

Workers International News

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*Theoretical
Organ of the
Revolutionary
Communist
Party*

Contents ==

EDITORIAL NOTES :

THE SIGNIFICANCE OF THE DOCKERS' STRIKES

WHERE IS THE COMMUNIST

PARTY GOING? - - - - David James

RELIGION IN THE SOVIET UNION Paul Dixon

THE RUSSIAN REVOLUTION - - Leon Trotsky

November 1945

WORKERS INTERNATIONAL NEWS

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Contents

	Page
EDITORIAL NOTES	35
WHERE IS THE COMMUNIST PARTY GOING ? By David James	39
RELIGION IN THE SOVIET UNION By Paul Dixon	44
THE RUSSIAN REVOLUTION By Leon Trotsky	49

Manager's Column

OUR magazine in its new make-up has been very well received. Two issues of the new series have now appeared. Write and let us know what you think of W.I.N. Tell us which articles and features you like best. Are there articles or features not contained in the magazine which you would like to see? If so, what are they? If you would like any particular subject or subjects dealt with or events approached from some other angle, we want to know of this. Constructive criticism will be welcomed by the Editorial Board. Let us have your suggestions for improving W.I.N. Particularly welcome are the comments of comrades in other lands, or those of our own comrades overseas.

There are other ways also in which our readers, whether members of the R.C.P. or not, can help. Whilst we

hope that all who can afford it will send us donations towards the cost of production, there will be many workers not in a financial position to do so. These can help by getting new readers for W.I.N. In order to pay for itself, our magazine must have a stable circulation. To help stabilize the circulation and to ensure that you receive your own copy regularly, take out a subscription, 7d. per single copy post free, 3/6 for six months, or 7/- a year. We will mail single copies or bundles to your address anywhere in the world. Newsagents will be supplied on trade terms. Efforts should be made to get W.I.N. into your local newsagents.

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WORKERS INTERNATIONAL NEWS

VOLUME 6.

NOVEMBER, 1945.

NUMBER 2.

Editorial Notes

THE NEW AWAKENING

REGIME OF THE Labour Government has an overwhelming Parliamentary majority, an indisputable mandate. The capitalist class, shaken and disoriented, is content for the time being to lean on the reformists in the hope that British capitalism will thus be able to weather the storm of social crisis now breaking over its head. The Tories are offering only token opposition to the Labour leaders, contenting themselves with sniping and applying mild pressure on the Government. The occasional reactionary outbursts emitted by a few of those Tories least susceptible to Party discipline, are the exception rather than the rule. Yet despite this, despite the high degree of unity which prevails between the imperialist master and the "labour" flunkies, the regime of Attlee & Co. is a regime of crisis. For it is not at the top that the seeds of revolt are germinating, but deep down in the subsoil of capitalist society. How can it be otherwise? The toilers have voted into power that which they accept as a workers government. By the very decisiveness of their mandate they have demanded an improvement of their lot and concomitant drastic social changes. Instead, all that is emerging is a "continuation of (Tory) policy" in practically all fields.

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LABOUR'S FORCES FISSURES are bound to appear within the ranks of organised labour and its supporters. For these workers and lower middle class people are not by any means a homogeneous political mass. Labour's support is derived basically from two broad strata which reflect even now a duality of mood and attitude towards the Administration. On one side there is the old vanguard of organised labour. The older generations who have been in the trade unions and workers' parties for years; this section, together with the politically advanced strata of the younger generation, have few illusions. For the most part they voted Labour from tradition; from loyalty to their class; and because they saw no tangible alternative leadership. But they are sceptical of the labour leaders and their airy promises. They have no faith that the promises will be kept; that any measures against the capitalists will be taken except where dictated by mass pressure. In this category are to be found the dock and transport workers, and the building workers. And it is they who are the first to attempt to enforce that pressure on "their own" elected Government.

ON the other hand there is the younger generation of workers and soldiers whose votes swung the balance so forcibly in Labour's favour. Largely new to politics, they have received their education in the pre-war depression and in the fires of war. Their attitude is more naively hopeful. They have cast their votes for Labour and they expect results from the reformists. But even here there is no mood for trifling. The "socialist" Government has been

overwhelmingly voted into power. It must deliver the goods. There is no room for excuses! That is a fair representation of the attitude of these workers and soldiers. But, apart from those who have a stake in the reformist, social-democratic machine or an axe to grind by supporting it, it is mainly from this strata of Labour supporters that the "give them time" attitude prevails. A mood which finds a progressive expression in its hostility to the criticisms and obstructions of the ruling class against the Labour Government, but which has been exploited with a modicum of success by the Labour and trade union leaders in their struggle against the dock workers.

IT cannot be denied that the strikes have not received among the broad masses, the sympathy and support which this entirely progressive and vigorous struggle against the capitalists, merited. This can be also mainly attributed to organisational weaknesses on the part of the strike machinery. Little or no attempt was made by the strike committee to publicise and win sympathy and support for the dockers cause by means of leaflets, mass circulation of all sections of the working class movement, etc. Thus the tremendous significance of the dockers struggle is not fully understood by the British workers.

THE ROOT OF THE TROUBLE

THE developments in Britain are not only coloured by the whole background of world social unrest but conditioned by the changed position in which British capitalism has emerged from the imperialist conflict. The Labour Government's heritage is not a prosperous and expanding economy which has emerged victorious from a war. On the contrary, its legacy is a bankrupt economy based on a declining Empire: one which is being dragged down inexorably into the shambles of the shattered European and world capitalist economy.

DURING the war the British bourgeoisie, in alliance with the Labour, Trade Union and Stalinist leaderships, was able to maintain class harmony to some extent. This was due chiefly to the threat of Hitler across the channel and the disorientation due to the betrayals of the reformist labour leaderships. But with the termination of the conflict the cement of "national unity" crumbled into dust. The masses dealt a blow, first to political expression of class collaboration—the coalition Government of Churchill—and now, led by the more advanced sections, are preparing the exposure of the concealed class collaboration of the Labour leaders. That is the real meaning of the dockers' struggle.

A small spark can be the direct but not the real cause of a gigantic conflagration. This was so in the case of the dock strikes. For the issue was by no means restricted to the pit prop dispute of a few hundred workers in Birkenhead. The forty to fifty thousands who participated in the strikes, from regions as far apart as Glasgow and London, who acted so spontaneously, who fought and suffered so grimly, have made their sacrifices for broader aims. Stakes far higher even than the economic demands are being fought for. This is evident from an examination of the course which the struggle has taken.

THE UNIONS AND THE STATE

THE past period has witnessed a gradual process of growing together of the trade unions and the State machine. The thoroughly bureaucratised leaderships have succeeded throughout the years of the "Mond-Turner" phase of trade union tactics, in converting the unions from organs of proletarian struggle into vehicles of class-collaboration. The trade unions are now wielded by

the bureaucrats in the interests of the exploiters and against the toilers who created them, in every direct battle which takes place. Through Joint Production Committees, Working Parties, etc., the workers are being driven to provide more profits for the capitalist class. A veritable maze of negotiating and arbitration machinery has been built in order to stifle the resistance of the workers to a lowering of their standards of life and to protect the union "leaders" from the masses they are supposed to represent.

IT is practically impossible at the present time for the workers to use the official trade union machinery to conduct a direct struggle against the employers. Union bureaucrats and capitalists unite in their refusal to discuss the demands of workers who have been forced to take strike action to protect their interests on the job. Union funds, the property of the members, are denied them in the form of strike pay. And this swindle is protected by legal sanction. All strikes are declared "unofficial" and "illegal", and the trade union representatives regard it as their first duty when a strike takes place to get the men back on the job. Their task, as they see it, is to break the strike, never to help win it! While the overwhelming majority of the unionised dock workers were on the streets, Donovan and other leaders, representing practically nobody but themselves had the audacity to proclaim the strike action unofficial!

THIS process of fusing together of the trade union and State machinery received added impetus from the imperialist war and is attaining an even higher tempo now that the Labour leaders are responsible for the effective functioning of British capitalism. With the trade union organisations thus hamstringing, every movement of independent class struggle must, in the nature of things, create its own leadership from the rank and file participants. Two questions arise: the tactics to be employed in order to ensure the successful termination of the immediate struggle and the political implications of the struggle itself. Many determined and promising struggles are defeated by the slick manoeuvrings of the union bureaucrats because of lack of perspective and organisational inexperience of *ad hoc* leaderships.

