (Trotsky, "Again and Once More Again on the Nature of the U.S.S.R.," *The New International*, Feb. 1940, p. 14.)

Is or is not the Stalinist bureaucracy "a ruling class indispensable" to the system of economy in the Soviet Union?

This question—begs the question! The question is precisely: what is the given system of economy? For the *given* system—the property relations established by the counter-revolution—the Stalinist bureaucracy is the indispensable ruling class. As for the economic system and the property relations established by the Bolshevik revolution (under which the Stalinist bureaucracy was by no means the indispensable ruling class)—these are just what the bureaucratic counter-revolution destroyed! To the question, is the bureaucracy indispensable to "Soviet

economy"? one can therefore answer, Yes and no.

To the same question put somewhat differently, is the bureaucracy an "historical accident," an abortion, or viable and a necessity, the answer must be given in the same spirit. It is an historical necessity—a result of the iron necessity to give birth to and support a privileged minority so long as it is impossible to guarantee genuine equality" (*The Revolution Betrayed*, p. 55). It is not an "historical accident" for the good reason that it has well-established historical causes. It is not inherent in a society resting upon collective property in the means of production and exchange, as the capitalist class is inherent in a society resting upon capitalist property. Rather, it is the product of a conjunction of circumstances, primarily that the proletarian revolution broke out in *backward* Russia and was not supplemented and thereby saved by the victory of the revolution in the *advanced* countries. Hence, while its concrete characteristics do not permit us to qualify it as a viable or indispensable ruling class in the same sense as the historical capitalist class, we may and do speak of it as a ruling class whose complete control of the state now guarantees its political and economic supremacy in the country.

It is interesting to note that the evolution and transformation of the Soviet bureaucracy in the workers' state—the state of Lenin and Trotsky—is quite different and even contrary to the evolution of the capitalist class in its state.

Speaking of the separation of the capitalist manager into capitalists and managers of the process of production, Marx writes:

The labor of superintendence and management arising out of the antagonistic character and rule of capital over labor, which all modes of production based on class antagonisms have in common with the capitalist mode, is directly and inseparably connected, also under the capitalist system, with those productive functions, which all combined social labor assigns to individuals as their special tasks. . . . Compared to the money-capitalist the industrial capitalist is a laborer, but a laboring capitalist, an exploiter of the labor of others. The wages which he claims and pockets for this labor amount exactly to the appropriated quantity of another's labor and depend directly upon the rate of exploitation of this labor, so far as he takes the trouble to assume the necessary burdens of exploitation. They do not depend upon the degree of his exertions in carrying on this exploitation. He can easily

shift this burden to the shoulders of a superintendent for moderate pay. . . . Stock companies in general, developed with the credit system, have a tendency to separate this labor of management as a function more and more from the ownership of capital, whether it be self-owned or borrowed. (*Capital*, Vol. III, pp. 454ff.)

Even though this tendency to separate out of the capitalist class (or the upper ranks of the working class) a group of managers and superintendents is constantly accentuated under capitalism, this group does not develop into an independent class. Why? Because to the extent that the manager (*i.e.*, a highly-paid superintendent-worker) changes his "relations to property" and becomes an owner of capital, he merely enters into the already existing capitalist class. He need not and does not create new property relations.

The evolution has been distinctly different in Russia. The proletariat in control of the state, and therefore of economy, soon found itself unable directly to organize economy, expand the productive forces and raise labor productivity because of a whole series of circumstances—its own lack of training in management and superintendence, in bookkeeping and strict accounting, the absence of help from the technologically more advanced countries, *etc.*, *etc.* As with the building of the Red Army, so in industry, the Russian proletariat was urged by Lenin to call upon and it did call upon a whole host and variety of experts—some from its own ranks, some from the ranks of the class enemy, some from the ranks of the bandwagon-jumpers, constituting in all a considerable bureaucracy. But, given the revolutionary party, given the Soviets, given the trade unions, given the factory committees, that is, given those concrete means by which the workers ruled the state, *their* state, this bureaucracy, however perilous, remained within the limitations of "hired hands" in the service of the workers' state. In political or economic life—the bureaucracies in both tended to and did merge—the bureaucracy was subject to the criticism, control, recall or discharge of the "working class organized as a ruling class."