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THE NEW PLANE OF STRUGGLE AN outstanding feature of the dockers struggle is the high plane on which it was conducted. For it was in this battle that the ideas propagandised by the revolutionary communists became transformed into a programme of action. A national alliance of the rank and file leaderships from the various ports; the adoption of a concise economic programme for the whole of the dockers throughout the country; and, all important, the decisive votes of no-confidence in the union leaders and the understanding of the need to clear out the old leadership and democratise the unions: these constituted the programme of struggle. Hence the violent attacks of the union leaders and the bourgeois press and radio against the Revolutionary Communist Party whom they accused of "fomenting the disturbance."

ANOTHER outstanding feature of the London docks strike was the role of the clerical workers. Not only was there a large measure of sympathy for the strike among the clerks, but it found concrete expression in the Surrey Docks where the clerical workers brought the manual workers out by striking first. Here the clerks actually gave the lead and, through their spokesmen at the mass meetings of the dockers, expressed their complete identity of aims with the manual workers and their solidarity in the struggle. This expression of class consciousness on the part of the clerks is a development of tremendous consequence.

STALINISM IN THE STRIKE

AS in all struggles of the workers which have taken place since June 1941 the Stalinists were in the vanguard of the strike-breaking forces. The tactical position which they occupy in these cases puts them in a more favourable position as a rule than the labour bureaucrats. For they still hold many positions of rank and file leadership in the organisations on the jobs. But they have received a rude blow from the dockers. Their attempts to break the strike brought them into immediate conflict with the strikers, and they were forced to beat a tremendous retreat. It is significant that in the main centres of the struggle the London and Liverpool dockers, who have had recent experience of the Stalinists, elected anti-Stalinist strike committees.

SO great was the pressure on the Communist Party element in the docks that not a few of the militants of the Party broke its discipline and supported the strike, and at least one prominent London docker announced his resignation from the C.P. Following on these developments the *Daily Worker* was compelled to come out belatedly in support of the strike. This is a portent of the coming events. It is evidence in support of our contention that neither the labour and trade union bureaucrats nor the Stalinists will be capable of stemming the tide of class struggles in the coming period.

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THE NEXT STAGE

WHATEVER the outcome of the strike, it has achieved the important objective of exposing the role of the labour and trade union bureaucrats in the eyes of the advanced workers. In an earlier paragraph we dealt with composition of labour's support, showing how the older generation lack faith in their leadership and realise that they will get only what they fight for. It is no accident that the first struggles in the tenure of office of the Labour Government are being waged by the transport and dock and building workers; for it is in these industries that the older labour workers are to be found.

THE primary lesson to be learned from the dockers struggle is the need to democratise the unions; to elect new militant leaderships and restore the independence of the unions from the State machine. Thus and only thus can they once again become organs of working class struggle against the capitalist class, capable of defending and improving the living standards of the organised toilers and instruments in the struggle for the revolutionary overthrow of capitalism.

THE end of the dockers strike is by no means the end of the struggle for these objectives. It is essential to maintain the rank-and-file alliance and to conduct a determined national struggle through the union branches for the ousting of the Donovans and Deakins and their replacement by those militants who creditably acquitted themselves in the strike. Many constitutional barriers bar the way of such a struggle and, unless the strike is triumphant, the struggle in the branches will have to be waged on the ebb of the present wave of militancy. If these facts are understood by the dockers and their rank-and-file leaders and squarely faced up to, the experiences of the dockers can have tremendous importance and the British working class movement can make gigantic strides forward in the coming period.

WHERE IS THE COMMUNIST PARTY GOING?

BY DAVID JAMES

ON November 24th-26th the Annual Conference of the Communist Party is meeting in London. This is an event of more than ordinary importance for every C.P. member, because it takes place at the end of a year of great events for the working-class movement. The lessons of the war and of the General Election; the problems of peace and the new situation posed by the coming to power for the first time of a majority Labour Government; a review of the past year's activity and the elaboration of perspectives for the next period must take these events into account.

The impact of great events has put the policy of every party to a severe test. A mood of doubt is sweeping the C.P. ranks, because the policy of the Party during the past year has quite clearly failed to stand up to this test. In many important respects it has been completely falsified.

The General Election Campaign

The C.P. campaign was prepared around the slogan "Labour and Progressive Government". The line was laid down in an E.C. letter dated February 21st. The aim was to get a Government that would carry out the policy of Crimea, that is, peaceful collaboration between the U.S.S.R. and the imperialist powers; that would preserve capitalist democracy; and would raise the living standard of the people. It was specifically stated that the immediate objective was not the struggle for Socialism but the continuation of capitalism in the "democratic" form. Such a policy was quite clearly one of class-collaboration, on a national and an international plane. The logical conclusion was to elect a National Government, composed of Labour, Liberals and the allegedly "progressive" section of the Tories, whose representatives were named in the E.C. letter: Churchill and Eden.

As the election approached, the slogan "Labour and Progressive Government" was concretised more and more clearly as a continuation of

the Coalition into the post-war period, with a shift in the relationship of forces within the coalition. The E.C. statement on the election ("**Daily Worker**", 20.3.45) was entitled "National Unity after the war." It said:

"The Communist Party . . . is of the opinion that National Unity, essential for winning the war, will be equally essential in the critical years following the General Election to complete the victory and win the peace."

Finally a pamphlet issued by the London District Committee, which was presumably endorsed by the leadership because it was never criticised or withdrawn, issued the following call:

"Provided we get a new House of Commons with a strong majority of Labour, Communist and Liberals, I believe the Labour Party should then form a new National Government and invite others, including Tories like Churchill and Eden, to participate."

Simultaneously, Pollitt was writing a series of pamphlets laying down the theoretical basis for this policy: "How to Win the Peace", "Pollitt Answers Questions on Communist Policy" (in which he defended Earl Browder who, on similar theoretical grounds, had dissolved the Communist Party to America), and finally, "Answers to Questions". The latter pamphlet, which states the whole policy in its crassest form, has been analysed in

detail in a previous issue of W.I.N. (July-Aug., 1945).

Pollitt went further in revising or, rather, abandoning Marxism than Bernstein, Kautsky or any of the classical revisionists ever did. He wrote that capitalism has been fundamentally changed; the basic section of the capitalists have learned that international competition and imperialist rivalry, as well as the class struggle, do not pay. Therefore, he said, there is a basis for collaboration between the "Enlightened" or "progressive" section of the bourgeoisie and the working class. To the questions "Is it possible to carry out economic co-operation, or will it break down through inter-imperialist rivalry, particularly Anglo-American rivalry?", "Is planned capitalism possible, and under what conditions?", "Is a peaceful transition to Socialism possible?", he answered in substance: "Yes—provided the democrats of all classes cooperate for these aims." With one stroke the whole Marxist-Leninist analysis of the fundamental and insoluble contradictions of capitalism, necessitating revolutionary seizure of State power by the proletariat, was liquidated.

Such was the theoretical and practical policy with which the C.P. entered the General Election campaign.

The Workers' Hostility Forced a Change of Policy

Within the ranks of the C.P. itself this policy did not receive anything like unanimous support. For the first time in many years there was a considerable opposition to the E.C. proposals. Walter Holmes in the "Daily Worker", (22.3.45) showed that out of branches numbering 8,684 members, 7,850 voted for the E.C. proposals, 278 against and 556 abstained.

But, outside the Party ranks the opposition was overwhelming. The workers had tolerated the Coalition only because their mass organisations gave no lead for an independent class

policy. They had become increasingly dissatisfied as the Coalition was progressively revealed as a means of tying the working class to the apron strings of the bourgeoisie, and they welcomed the Labour Party decision to break it at the end of the war and fight the election as an independent party. And proposals for continuing the Coalition into peacetime were greeted with hostility and derision. C.P. militants found themselves in the impossible position of advocating a policy which the most backward worker regarded as reactionary. The election campaign itself, opened by Churchill's first radio speech, clearly made nonsense of the claim that he and Eden were "progressive".

The Stalinist leaders reacted by performing one of their most amazing somersaults. Without a word of explanation, the slogan "Labour and Progressive Government" was dropped—in the middle of the campaign!—and replaced by "Labour and Communist majority". If the previous policy represented a complete break from Marxism, this reversal of a position that had been developed over a long period, abandoning theoretical positions without an attempt at justification, was the most disgraceful form of opportunism.

The situation on the eve of the election was, therefore, as follows. The Communist Party was supporting the Labour Party, and its programme was identical with the latter's in every respect. At the same time it put up 21 candidates, all of whom were opposed to Labour Party candidates, because of the failure to reach electoral agreement. The only justification the C.P. leadership could find for putting up candidates at all, was that the C.P. candidates were "more dynamic".

This policy was put to the test at the polls on July 25th.

The C.P. Election Policy Proved False

The slogan "Labour and Progressive Government" was based, as we have

seen, on the false and reactionary idea of class collaboration "to make capitalism work", and was completely opposed to the Marxist conception of class struggle for the overthrow of capitalism. But had Labour gained only a small majority, or a minority of the votes, it is possible that the slogan would have gained considerable support. In that case we should have had a powerful Popular Front movement, and the workers would have learned the need for a break with all capitalist parties only through bitter experience, and possibly through the defeat and destruction of the working-class movement (this was the result of Popular Front politics in France and Spain). Fortunately, this stage has been avoided. The workers, with considerably more class-consciousness than Pollitt and the Communist Party E.C., voted overwhelmingly Labour. They thereby threw the idea of a "Labour and Progressive Government" and "National Unity after the War" into the dustbin.

In attempting to explain away this débâcle of their policy, some C.P. leaders have tried to make out that it was justified because it seemed probable that Labour would not have had a big majority, under which circumstances a Popular Front coalition would have been correct. As if the question of collaboration with capitalist parties were simply one of electoral arithmetic! No-one foresaw exactly the result of the election; but even had Labour been defeated it was still correct for them to contest independently. The C.P. policy was false because the whole class-collaborationist basis of it was wrong in principle. The election result has served to demonstrate this.

But not only did the workers reject the Popular Front: they also rejected the slogan of "Labour and Communist majority" which had been hurriedly adopted in its place. For the Communist Party took a tremendous beating at the election. Of its 21 candidates, 19 were defeated, of whom 12 lost their deposits.

The reason is not hard to find. Faced with two working-class candidates bearing different labels but **having identical programmes**, the workers naturally voted for their traditional party, the Labour Party. Even where the C.P. candidate had much sympathy, as for example at Sparkbrook, the workers' votes went to the Labour candidate. In Glasgow Central the Tory defeated the Labour candidate by slightly less than the number of votes cast for the C.P. candidate; and but for the split vote Capt. Gammans would probably have been defeated by a working-class candidate in Hornsey. It is no use for the C.P. leadership to blame the Labour leadership for splitting the vote. It is true that the Labour leaders are opposed to working-class unity; but **having abandoned all programmatic differences with the Labour Party the onus was on the C.P. as the less influential party to withdraw, particularly in view of its great propaganda for unity.**

To sum up: the workers rejected the idea of the Communist Party existing as a parallel party to the Labour Party **without any difference in programme to justify its existence.** Every C.P. member will have been thinking very hard about this experience. One of the jobs of the Conference should be to draw the lessons from it; and the leadership have the duty of explaining why their policies were so completely falsified by events. We can confidently predict, however, that they will not do so.

What Future Perspective Has the Communist Party?

The reaction of many C.P. members has been to ask: what is the point of continuing to exist as a separate party at all? If our programme and ideas are no different from those of the Labour Party, why do we not dissolve and enter the latter?

In an article in the "Daily Worker" (24.10.44), Pollitt devoted a good deal of space to justifying the continued

existence of the party. He could, however, give no sound reason for doing so. The E.C. statement for pre-Conference discussion is no better. The Party is to support the Labour Government—with criticism, but with no alternative revolutionary perspective. Its whole rôle is reduced to that of “invigorating” the Labour movement. The tasks it sets the Party are: to fight for affiliation to the Labour Party, to spread Marxist education, and to develop the “Daily Worker”.

Now this is all very well but it does not answer the question. All the tasks outlined above can be fulfilled by C.P. members as individual members of the Labour Party. The argument of the superior energy and enthusiasm of C.P. members, even if true, is quite irrelevant. Only a separate programme justifies the existence of a separate party. Affiliation is only a way of dodging the issue, because even affiliated to the Labour Party the Communist Party would retain its separate existence. Lenin advocated that the C.P. should affiliate to the Labour Party in 1920, when it had a revolutionary programme opposed to that of the Labour leadership, provided that it had freedom to propagate this programme. The question of the separate existence of the Communist Party as a separate organisation remains unanswered.

To such a pass have the politics of the Stalinist leadership brought the Party! Through a series of zig-zags the Party has been evolving steadily to the right for two decades. To-day it presents the picture of a typical reformist party. The leadership talks the language of the reformists and its perspective is that of classical reformism (peaceful transition to Socialism through class-collaboration). Nothing remains of the programme of revolutionary Marxism. (The talk of “spreading Marxist education” is meaningless, for with such a programme this can only be the “Marx-

ism” of Kautsky, not that of Lenin.) The logical conclusion of Pollitt's policy is dissolution of the C.P. into the reformist party.

Why Is the C.P. to Remain ?

Why, then, does the E.C. want to continue the Party's existence? The reason for this, not the least unprincipled of all the unprincipled Stalinist positions, is to be found in the last analysis in the fountain-head of all Stalinist policy: the foreign policy of the Stalinist bureaucracy in the Soviet Union.

When Earl Browder and the American Stalinist leaders came in 1944 to the same conclusions as Pollitt, and openly renounced the struggle for Socialism, they dissolved the Communist Party. This was in line with Stalin's policy of doing nothing to offend his “ally”, American imperialism. Since then, however, the “Teheran perspective” on which it was based—“Capitalism and Socialism have now found a way to peaceful co-existence in the same world”—has also been falsified. The clash between these Powers has become more open: and the American C.P. has dutifully been resurrected.

For the same reason, Stalin wishes to retain the British C.P. as a weapon of pressure in this country against any anti-Soviet orientation of British imperialism. Not in order to pursue a revolutionary policy but in order to be a faithful defender of every act of Stalin's diplomacy, and to prevent the emergence of a genuine revolutionary party.

A Revolutionary Programme Is Necessary !

The result of the C.P. leadership's capitulation to reformism has been to confuse and disorder the rank and file. A few have gone over to the Labour Party. Many of the best elements who remain still believe in the necessity for a Communist Party,

but are groping for a different road to that of the leadership. To these workers we say: there is a need for a Communist movement today; and always will be until the classless society is attained. Indeed, the coming to power of the Labour Party has made the building of a strong communist movement an urgent task. But this movement can be built only on the basis of a revolutionary Marxist programme.

The Communist Party originated in the struggle against reformism. When the parties of the Second International went over to the side of their respective capitalist classes in the imperialist war of 1914-18, Lenin, Luxemburg and their co-thinkers proclaimed the necessity for a Third, Communist International. They pointed out that the reformist programme was an illusion in the epoch of declining capitalism; that if the reformists came to power they would only administer capitalism, and their Governments would in the long run collapse beneath the weight of its contradictions. The rôle of the Communists was to conduct revolutionary propaganda, give leadership to the workers' struggles, and mobilise the working-class for revolutionary seizure of State power when the failure of the reformists became evident in practice.

The programme of Lenin is as true today as it was then. Two decades of terrible defeats for the working class, culminating in the Second World War, have re-emphasised the need for a revolutionary party. Far from having diminished, the contradictions of capitalism have acquired a more explosive character. The failure of the imperialists to achieve international agreement and the triumph of chauvinist power-politics (the atom-bomb); the struggle of the oppressed peoples for national liberation and its brutal suppression by the "democratic" imperialists (Indonesia, Indo-China); the anarchy of capitalist economy (unemployment in America, the mad scramble for exports); and the alignment of the imperialist

powers against the Soviet Union; all falsify the reformist and class-collaborationist picture painted by Pollitt and Stalin. The capitalists have learned nothing. Their system is plunging deeper into decay.

Faced with this, the programme of reformism is a Utopia. Attlee, Bevin and Co., whose gospel is "the inevitability of gradualness", will be no more successful in peacefully transforming capitalism than were their German or Austrian counterparts. The decline of British imperialism will place heavy burdens on the backs of the British workers in the form of wage cuts, longer hours, and unemployment. The workers will resist, as they are already resisting; the employers will intensify their attacks. The Labour Government, trying to improve the lot of the workers while administering capitalism, will be ground between the upper and nether millstones. The workers will lose confidence in the Labour leaders and look for a revolutionary solution. The capitalists will attempt another solution: the extermination of the working-class organisations by means of fascism.

Only a party with a revolutionary programme will pass the test of these events. If such a party does not exist, the tragic events of Italy, Germany and France will be repeated here also. The proletariat will be disoriented, the despairing middle classes will be drawn to the side of Fascism.

Only one tendency has consistently criticised and exposed the reformist evolution of the C.P. leadership and developed a revolutionary programme, and that is Trotskyism. During the war, when the Labour and Stalinist leaders advocated ceasing the class struggle for the sake of "national unity", and even indulged in strike-breaking, we stood solidly for an independent class policy. We called for an end to the Coalition, and Labour to take power. At the same time we pointed out that in itself this would not solve the problems of the

working class, for which only a revolutionary seizure of State power and the complete expropriation of the capitalists would suffice. Nevertheless, while sowing no illusions in reformism, we regarded a majority Labour Government as a necessary stage through which the workers would have to pass before they realised the correctness of the revolutionary programme. We denounced the slogan of "Labour and Progressive Government" as a class-collaborationist trap. Experience has proved us correct.