The whole history of the struggle of the Trotskyist movement in Russia against the bureaucracy signified, at bottom, a struggle to prevent the crushing of the workers' state by the growing monster of a bureaucracy which was becoming increasingly different in *quality*

from the "hired hands" of the workers' state as well as from any kind of bureaucratic group under capitalism. What we have called the consummated usurpation of power by the Stalinist bureaucracy was, in reality, nothing but the self-realization of the bureaucracy as a class and its seizure of state power from the proletariat, the establishment of its own state power and its own rule. The *qualitative* difference lies precisely in this: the bureaucracy is no longer the controlled and revocable "managers and superintendents" employed by the workers' state in the party, the state apparatus, the industries, the army, the unions, the fields, but the owners and controllers of the state, which is in turn the repository of collectivized property and thereby the employer of all hired hands, the masses of the workers, above all, included.

The situation of the young Soviet republic (the historical circumstances surrounding its birth and evolution), imposed upon it the "division of labor" described above, and often commented on by Lenin. Where a similar division of labor under capitalism does not transform the economic or political agents of the ruling class into a new class, for the reasons given above (primarily, the relations to capitalist private property), it does tend to create a new class in a state reposing on collectivized property, that is, in a state which is itself the repository of *all* social property.

Trotsky is entirely right when he speaks of "dynamic social formations [in Russia] which have had no precedent and have no analogies." It is even more to the point when he writes that "the very fact of its [the bureaucracy's] appropriation of political power in a country where the principal means of production are in the hands of the state, creates a new and hitherto unknown relation between the bureaucracy and the riches of the nation." For what is unprecedented and new, hitherto unknown, one cannot find a sufficiently illuminating analogy in the bureaucracies in other societies which did not develop into a class but remained class-serving bureaucracies.

What Trotsky calls the indispensable theoretical key to an understanding of the situation in Russia is the remarkable passage from Marx which he quotes in *The Revolution Betrayed*: "A development of the productive forces is the absolutely necessary practical premise

[of communism], because without it want is generalized, and with want the struggle for necessities begins again, and that means that all the old crap must revive."

Both Lenin and Trotsky kept repeating in the early years: in backward Russia, socialism cannot be built without the aid of the more advanced countries. Before the revolution, in 1915, Trotsky made clear his opinion—for which Stalinism never forgave him—that without state aid of the western proletariat, the workers of Russia could not hope to remain in power for long. That state aid did not come, thanks to the international social democracy, later ably supplemented by the Stalinists. But the prediction of Lenin and Trotsky did come true. The workers of the Soviet Union were unable to hold power. That they lost it in a peculiar, unforeseen and even unforeseeable way—not because of a bourgeois restoration, but in the form of the seizure of power by a counter-revolutionary bureaucracy which retained and based itself on the new, collectivist form of property—is true. But they did lose power. The old crap was revived—in a new, unprecedented, hitherto-unknown form, the rule of a *new bureaucratic class*. A class that always was, that always will be? Not at all. "Class," Lenin pointed out in April 1920, "is a concept that takes shape in struggle—and in the course of development." The reminder is particularly timely in considering the struggle and evolution of the Stalinist bureaucracy into a class. Precisely here it is worth more than passing notice (because of its profound significance), that the counter-revolution, like the revolution that preceded it, found that it could not, as Marx said about the seizure of power by the proletariat in the Paris Commune, "simply lay hold of the ready-made state machinery and wield it for its own purposes." The Russian proletariat had to *shatter* the old bourgeois state and its apparatus, and put in its place a new state, a complex of the Soviets, the revolutionary party, the trade unions, the factory committees, the militia system, *etc.* To achieve power and establish its rule, the Stalinist counter-revolution in turn had to shatter the proletarian Soviet state—those same Soviets, the party, the unions, the factory committees, the militia system, the "armed people," *etc.* It did not and could not "simply lay hold of" the existing machinery of state and

set it going for its own ends. It shattered the workers' state, and put in its place the totalitarian state of bureaucratic collectivism.