Today, our party alone refuses to participate in the general illusions about the Labour Government. We apply the analytical methods of Marx, Lenin and Trotsky: the Labour Government will eventually founder on the rocks of capitalist contradictions, and the struggle will sharpen

out between the two basic forces in modern society: revolutionary communism and reaction.

This Communist Party Conference takes place at a crucial moment. At the time of writing the great dock strike foreshadows the character of the struggles that will face this country. Communist workers! Will you be on the side of Pollitt and all those who pin their faith on reforming capitalism, and in doing so take an attitude of hostility or indifference towards the fighting workers? Or will you join those who advocate the programme of Marx and Lenin, and earn the hatred of the capitalist class by supporting and participating in all the workers' struggles?

These are the alternatives that face you. Reformism or revolutionary Marxism. Attlee and Pollitt or the Revolutionary Communist Party.

RELIGION IN THE SOVIET UNION 2.

By PAUL DIXON

This is the concluding section of an article the first instalment of which appeared in our previous issue.

IT IS of interest to note that even during this period—the first since the Revolution—of undoubted religious persecution, the servile head of the Orthodox Church, the Acting-Patriarch Sergius, found it possible to declare, at a stage-managed interview with foreign correspondents, that: "There never has been, nor is there any persecution of religion in the U.S.S.R." The Orthodox Church was even then quite willing to put its services at the disposal of the Stalinist Bureaucracy in the same way as it had given them to Tsarism, only the Stalinist Bureaucracy did not want them!

BUT it had not long to wait. The Left zig-zag of the bureaucracy was inevitably followed by a turn to the

Right. The anti-religious processions which had been organised during the Church festivals of Christmas and Easter were abolished; the sale of Christmas trees was allowed once more; exiled priests were allowed to return to their parishes. But Stalin hastened to go even further than relaxing the pressure against the Church—he gave it rights that it had never previously enjoyed since the Revolution. In the New Constitution of the U.S.S.R. of 1936 priests were given the right to vote and to be elected in Soviet elections.

NEVERTHELESS the alliance between Stalin and the Orthodox Church was not yet finally cemented. In the period of mass purges of 1937

the attack upon the Church was for a short time resumed. Once again priests were arrested and banished and in January 1938 the "Society of Militant Atheists" accused the Clergy of being in the service of the military staffs of Fascist States, of disorganising the Army, of trying to wreck railways, etc., etc.

BUT this renewed attack was very speedily followed by an even more drastic swing to the Right, a swing which reached truly remarkable proportions after the German invasion of the U.S.S.R. Not only did all Government pressure upon the Church cease but all anti-religious propaganda also. The "Society of Militant Atheists" had built up a huge publishing concern which in ten years had published 1,700 books and issued magazines with a circulation of some 43 million copies. The whole undertaking was closed down upon the grounds of "paper shortage". At the same time school text-books were revised and anti-religious passages removed. Anti-religious tests for the Army and Civil Service were abolished.

IN return the Church entered enthusiastically into the service of the Stalinist Bureaucracy. The following message sent by Sergius, the Acting Patriarch, to Stalin, on the occasion of the 25th anniversary of the October Revolution (November 1942) gives eloquent proof of this:

"On this 25th anniversary of the Republic of the Soviets, in the name of our Clergy and of all the believers of the Russian Orthodox Church, faithful children of our Fatherland, I salute with cordiality and piety, in your person, the leader chosen by God, the leader of our military and cultural forces, who is guiding us to triumph over the barbarous invasion, to the prosperity of our country in peace, towards a radiant future for its peoples. May God bless by success and glory your valorous exploits for our Fatherland."

SIMILAR messages were sent on this, and all other suitable occasions by all the main dignitaries of the Orthodox Church. The War in fact brought with it nothing more nor less than the incorporation of the Russian Orthodox Church into the Stalinist Bureaucracy, with all the privileges that this entails. Some idea of these latter can be gleaned from the contribution made by ecclesiastical dignitaries to the Soviet war effort, as published in the Soviet Press. For instance, on December 27th, 1942, Alexander Alexandrovich Troitski, priest of the parish of Chubino, writes to Stalin announcing that he has already subscribed 30,000 rubles, "taken from my own savings" towards national defence. Now, he states, "I have decided to buy, with my savings, an aeroplane for the Red Army, and I am remitting for this great work the sum of a hundred thousand rubles. I have already paid in fifty thousand of them to the State Bank and I will remit the fifty thousand remaining on January 15th 1943." It must be noted that Alexander Alexandrovich Troitski is no highly placed ecclesiastic, but merely a parish priest. It must also be remembered that the average monthly wage of a Soviet worker, upon the eve of the present war, was 300 rubles. In other words this parish priest has been able to amass savings so vast that he is able to give from them to the State a sum equal to the total earnings of a worker for more than eight years. What must the income of the parish priest be like?

NOR is this merely an isolated instance. Many others exist of similar huge sums being given by the relatively lower ranks of the hierarchy of the Russian Orthodox Church. The priest of the Church of the Assumption, for instance, announces to Stalin on January 4th, 1943, that he has already paid into the State Bank, "All my personal savings, amounting to 273,000 rubles. I beg of you, Joseph Vissarionovich," he continues, "to

have built with this money two war planes, giving them the names of our heroic ancestors Alexander Nevski and Dmitri Donskoi."

THE higher up one goes in the Church hierarchy the greater become the sums subscribed. For instance, on January 5th, 1943, Alexis, Metropolitan of Leningrad, informs Stalin that his Bishopric has already subscribed 3,182,143 rubles; he is now adding to this a further 500,000 rubles! He finished up with the statement that "We pray to God that he may aid you in your great historic mission; to defend the honour, the liberty and the glory of our fatherland."

IN each case a polite, if somewhat brief, reply is sent by Stalin and published in the press. For instance, the above mentioned priest of the Church of the Assumption received the following answer:

"I thank you, Vladimir Alexandrovich, for your solicitude for the Red Army Air Force. Your desire shall be granted.

Receive my greetings,

J. Stalin."

NOR was it long before Stalin gave his loyal supporters of the Russian Orthodox Church an appropriate recompense. In the official Soviet Daily, "Izvestia", on September 5th, 1943, there appeared the announcement that Stalin had received leading Church dignitaries in the course of which "the Metropolitan Sergius informed the President of the Council of Peoples Commissars that the leading circles of the Orthodox Church had the intention of calling together in the near future a council of bishops with the object of electing the Patriarch of Moscow and of all the Russias, and of forming a Holy Synod alongside the Patriarch.

THE head of the Government, J. Stalin, showed himself sympathetic to this possibility and declared that there would be "no objections on the part of the Government."

ON September 8th, 1943, the Church had its wish—it elected a Patriarch,

for the first time since the Kerensky period. Nor was that all—an official link was established between the Russian Orthodox Church and the Soviet State. There exists to-day a "Council for the affairs of the Russian Orthodox Church attached to the Council of Peoples Commissars of the U.S.S.R." When in January of this year a Church Assembly met in order to elect a new Patriarch to replace Sergius who had recently died, it was greeted by a speech by G. G. Karpov, the President of this Council for the affairs of the Russian Orthodox Church. He informed the assembled ecclesiastics that:

"The Government of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics has authorised me to convey to the present High Assembly greetings in the name of the Government and best wishes for successful and fruitful work for the construction of the Highest Church Administration.

I am deeply convinced that the decisions of the Assembly will serve towards strengthening the Church and will be an important starting point in the future development of the activities of the Church, which are directed towards assisting the Soviet people in the attainment of the great historical tasks before it."

BUT Karpov does not stop here; he goes on to give a new appreciation of the past of the Church. Lenin, writing in 1901 ("Socialism and Religion") referred to "that shameful and accursed past when the Church was in feudal dependence on the State, and Russian citizens were in feudal dependence on the Established Church." Not so Karpov to-day. "The Russian Orthodox Church," he announced, "in the days of hard trial, which our Fatherland repeatedly underwent in the past, did not break its link with the people, it lived with their needs, their hopes, their wishes and contributed its mite to the common struggle . . . many leading members of the Church sacrificed their lives for the good of the Fatherland."

IT is hardly surprising under these circumstances that the Assembly was able to state in the message which it sent to the Soviet Government:

"Our Church thanks to God, lives with a full life, according to our laws and to the customs of the Church. In all its activities our Church meets with full co-operation in its needs from the Government and in first place from the Council for the affairs of the Russian Orthodox Church attached to the Sovnatom of the U.S.S.R."

AT every step now, the Orthodox Church hastens publicly to announce its support for Stalin and his policy. For instance, in "Izvestia" of February 17th of this year one meets the heading "The Most Holy Patriarch of Moscow and of all Russia on the decisions of the Crimea Conference." In it we read "The Church blesses these bright Christian wishes and hopes; and redoubles its prayers to 'the Lord of Hosts' and the 'Prince of Peace' (Isaiah, IX, 6.)" etc. etc.

THE priests of the other Churches existing in the U.S.S.R. do not lag behind their Orthodox brothers in their expressions of loyalty to Stalin and his Government. Thus Abdurakhman Rassolev, Mufti of the Central Spiritual Direction of the Mussulmans, sends his congratulations to Stalin on the occasion of the 26th Anniversary of the October Revolution and ends with these words:

"May Allah aid you to bring to a successful conclusion your glorious efforts for the liberation of the oppressed peoples. So may it be"

SIMILAR greetings are sent on the appropriate occasions by the Jewish Clergy. Thus Stalin has secured the backing not only of Christ, but of Allah and Jehovah also!

ALL accounts from the Soviet Union during the past few years agree that never since the Revolution has religion had such a hold over the mass of the population. We read of church services being attended by thousands, including young workers and soldiers of the Red Army. According to

"Soviet War News" of August 22nd 1941, there existed at that time 30,000 religious associations of all kinds in the Soviet Union. An English clergyman, Canon Widdrington, has estimated the number of supporters of the Orthodox Church alone to be some 60,000,000 persons.

THE conclusions to be drawn from all this are sufficiently obvious. In the first place there is no question of religion dying out in the Soviet Union as would be the case in a society which was advancing towards Socialism. Thus is the lie given, by this fact alone, to the Stalinist claims to have "finally and irrevocably" established Socialism in the Soviet Union. On the contrary, religion is maintaining and increasing its hold over broad sections of the Soviet masses. This is undoubtedly due to the increasingly capitalist nature of income distribution within the Soviet Union. Without the Bureaucracy having become a class, and with the basic economic conquest of the October Revolution as yet still in existence, the Bureaucracy has taken for itself an ever-mounting proportion of the national income of the Soviet State. The inequalities between the position of the bureaucrats, with their incomes of tens and hundreds of thousands of rubles and that of the workers with their few hundreds, have assumed a capitalist character. At the same time, despite all the empty boasting about "social security", the masses still live miserably and at the mercy of economic forces which neither they nor the Bureaucracy can control. True these uncontrolled economic forces no longer, as in the capitalist world, threaten the masses with unemployment, but they affect them in equally significant ways — through periods of famine or semi-famine, through the chronic shortage of goods of all kinds, a shortage which is continually assuming acute forms in one sphere or another, or through drastic forced movements of population. Moreover the very nature of the rule of the Bureaucracy itself

means that the lives and the liberty of the masses are constantly threatened by a force over which they have no control and the actions of which they cannot foresee.

THE social roots of religion, the fear of the uncontrolled social forces which dominate the masses in their daily lives, "the impotence of the exploited classes in struggle with the exploiters", (Lenin) not only still exist in the Soviet Union, they are being strengthened as the degeneration of the Bureaucracy proceeds and the burdens which it heaps upon the masses increase.

IN the second place there has ceased to exist any reason for a schism between the Bureaucracy and the Church. The bitter hatred of the clergy for the Bolshevik Party of Lenin and Trotsky which represented the toiling masses and was working for the establishment of a classless society is not extended to their degenerate Stalinist successors who represent a usurping caste anxious only for the maintenance and extension of its own position and privileges. With such a caste it is possible for the clergy to come to terms in the same way as they have been able to come to terms with ruling and exploiting classes throughout history. True, in the present case the terms that the clergy have received have not as yet been particularly good, though they steadily improve with time. But that is because even Stalin's Russia is still not yet capitalist Russia and the effects of the terrific blow that the October Revolution dealt at religion have not yet disappeared; broad sections of the masses still contemptuously turn their backs upon religion.

STALIN, therefore, does not, at least as yet, need the services of the Church so urgently as the Tsar did. But need them he does nevertheless. Inevitably, under the conditions of the rule of the Bureaucracy, the Church must command the support of broad sections of the population; Stalin cannot destroy this support by adminis-

trative means—he has tried and failed. He must therefore secure an agreement with this Church which he cannot crush in order to secure the hold of the Bureaucracy over the Soviet masses, for the nature of his regime does not permit the existence of an independent and potentially hostile force within the Soviet State.

AS we have indicated, such an agreement was not difficult to arrange. And to-day Stalin who in his interview with the First American Trade Union Delegation (September 1927) once stated "The Party cannot be neutral with regard to religion, and it conducts anti-religious propaganda against any and all religious prejudices because it stands for science, while religious prejudices go against science, since every religion is something contrary to science."—that same Stalin to-day is not neutral towards religion but gives it active, if as yet limited, support, for which he receives public thanks from the clergy.

THE Church then is to-day an integral, though subordinate part of the Stalinist state machine and the clergy enjoy the privileges accorded to the members of the Bureaucracy. With the continuation of Stalinist rule and of Stalinist degeneration we may expect the alliance not only to continue but, by and large, to be strengthened with increasing privileges granted to the clergy. This does not, of course, signify that there may not take place in the future conflicts, and sharp ones at that between the Bureaucracy and the Church. Such conflicts will take place between sections of the Bureaucracy itself and have taken place in the past between ruling classes and their Churches. But the general tendency will be one of increasing integration.

ONLY the overthrow of the Stalinist Bureaucracy and the restoration of direct proletarian rule in the Soviet Union can, in alliance with the World Revolution, destroy the new privileges which religion is gaining and pave the way for the destruction of religion itself.

THE RUSSIAN REVOLUTION

By LEON TROTSKY

THIS month marks the 28th Anniversary of the Russian Revolution. On this historic occasion, as a contribution to a greater understanding of this mighty achievement of the working class, we present the following lecture which was delivered in 1932 in Copenhagen, by Leon Trotsky—one of the most outstanding participants in the Russian Revolution, and its greatest historian.

THE first time that I was in Copenhagen was at the international Socialist Congress, and I took away with me the kindest recollections of your city. But that was over a quarter of a century ago. Since then, the water in the Ore-Sund and in the fjords has changed over and over again. And not the water alone. The war broke the backbone of the old European continent. The rivers and seas of Europe have washed down not a little blood. Mankind, and particularly European mankind, has gone through severe trials, has become more sombre and more brutal. Every kind of conflict has become more bitter. The world has entered into the period of the great change. Its most extreme expressions are *war* and *revolution*.

Before I pass on to the theme of my lecture, the Revolution, I consider it my duty to express my thanks to the organisers of this meeting, the organisation of social-democratic students. I do this as a political adversary. My lecture, it is true, pursues historico-scientific and not political lines. I want to emphasise this right from the beginning. But it is impossible to speak of a Revolution, out of which the Soviet Republic arose, without taking up a political position. As a lecturer I stand under the same banner as I did when I participated in the events of the Revolution.

Up to the war, the Bolshevik Party belonged to the Social-Democratic International. On August 4, 1914, the vote of the German social-democracy for the war credits put an end to this connection once and for all, and opened the period of uninterrupted

and irreconcilable struggle of Bolshevism against social-democracy. Does this mean that the organisers of this assembly made a mistake in inviting me to lecture? On this point the audience will be able to judge only after my lecture. To justify my acceptance of the kind invitation to present a report on the Russian Revolution, permit me to point to the fact that during the thirty-five years of my political life the question of the Russian Revolution has been the practical and theoretical axis of my thought and of my actions. The four years of my stay in Turkey were principally devoted to the historical elaboration of the problems of the Russian Revolution. Perhaps this fact gives me a certain right to hope that I will succeed, in part, at least, in helping not only friends and sympathisers but also opponents, better to understand many features of the Revolution which before had escaped their attention. At all events, the purpose of my lecture is: *to help to understand*. I do not intend to conduct propaganda for the Revolution nor to call upon you to join the Revolution. I intend to explain the Revolution.

Let us begin with some elementary sociological principles, which are doubtless familiar to you all, but as to which we must refresh our memory in approaching so complicated a phenomenon as the Revolution.

Human society is an historically-originated collaboration in the struggle for existence and the assurance of the maintenance of the generations. The character of a society is determined by the character of its

economy. The character of its economy is determined by its means of productive labour.

For every great epoch in the development of the productive forces there is a definite corresponding social régime. Every social régime until now has secured enormous advantages to the ruling class.