Thereby it compelled us to add to our theory this conception, among others: Just as it is possible to have different classes ruling in societies resting upon the private ownership of property, so it is possible to have more than one class ruling in a society resting upon the collective ownership of property—concretely, the working class and the bureaucracy.

Can this new class look forward to a social life-span as long as that enjoyed, for example, by the capitalist class? We see no reason to believe that it can. Throughout modern capitalist society, ripped apart so violently by its contradictions, there is clearly discernible the irrepressible tendency towards collectivism, the only means whereby the productive forces of mankind can be expanded and thereby provide that ample satisfaction of human needs which is the precondition to the blooming of a new civilization and culture. But there is no adequate ground for believing that this tendency will materialize in the form of a universal "bureaucratic collectivism." The "unconditional development of the productive forces of society comes continually into conflict with the limited end, the self-expansion of the existing capital." The revolutionary struggle against the capitalist mode of production, triumphing in those countries which have already attained a high level of economic development, including the development of labor productivity, leads rather to the socialist society. The circumstances which left Soviet Russia isolated, dependent upon its own primitive forces, and thus generated that "generalized want" which facilitated the victory of the bureaucratic counter-revolution, will be and can only be overcome by overcoming its causes—namely, the capitalist encirclement. The social revolution which spells the doom of capitalist imperialism and the release of the pent-up, strangled forces of production, will put an end to the want and misery of the masses in the West and to the very basis of the misery of Stalinism in the Soviet Union.

Social life and evolution were slow and long-drawn-out under feudalism. Their pace was considerably accelerated under

capitalism, and phenomena which took decades in developing under feudalism, took only years to develop under capitalism. World society which entered the period of world wars and socialist revolutions, finds the pace speeded up to a rhythm that has no precedent in history. All events and phenomena tend to be telescoped in point of time. From this standpoint, the rise, and the early fall, of the bureaucracy in the Soviet Union necessitates an indication of the limits of its development, as we pointed out above, precisely in order to distinguish it from the fundamental historical classes. This is perhaps best done by characterizing it as the ruling class of an instable society which is already a fetter on economic development.

### STALINIST BUREAUCRACY— FASCIST BUREAUCRACY

What has already been said should serve to indicate the similarities between the Stalinist and Fascist bureaucracies, but above all to indicate the profound social and historical difference between them. Following our analysis, the animadversions of all species of rationalizers on the identity of character of Stalinism and Fascism, remain just as superficial as ever.

Trotsky's characterization of the two bureaucracies as "symmetrical" is incontrovertible, but only within the limits with which he surrounds the term, namely, they are both products of the same failure of the Western proletariat to solve the social crisis by social revolution. To go further, they are identical, but again within well-defined limits. The political régime, the technique of rule, the highly-developed social demagoguery, the system of terror without end—these are essential features of Hitlerite and Stalinist totalitarianism, some of them more fully developed under the latter than under the former. At this point, however, the similarity ceases.

From the standpoint of our old analysis and theory, the Soviet Union remained a workers' state despite its political régime. In short, we said, just as the social rule of capitalism, the capitalist state, was preserved under different political régimes—republic, monarchy, military dictatorship, fascism—so the social rule of the proletariat, the workers' state could be maintained under different political régimes—Soviet democracy, Stal-

inist totalitarianism. Can we, then, even speak of a "counter-revolutionary workers' state"? was the question posed by Trotsky early this year. To which his reply was, "There are two completely counter-revolutionary workers' Internationals" and one can therefore speak also of "the counter-revolutionary workers' state. In the last analysis a workers' state is a trade union which has conquered power." It is a workers' state by virtue of its property forms, and it is counter-revolutionary by virtue of its political régime.