It is clear, therefore, that social régimes are not eternal. They arise historically, and then become fetters on further progress. "All that arises deserves to be destroyed."

But no ruling class has ever voluntarily and peacefully abdicated. In questions of life and death arguments based on reason have never replaced the argument of force. This may be sad, but it is so. It is not we that have made this world. We can do nothing but take it as it is.

THE MEANING OF REVOLUTION

Revolution means a change of the social order. It transfers the power from the hands of a class which has exhausted itself into those of another class, which is in the ascendant. Insurrection constitutes the sharpest and most critical moment in the struggle for power of two classes. The insurrection can lead to the real victory of the Revolution and to the establishment of a new order only when it is based on a progressive class, which is able to rally around it the overwhelming majority of the people.

As distinguished from the processes of nature, a revolution is made by human beings and through human beings. But in the course of revolution, too, men act under the influence of social conditions which are not freely chosen by them: but are handed down from the past and imperatively point out the road which they must follow. For this reason, and only for this reason, a revolution follows certain laws.

But human consciousness does not merely passively reflect its objective conditions. It is accustomed to react actively to them. At certain times this reaction assumes a tense, passion-

ate, mass character. The barriers of right and might are overthrown. The active intervention of the masses in historical events is in fact the most indispensable element of a revolution.

But even the stormiest activity can remain in the stage of demonstration or rebellion, without rising to the height of a revolution. The uprising of the masses must lead to the overthrow of the domination of one class and to the establishment of the domination of another. Only then have we achieved a revolution. A mass uprising is no isolated undertaking, which can be conjured up any time one pleases. It represents an objectively-conditioned element in the development of a revolution, just as a revolution represents an objectively-conditioned process in the development of society. But if the necessary conditions for the uprising exist, one must not simply wait passively, with open mouth: as Shakespeare says: "There is a tide in the affairs of men which, taken at the flood, leads on to fortune."

In order to sweep away the outlived social order, the progressive class must understand that its hour has struck, and set before itself the task of conquering power. Here opens the field of conscious revolutionary action, where foresight and calculation combine with will and courage. In other words: here opens the field of action of the Party.

THE "COUP D'ETAT"

The revolutionary Party unites within itself the flower of the progressive class. Without a Party which is able to orientate itself in its environment, appreciate the progress and rhythm of events, and early win the confidence of the masses, the victory of the proletarian revolution is impossible. These are the reciprocal relations between the objective and the subjective factors of insurrection and revolution.

In disputations, particularly theological ones, it is customary, as you know, for the opponents to discredit

scientific truth by driving it to an absurdity. This method is called in logic *Reductio ad absurdum*. We shall try to pursue the opposite method: that is, we shall start from an absurdity so as to approach the truth with all the greater safety. In any case, we cannot complain of lack of absurdities. Let us take one of the most recent, and crude.

The Italian writer Malaparte, who is something in the nature of a Fascist theoretician—there are such, too—not long ago, launched a book on the technique of the *coup d'état*. Naturally, the author devotes a not inconsiderable number of pages of his "Investigation" to the October upheaval.

In contradistinction to the "strategy" of Lenin which was always related to the social and political conditions of Russia in 1917, "the tactics of Trotsky," in Malaparte's words, "were, on the contrary, not at all limited by the general conditions of the country." This is the main idea of the book! Malaparte compels Lenin and Trotsky in the pages of his book, to carry on numerous dialogues, in which both participants together show as much profundity of mind as Nature put at the disposal of Malaparte alone. In answer to Lenin's considerations of the social and political prerequisites of the upheaval, Malaparte has his alleged Trotsky say, literally, "Your strategy requires far too many favourable circumstances; the insurrection needs nothing, it is self-sufficing." You hear: "The insurrection needs nothing!" That is precisely the absurdity which must help us to approach the truth. The author repeats persistently, that, in the October Revolution, it was not the strategy of Lenin but the tactics of Trotsky which won the victory. These tactics, according to his words, are a menace even now to the peace of the States of Europe. "The strategy of Lenin," I quote word for word, "does not constitute any immediate danger for the Governments of Europe. But the tactics of Trotsky do

constitute an actual and consequently a permanent danger to them." Still more concretely, "Put Poincaré in the place of Kerensky and the Bolshevik *coup d'état* of October, 1917, would have been just as successful." It is hard to believe that such a book has been translated into several languages and taken seriously.

We seek in vain to discover what is the necessity altogether of the historically-conditioned strategy of Lenin, if "Trotsky's tactics" can fulfil the same tasks in every situation. And why are successful revolutions so rare, if only a few technical recipes suffice for their success?

The dialogue between Lenin and Trotsky presented by the Fascist author is in content, as well as form, an insipid invention, from beginning to end. Of such inventions there are not a few floating around the world. For example, in Madrid there has been printed a book, "La Vida del Lenin" ("The Life of Lenin"), for which I am as little responsible as for the tactical recipes of Malaparte. The Madrid weekly, *Estampa*, published in advance whole chapters of this alleged book of Trotsky's on Lenin, which contain horrible desecrations of the memory of that man whom I valued and still value incomparably higher than anyone else among my contemporaries.

But let us leave the forgers to their fate. Old Wilhelm Liebknecht, the father of the unforgettable fighter and hero Karl Liebknecht, liked to say, "A revolutionary politician must provide himself with a thick skin." Doctor Stockmann even more expressively recommended that anyone who proposed to act in a manner contrary to the opinion of society should refrain from putting on new trousers. We will take note of the two good pieces of advice and proceed.

THE CAUSES OF OCTOBER

What questions does the October Revolution raise in the mind of a thinking man?

1. Why and how did this Revolution

take place? More concretely, why did the proletarian revolution conquer in one of the most backward countries of Europe?

2. What have been the results of the October Revolution? And finally,

3. Has the October Revolution stood the test?

The first question, as to the causes, can now be answered more or less exhaustively. I have attempted to do this in great detail in my "History of the Revolution". Here I can only formulate the most important conclusions.

The fact that the proletariat reached power for the first time in such a backward country as the former Tsarist Russia seems mysterious only at first glance; in reality, it is fully in accord with historical law. It could have been predicted and it was predicted. Still more, on the basis of the prediction of this fact the revolutionary Marxists built up their strategy long before the decisive events.

The first and most general explanation is: Russia is a backward country, but only a part of world economy, only an element of the capitalist world system. In this sense Lenin solved the enigma of the Russian Revolution with the lapidary formula, "The chain broke at its weakest link."

A crude illustration: the Great War, the result of the contradictions of world imperialism, drew into its maelstrom countries of *different* stages of development, but made the *same* claims on all the participants. It is clear that the burdens of the war would be particularly intolerable for the most backward countries. Russia was the first to be compelled to leave the field. But to tear itself away from the war, the Russian people had to overthrow the ruling classes. In this way the chain of war broke at its weakest link.

Still war is not a catastrophe coming from outside, like an earthquake, but as old Clausewitz said, the continuation of policies by other means. In the last war, the main tendencies of the imperialistic system of

"peace"-time only expressed themselves more crudely. The higher the general forces of production, the tenser the competition on the world markets, the sharper the antagonisms and the madder the race for armaments, so much the more difficult it became for the weaker participants. That is precisely why the backward countries assumed the first places in the succession of collapses. The chain of world capitalism always tends to break at its weakest link.

If, as a result of exceptional or exceptionally unfavourable circumstances—for example, let us say, a successful military intervention from the outside or irreparable mistakes on the part of the Soviet Government itself—capitalism should arise again on the immeasurably wide Soviet territory, its historical inadequacy would at the same time have inevitably arisen and such capitalism would in turn soon become the victim of the same contradictions which caused its explosion in 1917. No tactical recipes could have called the October Revolution into being, if Russia had not carried it within its body. The revolutionary Party in the last analysis can claim only the rôle of an obstetrician, who is compelled to resort to a Caesarean operation.

One might say in answer to this: "Your general considerations may adequately explain why old Russia had to suffer shipwreck, that country where backward capitalism and an impoverished peasantry were crowned by a parasitic nobility and a decaying monarchy. But in the simile of the chain and its weakest link there is still missing the key to the real enigma: How could a *socialist* revolution succeed in a *backward* country? History knows of more than a few illustrations of the decay of countries and civilisations accompanied by the collapse of the old classes for which no progressive successors had been found. The breakdown of old Russia should, at first sight, have changed the country into a capitalist colony rather than into a Socialist State."

This objection is very interesting. It leads us directly to the kernel of the whole problem. And yet, this objection is erroneous; I might say, it lacks internal symmetry. On the one hand, it starts from an exaggerated conception of the backwardness of Russia; on the other, from a false theoretical conception of the phenomenon of historical backwardness in general.

Living beings including man, of course, go through similar stages of development in accordance with their ages. In a normal five-year-old child, we find a certain correspondence between the weight, size and the internal organs. But it is quite otherwise with human consciousness. In contrast with anatomy and physiology, psychology, both individual and collective, is distinguished by exceptional capacity of absorption, flexibility and elasticity; therein consists the aristocratic advantage of man over his nearest zoological relatives, the apes. The absorptive and flexible psyche confers on the so-called social "organisms," as distinguished from the real, that is biological organisms, an exceptional variability of internal structure as a necessary condition for historical progress. In the development of nations and States, particularly capitalist ones, there is neither similarity nor regularity. Different stages of civilisation even polar opposites, approach and intermingle with one another in the life of one and the same country.

Let us not forget that historical backwardness is a *relative* concept. There being both backward and progressive countries, there is also a reciprocal influencing of one by the other; there is the pressure of the progressive countries on the backward ones; there is the necessity for the backward countries to catch up with the progressive ones, to borrow their technology and science, etc. In this way arises the *combined type of development*: features of backwardness are combined with the last world in world technique and in world thought. Finally, the countries historically

backward, in order to escape from their backwardness, are often compelled to rush ahead of the others.

The flexibility of the collective consciousness makes it possible under certain conditions to achieve the result, in the social arena, which in individual psychology is called "overcoming the consciousness of inferiority." In this sense we can say that the October Revolution was an heroic means whereby the people of Russia were able to overcome their own economic and cultural inferiority.

But let us pass over from these historico-philosophic, perhaps somewhat too abstract generalisations, and put the same question in concrete form, that is, within the cross-section of living economic facts. The backwardness of Russia expressed itself most clearly at the beginning of the twentieth century in the fact that industry occupied a small place in that country in comparison with agriculture, the city in comparison with the village, the proletariat in comparison with the peasantry. Taken as a whole, this meant a low productivity of the national labour. Suffice it to say that on the eve of the war, when Tsarist Russia had reached the peak of its well-being, the national income was eight to ten times lower than in the United States. This expresses, numerically, the "amplitude" of its backwardness, if the word "amplitude" can be used at all in connection with backwardness.

At the same time, however, the law of combined development expresses itself in the economic field at every step, in simple as well as in complex phenomena. Almost without highways Russia was compelled to build railroads. Without having gone through the European artisan and manufacturing stages, Russia passed directly to mechanised production. To jump over intermediate stages is the way of backward countries.

While peasant agriculture often remained at the level of the seventeenth century, Russia's industry, if not in

scope, at least in type, reached the level of the progressive countries and in some respects rushed ahead of them. It suffices to say that the gigantic enterprises, with over a thousand workers each, employed, in the United States less than 18 per cent. of the total number of industrial workers, in Russia over 41 per cent. This fact is hard to reconcile with the conventional conception of the economic backwardness of Russia. It does not, on the other hand, refute this backwardness, but dialectically complements it.

The same contradictory character was shown by the class structure of the country. The finance capital of Europe industrialised Russian economy at an accelerated tempo. The industrial bourgeoisie forthwith assumed a large-scale capitalistic and anti-popular character. The foreign stockholders moreover, lived outside of the country. The workers, on the other hand, were naturally Russians. Against a numerically weak Russian bourgeoisie, which had no national roots, there stood confronting it a relatively strong proletariat, with strong roots in the depths of the people.

The revolutionary character of the proletariat was furthered by the fact that Russia in particular, as a backward country, under the compulsion of catching up with its opponents, had not been able to work out its own social or political conservatism. The most conservative country of Europe, in fact of the entire world, is considered, and correctly, to be the oldest capitalist country—England. The European country freest of conservatism would in all probability be Russia.

But the young, fresh, determined proletariat of Russia still constituted only a tiny minority of the nation. The reserves of its revolutionary power lay outside of the proletariat itself—in the peasantry, living in half-serfdom; and in the oppressed nationalities.

THE PEASANTRY

The subsoil of the Revolution was the agrarian question. The old feudal-monarchic system became doubly intolerable under the conditions of the new capitalist exploitation. The peasant communal areas amounted to some 140 million dessiatines.* But 30,000 large landowners, whose average holdings were over 2,000 dessiatines, owned altogether 7 million dessiatines, that is as much as some 10 million peasant population. *These statistics of land tenure constituted a ready-made programme of agrarian revolt.*

The nobleman, Bokorkin, wrote in 1917 to the dignitary, Rodsianko, the chairman of the last municipal Duma, "I am a landowner and I cannot get it into my head that I must lose my land, and for an unbelievable purpose to boot, for the experiment of the socialist doctrine." But it is precisely the task of revolutions to accomplish that which the ruling classes cannot get into their heads.

In Autumn, 1917, almost the whole country was the scene of peasant revolts. Of the 624 departments of old Russia, 482, that is, 77 per cent., were affected by the movement! The reflection of the burning villages lit up the arena of the insurrections in the cities.

But you may argue the war of the peasants against the landowners is one of the classic elements of bourgeois revolution, and not at all of the proletarian revolution!

Perfectly right, I reply—so it was in the past. But the inability of capitalist society to survive in an historically backward country was expressed precisely in the fact that the peasant insurrections did not drive the bourgeois classes of Russia forward, but on the contrary, drove them back for good into the camp of reaction. If the peasantry did not want to be completely ruined, there was nothing else left for it but to join the industrial proletariat. This revolutionary join-

* One dessiatine equals 1.40 acres.

ing of the two oppressed classes was foreseen by the genius of Lenin and prepared for by him long before.

Had the agrarian question been courageously solved by the bourgeoisie, the proletariat of Russia would not, obviously, have been able to arrive at the power in 1917. But the Russian bourgeoisie, covetous and cowardly, too late on the scene, prematurely a victim of senility, dared not lift a hand against feudal property. But thereby it delivered the power to the proletariat and together with it the right to dispose of the destinies of bourgeois society.

In order for the Soviet State to come into existence, it was consequently necessary for two factors of different historical nature to collaborate: the peasant war, that is, to say a movement which is characteristic of the dawn of bourgeois development, and the proletarian insurrection, or uprising which announces the decline of the bourgeois movement. There we have the *combined* character of the Russian Revolution.

Once let the Bear—the peasant—stand up on his hind feet, he becomes terrible in his wrath. But he is unable to give conscious expression to his indignation. He needs a leader. For the first time in the history of the world, the insurrectionary peasants found a faithful leader in the person of the proletariat.

Four million workers in industry and transport leading a hundred million peasants. That was the natural and inevitable reciprocal relation between proletariat and peasantry in the Revolution.

THE NATIONAL QUESTION

The second revolutionary reserve of the proletariat was formed by the oppressed nationalities, who moreover were also predominantly peasants. Closely allied with the historical backwardness of the country is the extensive character of the development of the State, which spread out like a grease spot from the centre at

Moscow to the circumference. In the East, it subjugated the still more backward peoples, basing itself upon them, in order to stifle the more developed nationalities of the West. To the 70 million Great Russians, who constituted the main mass of the population, were added gradually some 90 millions of "other races."

In this way arose the Empire, in whose composition the ruling nationality made up only 43 per cent. of the population, while the remaining 57 per cent. consisted of nationalities of varying degrees of civilisation and legal deprivation. The national pressure was incomparably cruder in Russia than in the neighbouring States, and not only than those beyond the western Frontier, but beyond the eastern one too. This conferred on the national problem an enormous explosive force.

The Russian liberal bourgeoisie was not willing in either the national or the agrarian question, to go beyond certain ameliorations of the régime of oppression and violence. The "democratic" Governments of Miliukov and Kerensky, which reflected the interests of the Great Russian bourgeoisie and bureaucracy, actually hastened to impress upon the discontented nationalities, in the course of the eight months of their existence, "You will obtain only what you can get by force."

The inevitability of the development of the centrifugal national movement had been early taken into consideration by Lenin. The Bolshevik Party struggled obstinately for years for the right of self-determination for nations, that is, for the right of full secession. Only through this courageous position on the national question could the Russian proletariat gradually win the confidence of the oppressed peoples. The national independence movement, as well as the agrarian movement, necessarily turned against the official democracy, strengthened the proletariat, and poured into the stream of the October upheaval.

THE PERMANENT REVOLUTION

In these ways the riddle of the proletarian upheaval in an historically backward country loses its veil of mystery.

Marxist revolutionaries predicted, long before the events the march of the Revolution and the historical rôle of the young Russian proletariat. I may be permitted to repeat here a passage from a work of my own in 1905:

"In an economically backward country the proletariat can arrive at power earlier than in a capitalistically advanced one. . . .