Without dwelling here on the analogy between the Soviet state today and the trade unions, it is necessary to point out that thoroughgoing consistency would demand of this standpoint that the Soviet Union be characterized as a *Fascist workers' state*, workers' state, again, because of its political régime. Objections to this characterization can only be based upon the embarrassment caused by this natural product of consistency.

However that may be, if it is not a workers' state, not even a Fascist workers' state, neither is it a state comparable to that of the German Nazis. Let us see why.

Fascism, resting on the mass basis of the petty-bourgeoisie gone mad under the horrors of the social crisis, *was called to power deliberately* by the big bourgeoisie in order to preserve its social rule, the system of private property. Writers who argue that Fascism put an end to capitalism and inaugurated a new social order, with a new class rule, are guilty of an abstract and static conception of capitalism; more accurately, of an idealization of capitalism as permanently identical with what it was in its halcyon period of organic upward development, its "democratic" phase. Faced with the imminent prospect of the proletarian revolution putting an end both to the contradictions of capitalism and to capitalist rule, the bourgeoisie preferred the annoyance of a Fascist régime which would suppress (not abolish!) these contradictions and preserve capitalist rule. In other words, at a given stage of its *degeneration*, the *only* way to preserve the capitalist system in any form is by means of the totalitarian dictatorship. As all historians agree, calling Fascism to political power—the abandonment of political rule by the bourgeoisie

—was the conscious act of the bourgeoisie itself.

But, it is argued, *after* it came to political power, the Fascist bureaucracy completely dispossessed the bourgeoisie and itself became the ruling class. Which is precisely what needs to be but has not been proved. The system of private ownership of socially-operated property *remains basically intact*. After being in power in Italy for over eighteen years, and in Germany for almost eight, Fascism has yet to nationalize industry, to say nothing of expropriating the bourgeoisie (the expropriation of small sections of the bourgeoisie—the Jewish—is done in the interests of the bourgeoisie as a whole). Why does Hitler, who is so bold in all other spheres, suddenly turn timid when he confronts the "juridical detail" represented by the private (or corporate) ownership of the means of production? Because the two cannot be counterposed: his boldness and "radicalism" in all spheres is directed towards maintaining and reinforcing that "juridical detail," that is, capitalist society, to the extent to which it is at all possible to maintain it *in the period of its decay*.

But doesn't Fascism control the bourgeoisie? Yes, in a sense. That kind of control was foreseen long ago. In January 1916, Lenin and the Zimmerwald Left wrote: "At the end of the war a gigantic universal economic upheaval will manifest itself with all its force, when, under a general exhaustion, unemployment and lack of capital, industry will have to be regulated anew, when the terrific indebtedness of all states will drive them to tremendous taxation, and when state socialism—militarization of the economic life—will seem to be the only way out of financial difficulties." Fascist control means precisely this new regulation of industry, the militarization of economic life in its sharpest form. It controls, it restricts, it regulates, it plunders—but with all that it maintains and even strengthens the capitalist profit system, leaves the bourgeoisie intact as the class owning property. It *assures* the profits of the owning class—taking from it that portion which is required to maintain a bureaucracy and police-spy system needed to keep down labor (which threatens to take away *all* profits and *all* capital, let us not forget) and to maintain a highly modernized military establishment to defend the German bourgeoisie from at-

tacks at home and abroad and to acquire for it new fields of exploitation outside its own frontiers.

But isn't the Fascist bureaucracy, too, becoming a class? In a sense, yes, but not a new class with a new class rule. By virtue of their control of the state power, any number of Fascist bureaucrats, of high and low estate, have used coercion and intimidation to become Board Directors and stockholders in various enterprises. This is especially true of those bureaucrats assigned to industry as commissars of all kinds. On the other side, the bourgeoisie acquire the "good will" of Nazi bureaucrats, employed either in the state or the economic machinery, by bribes of stocks and positions on directing boards. There is, if you wish, a certain process of fusion between sections of the bureaucracy and the bourgeoisie. But the bureaucrats who become stockholders and Board Directors do not thereby become a new class, they enter as integral parts of the industrial or financial bourgeoisie class which we have known for quite some time!

Private ownership of capital, that "juridical detail" before which Hitler comes to a halt, is a social reality of the profoundest importance. With all its political power, the Nazi bureaucracy remains a bureaucracy; sections of it fuse with the bourgeoisie, but as a social aggregation, it is not developing into a new class. Here, control of the state power is not enough. The bureaucracy, in so far as its development into a new class with a new class rule of its own is concerned, *is itself controlled* by the objective reality of the private ownership of capital.

How different it is with the Stalinist bureaucracy! Both bureaucracies "devour, waste, and embezzle a considerable portion of the national income"; both have an income above that of the people, and privileges which correspond to their position in society. But similarity of income is not a definition of a social class. In Germany, the Nazis are not more than a bureaucracy—extremely powerful, to be sure, but still only a bureaucracy. In the Soviet Union, the bureaucracy is the ruling class, because it possesses as its own the state power which, in this country, is the owner of all social property.

In Germany, the Nazis have attained a great degree of independence by their control of the state, but it continues to be "the state of the most powerful eco-

omic class"—the bourgeoisie. In the Soviet Union, control of the state, sole owner of social property, makes the bureaucracy the most powerful economic class. Therein lies the fundamental difference between the Soviet state, even under Stalinism, and all other *pre-collectivist* states. The difference is of epochal historical importance.

Of epochal historical importance, we repeat, for our analysis does not diminish by an iota the profound social-revolutionary significance of the Russian proletarian revolution. Starting at a low level, lowered still further by years of war, civil war, famine and their devastation, isolated from world economy, infested with a monstrous bureaucracy, the Soviet Union nevertheless attained a rhythm of economic development, an expansion of the productive forces which exceeded the expectations of the boldest revolutionary thinkers and easily aroused the astonishment of the entire world. This was not due to any virtues of the bureaucracy under whose reign it was accomplished, but in spite of the concomitant overhead waste of that reign. Economic progress in the Soviet Union was accomplished on the basis of planning and of the new, collectivist forms of property established by the proletarian revolution. What would that progress have looked like if only those new forms, and property relations most suitable to them, had been extended to the more highly developed countries of Europe and America! It staggers the imagination.

Fascism, on the other hand, has developed to its highest degree the intervention of the state as regulator, subsidizer and controller of a social order which *does not expand but contracts* the productive forces of modern society. The contrary view held by those who are so impressed by the great development of industry in Germany in the period of war economy, is based upon superficial and temporary phenomena. Fascism, as a motor or a brake on the development of productive forces, must be judged not by the tons of war-steel produced in the Ruhr, but on the infinitely more significant policy it pursues in the conquered territories which it seeks to convert, from industrially advanced countries, into backward agricultural hinterlands of German national economy.

Both bureaucracies are reactionary.

Both bureaucracies act as brakes on the development of the productive forces of society. Neither plays a progressive rôle, even if in both cases this or that act may have an abstractly progressive significance (Hitler destroys Bavarian particularism and "liberates" the Sudetens; Stalin nationalizes industry in Latvia). In the Soviet Union, however, the Stalinist bureaucracy is the brake, and its removal would permit the widest expansion of the productive forces. Whereas in Germany, as in other capitalist countries, it is not merely the Fascist bureaucracy who stand in the way, but primarily the capitalist class, the capitalist mode of production.

The difference is between increased state intervention to preserve capitalist property and the collective ownership of property by the bureaucratic state.

How express the difference summarily and in conventional terms? People buying canned goods want and are entitled to have labels affixed that will enable them to distinguish at a glance peaches from peaches from peas. "We often seek salvation from unfamiliar phenomena in familiar terms," Trotsky observed. But what is to be done with unprecedented, new, hitherto-unknown phenomena, how label them in such a way as to describe at once their origin, their present state, their more than one future prospect, and wherein they resemble and differ from other phenomena? The task is not easy. Yet, life and politics demand some conventional, summary terms for social phenomena; one cannot answer the question—What is the Soviet state?—by repeating in detail a long and complex analysis. The demand must be met as satisfactorily as is possible in the nature of the case.

The early Soviet state we would call, with Lenin, a bureaucratically deformed workers' state. The Soviet state today we would call—bureaucratic state socialism, a characterization which attempts to embrace both its historical origin and its distinction from capitalism as well as its current diversion under Stalinism. The German state today we would call, in distinction from the Soviet state, bureaucratic or totalitarian state capitalism. These terms are neither elegant nor absolutely precise, but they will have to do for want of any others more precise or even half as precise.

## THE DEFENSE OF THE SOVIET UNION

From the foregoing analysis the basis is laid not only for eliminating the discrepancies and defects in our old analysis, but for clarifying our political position.

*Political or Social Revolution?* Here too, without falling into a game of terminology or toying with abstract concepts, it is necessary to strive for the maximum exactness. As distinct from social revolution, Trotsky and the International called up to now for a political revolution in the Soviet Union. "History has known elsewhere not only social revolutions which substituted the bourgeoisie for the feudal régime, but also political revolutions which, without destroying the economic foundations of society, swept out an old ruling upper crust (1830 and 1848 in France, February 1917 in Russia, etc.). The overthrow of the Bonapartist caste will, of course, have deep social consequences, but in itself it will be confined within the limits of political revolution." (*The Revolution Betrayed*, p. 288.) And again, on the same page: "It is not a question this time of changing the economic foundations of society, of replacing certain forms of property with other forms."

In the revolution against the Stalinist bureaucracy the nationalization of the means of production and exchange will indeed be preserved by the proletariat in power. If that is what is meant by political revolution, if that is all it could mean, then we could easily be reconciled to it. But from our whole analysis, it follows that the Stalinist counter-revolution, in seizing the power of the state, thereby changed the property relations in the Soviet Union. In overturning the rule of the bureaucracy, the Soviet proletariat will again raise itself to the position of ruling class, organize its own state, and once more change its relations to property. The revolution will thus not merely have "deep social consequences," it will be a social revolution. After what has been said in another section, it is not necessary to insist here on those points wherein the social revolution in Germany or England would resemble the social revolution in Russia and wherein they would differ from it. In the former, it is a question of ending capitalism and lifting the country into the new historical epoch of collectivism and socialism. In

the latter, it is a question of destroying a reactionary obstacle to the development of a collectivist society toward socialism.

*Unconditional Defense of the U.S.S.R.?* The slogan of "unconditional defense of the Soviet Union" assumed that, even under Stalin and despite Stalin, the Soviet Union could play only a progressive rôle in any war with a capitalist power. The Second World War broke out, with the Soviet Union as one of the participants, now as a belligerent, now as a "non-belligerent." But, "theory is not a note which you can present at any moment to reality for payment." Reality showed that the Soviet Union, in the war in Poland and in Finland, in the war as a whole, was playing a reactionary rôle. The Stalinist bureaucracy and its army acted as an indispensable auxiliary in the military calculations of German imperialism. They covered the latter's eastern, northern and southeastern flank, helped in the crushing of Poland (and along with it, of the incipient Polish Commune), and for their pains, received a share of the booty. In the conquered territories, it is true, Stalin proceeded to establish the same economic order that prevails in the Soviet Union. But this has no absolute value, in and of itself—only a relative value. One can say with Trotsky that "the economic transformations in the occupied provinces do not compensate for this by even a tenth part!"

From the standpoint of the interests of the international socialist revolution, defense of the Soviet Union in this war (*i.e.*, support of the Red Army) could only have a negative effect. Even from the more limited standpoint of preserving the new economic forms in the Soviet Union, it must be established that they were not involved in the war. At stake were and are what Trotsky calls "the driving force behind the Moscow bureaucracy . . . the tendency to expand its power, its prestige, its revenues."

The attempt to exhaust the analysis of the Stalinist course in the war by ascribing it to "purely military" steps of preventive-defensive character (what is meant in general by "purely military" steps remains a mystery, since they exist neither in nature nor society), is doomed by its superficiality to failure. Naturally, all military steps are . . . military steps, but saying so does not advance us very far.

The general political considerations

which actuated the Stalinists in making an alliance with Hitler (capitulation to Germany out of fear of war, etc.) have been stated by us on more than one occasion and require no repetition here. But there are even more profound reasons, which have little or nothing to do with the fact that Stalin's master-ally is German Fascism. The same reasons would have dictated the same course in the war if the alliance had been made, as a result of a different conjunction of circumstances, with the noble democracies. They are summed up in the lust for expansion of the Stalinist bureaucracy, which has even less in common with Lenin's policy of extending the revolution to capitalist countries than the Stalinist state has with the early workers' state.

And what is the economic base of this lust for expansion, this most peculiar imperialism which you have invented? We were asked, sometimes with superior sneers, sometimes with genuine interest in the problem. We know what are the irrepressible economic compulsions, the inherent economic contradictions, that produce the imperialist policy of finance capitalism. What are their equivalents in the Soviet Union?

Stalinist imperialism is no more like capitalist imperialism than the Stalinist state is like the bourgeois state. Just the same it has its own economic compulsions and internal contradictions, which hold it back here and drive it forward there. Under capitalism, the purpose of production is the production of surplus value, of profit, "not the product, but the surplus product." In the workers' state, production was carried on and extended for the satisfaction of the needs of the Soviet masses. For that, they needed not the oppression of themselves or of other people but the liberation of the peoples of the capitalist countries and the colonial empires. In the Stalinist state, production is carried on and extended for the satisfaction of the needs of the bureaucracy, for the increasing of its wealth, its privileges, its power. At every turn of events, it seeks to overcome the mounting difficulties and resolve the contradictions which it cannot really resolve, by intensifying the exploitation and oppression of the masses.

We surely need not, in a serious discussion among Marxists, insist upon the fact, so vehemently denied a year ago by the eminent Marxologist at the head of

the SWP, that there are still classes in the Soviet Union, and that exploitation takes place there. Not *capitalist* exploitation—but economic exploitation nonetheless: "The differences in income are determined, in other words, not only by differences of individual productiveness, but also by a *masked appropriation of the product of the labor of others*. The privileged minority of shareholders is living at the expense of the deprived majority." (*The Revolution Betrayed*, p. 240. My emphasis—M. S.) The *driving force* behind the bureaucracy is the tendency to increase and expand this "masked [and often not so masked] appropriation of the product of the labor of others." Hence, its penchant for methods of exploitation typical of the worst under capitalism; hence, its lust to extend its domination over the peoples of the weaker and more backward countries (if it is not the case with the stronger and more advanced countries, then only because the power, and not the will, is lacking), in order to subject them to the oppression and exploitation of the Kremlin oligarchs. The *de facto* occupation of the northwestern provinces of China by Stalin is a case in point. The occupation and then the spoliation of eastern Poland, of the three Baltic countries, of southern Finland (not to mention the hoped-for Petsamo nickel mines), of Bessarabia and Bukovina, tomorrow perhaps of parts of Turkey, Iran, and India, are other cases in point. We call this policy Stalinist imperialism.

But are not imperialism and imperialist policy a concomitant only of capitalism? No. While crises of over-production are unique to capitalism, that does not hold true either of war or imperialism, which are common to divers societies. Lenin, insisting precisely on the scientific, Marxist usage of the terms, wrote in 1917:

Crises, precisely in the form of overproduction or of the "stocking up of market commodities" (comrade S. does not like the word overproduction) are a phenomenon which is *exclusively* proper to capitalism. Wars, however, are proper both to the economic system based on slavery and the feudal. There have been imperialist wars on the basis of slavery (Rome's war against Carthage was an imperialist war on both sides) as well as in the Middle Ages and in the epoch of mercantile capitalism. Every war in which both belligerent camps are fighting to oppress foreign countries or peoples and for the division of the booty, that is, over "who shall op-

press more and who shall plunder more," must be called imperialistic. (*Sämtliche Werke*, Vol. XXI, pp. 387f.)

By this definition, on which Lenin dwelled because comrade S. had made an "error in principle," it is incontestable that the Stalinists in partnership with Hitler have been conducting an imperialist war "to oppress foreign countries or peoples," "for the division of the booty," to decide "who shall oppress more and who shall plunder more." It is only from this standpoint that Trotsky's statement late in 1939—"We were and remain against seizures of new territories by the Kremlin"—acquires full and serious meaning. If the Soviet state were essentially a trade union in power, with a reactionary bureaucracy at its head, then we could not possibly oppose "seizures of new territories" any more than we oppose a trade union bureaucracy bringing unorganized workers into the union. With all our opposition to their organizing methods, it is we, the left wing, who always insisted that Lewis or Green organize the unorganized. The analogy between the Soviet state and a trade union is not a very solid one. . . .

The theory that Soviet economy is progressive and therefore the wars of the Stalinist bureaucracy against a capitalist state are, by some mysticism, correspondingly and universally progressive, is thus untenable. As in the case of a colonial or semi-colonial country, or a small nation, we defend the Soviet Union against imperialism when it is fighting a progressive war, that is, in our epoch

one which corresponds to the interests of the international socialist revolution. When it fights a reactionary, imperialist war, as did "little Serbia" and China in the last world war, we take the traditional revolutionary position: continue implacably the class struggle regardless of the effects on the military front.

Under what conditions is it conceivable to defend the Soviet Union ruled by the Stalinist bureaucracy? It is possible to give only a generalized answer. For example, should the character of the present war change from that of a struggle between the capitalist imperialist camps into a struggle of the imperialists to crush the Soviet Union, the interests of the world revolution would demand the defense of the Soviet Union by the international proletariat. The aim of imperialism in that case, whether it were represented in the war by one or many powers, would be to solve the crisis of world capitalism (and thus prolong the agony of the proletariat) at the cost of reducing the Soviet Union to one or more colonial possessions or spheres of interest. Even though prostrated by the victors in the last war, Germany remained a capitalist country, whose social régime the Allies did their utmost to maintain against the revolutionary proletariat. In the present war, we find victorious Germany not only not undertaking any fundamental economic changes in the conquered territories but preserving the capitalist system by force of arms against the unrest and revolution-

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ism of the proletariat. There is no reason to believe that victorious imperialism in the Soviet Union would leave its nationalized property intact—quite the contrary. As Germany now seeks to do with France, imperialism would seek to destroy all the progress made in the Soviet Union by reducing it to a somewhat more advanced India—a village continent. In these considerations, too, the *historical significance* of the new, collectivist property established by the Russian Revolution, again stands out clearly. Such a transformation of the Soviet Union as triumphant imperialism would undertake, would have a vastly and durable reactionary effect upon world social development, give capitalism and reaction a new lease on life, retard enormously the revolutionary movement, and postpone for we don't know how long the introduction of the world socialist society. From this standpoint and under these conditions, the defense of the Soviet Un-

ion, even under Stalinism, is both possible and necessary.

●  
To revise one's position on so important a question as the class character of the Soviet Union, is, as the writer has himself learned, no easy matter. The mass of absurdities written against our old position only served to fix it more firmly in our minds and in our program. To expect others to take a new position overnight would be presumptuous and unprofitable. We did not arrive at the views outlined above lightly or hastily. We neither ask nor expect others to arrive at our views in that way. It is, however, right to ask that they be discussed with the critical objectivity, the exclusive concern with the truth that best serves our common interests, and the polemical loyalty that are the best traditions of Marxism.

*December 8, 1940.*

MAX SHACHTMAN

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