"The Russian Revolution creates the conditions under which the power can (and in the event of a successful revolution must) be transferred to the proletariat, even before the policy of bourgeois liberalism receives the opportunity of unfolding its genius for government to its full extent

"The destiny of the most elementary revolutionary interests of the peasantry . . . is bound up with the destiny of the whole revolution, that is, with the destiny of the proletariat. The proletariat, once arrived at power, will appear before the peasantry as the liberating class.

"The proletariat enters into the Government as the revolutionary representative of the nation, as the acknowledged leader of the people in the struggle with absolutism and the barbarism of serfdom.

"The proletarian régime will have to stand from the very beginning for the solution of the agrarian question, with which the question of the destiny of tremendous masses of the population of Russia is bound up."

I have taken the liberty of quoting these passages as evidence that the theory of the October Revolution which I am presenting to-day is no casual improvisation and was not constructed *ex post facto* under the pressure of events. No, in the form of a political prognosis it preceded the October upheaval by a long time. You

will agree that a theory is in general valuable only in so far as it helps to foresee the course of development and influences it purposively. Therein, in general terms, is the invaluable importance of Marxism as a weapon of social and historical orientation. I am sorry that the narrow limits of the lecture do not permit me to enlarge upon the above quotation materially. I will therefore content myself with a brief résumé of the whole work which dates from 1905.

In accordance with its immediate tasks, the Russian Revolution is a bourgeois revolution. But the Russian bourgeoisie is anti-revolutionary. The victory of the Revolution is therefore possible only as a victory of the proletariat. But the victorious proletariat will not stop at the programme of bourgeois democracy; it will go on to the programme of Socialism. The Russian Revolution will become the first stage of the Socialist world revolution.

This was the theory of the *permanent revolution* formulated by me in 1905 and since then exposed to the severest criticism under the name of "Trotskyism."

To be more exact, it is only a part of this theory. The other part, which is particularly timely now, states:

The present productive forces have long outgrown their national limits. A Socialist society is not feasible within national boundaries. Significant as the economic successes of an isolated workers' State may be, the programme of "Socialism in one country" is a petty-bourgeois Utopia. Only a European and then a world federation of Socialist republics can be the real arena for a harmonious Socialist society.

To-day, after the test of events, I see less reason than ever to discard this theory.

THE BOLSHEVIK PARTY

After all that has been said above, is it still worth while to recall the Fascist writer, Malaparte, who ascribes to me

tactics which are independent of strategy and amount to a series of technical recipes for insurrection, applicable in all latitudes and longitudes? It is a good thing that the name of the luckless theoretician of the *coup d'état* makes it easy to distinguish him from the victorious practitioner of the *coup d'état*; no one therefore runs the risk of confusing Malaparte with Bonaparte.

Without the armed insurrection of 7th November, 1917, the Soviet State would not be in existence. But the insurrection itself did not drop from Heaven. A series of historical prerequisites was necessary for the October Revolution.

1. The rotting away of the old ruling classes—the nobility, the monarchy, the bureaucracy.

2. The political weakness of the bourgeoisie, which had no roots in the masses of the people.

3. The revolutionary character of the agrarian question.

4. The revolutionary character of the problem of the oppressed nationalities.

5. The significant social burdens weighing on the proletariat.

To these organic preconditions must be added certain highly important connected conditions.

6. The Revolution of 1905 was the great school, or in Lenin's phrase, "the dress rehearsal" of the Revolution of 1917. The Soviets, as the irreplaceable organisational form of the proletarian united front in the Revolution were created for the first time in the year 1905.

7. The imperialist war sharpened all the contradictions, tore the backward masses out of their immobility, and thus prepared the grandiose scale of the catastrophe.

But all these conditions, which fully sufficed for the *outbreak of the Revolution*, were insufficient to assure the *victory of the proletariat* in the Revolution. For this victory one condition more was necessary.

8. The Bolshevik Party.

When I enumerate this condition last in the series, I do it only because it follows the logical sequence, and not because I assign the last place in the order of importance to the Party

No, I am far from such a thought. The liberal bourgeoisie can seize power and has seized it more than once as the result of struggles in which it took no part; it possesses organs of seizure which are admirably adapted to the purpose. But the working masses are in a different position; they have long been accustomed to give, and not to take. They work, are patient as long as they can be, hope, lose patience, rise up and struggle, die, bring victory to others, are betrayed, fall into despondency bow their necks, and work again. Such is the history of the masses of the people under all régimes. To be able to take the power firmly and surely into its hands the proletariat needs a Party, which far surpasses other parties in the clarity of its thought and in its revolutionary determination.

The Bolshevik Party, which has been described more than once and with complete justification as the most revolutionary Party in the history of mankind, was the living condensation of the modern history of Russia, of all that was dynamic in it. The overthrow of Tsarism had long been recognised as the necessary condition for the development of economy and culture. But for the solution of this task, the forces were insufficient. The bourgeoisie feared the Revolution. The intelligentsia tried to bring the peasant to his feet. The moujik, incapable of generalising his own miseries and his aims, left this appeal unanswered. The intelligentsia armed itself with dynamite. A whole generation was wasted in this struggle.

On March 1st 1887, Alexander Ulianov carried out the last of the great terrorist plots. The attempted assassination of Alexander III failed. Ulianov and the other participants were executed. The attempt to make

chemical preparation take the place of a revolutionary class came to grief. Even the most heroic intelligentsia is nothing without the masses. Ulijanov's younger brother Vladimir, the future Lenin, the greatest figure of Russian history, grew up under the immediate impression of these facts and conclusion. Even in his early youth he placed himself on the foundations of Marxism, and turned his face toward the proletariat. Without losing sight of the village for a moment he sought the way of the peasantry through the workers. Inheriting from his revolutionary predecessors their capacity for self-sacrifice, and their willingness to go to the limit, Lenin at an early age, became the teacher of the new generation of the intelligentsia and of the advanced workers. In strikes and street fights, in prisons and in exile, the workers received the necessary tempering. They needed the searchlight of Marxism to light up their historical road in the darkness of absolutism.

Among the émigrés the first Marxist group arose in 1883. In 1898 at a secret meeting, the foundation of the Russian Social-Democratic Workers' Party was proclaimed (we all called ourselves Social-Democrats in those days). In 1903 occurred the split between Bolsheviks and Mensheviks, and in 1912 the Bolshevik fraction finally became an independent Party.

It learned to recognise the class mechanics of society in its struggles during the events of twelve years (1905-1917). It educated groups equally capable of initiative and of subordination. The discipline of its revolutionary action was based on the unity of its doctrine, on the tradition of common struggles and on confidence in its tested leadership.

Such was the Party in 1917. Despised by the official "public opinion" and the paper thunder of the intelligentsia Press, it adapted itself to the movement of the masses. It kept firmly in hand the lever of control in the factories and regiments.

More and more the peasant masses turned toward it. If we understand by "nation" not the privileged heads, but the majority of the people, that is, the workers and peasants, then the Bolsheviks became dominant during the course of 1917 a truly national Russian Party.

In September, 1917, Lenin, who was compelled to keep in hiding, gave the signal, "The crisis is ripe, the hour of the insurrection has approached." He was right. The ruling classes faced with the problems of the war, the land and liberation, had got into inextricable difficulties. The bourgeoisie positively lost its head. The democratic parties, the Mensheviks and social-revolutionaries dissipated the last remaining bit of the confidence of the masses in them by their support of the imperialist war, by their policy of compromise and concessions to the bourgeois and feudal property-owners. The awakened army no longer wanted to fight for the alien aims of imperialism. Disregarding democratic advice, the peasantry smoked the landowners out of their estates. The oppressed nationalities of the far boundaries rose up against the bureaucracy of Petrograd. In the most important workers' and soldiers' Soviets the Bolsheviks were dominant. The ulcer was ripe. It needed a cut of the lancet.

Only under these social and political conditions was the insurrection possible. And thus it also became inevitable. But there is no playing around with insurrection. Woe to the surgeon who is careless in the use of the lance! Insurrection is an art. It has its laws and its rules.

The Party faced the realities of the October insurrection with cold calculation and with ardent resolution. Thanks to this it conquered almost without victims. Through the victorious Soviets the Bolsheviks placed themselves at the head of a country which occupies one-sixth of the surface of the globe.

The majority of my present listeners, it is to be presumed, did not occupy

themselves at all with politics in 1917. So much the better. Before the young generation lies much that is interesting, if not always easy. But the representatives of the old generation in this hall will certainly well remember how the seizure of power by the Bolsheviks was received: as a curiosity, as a misunderstanding, as a scandal; most often as a nightmare which was bound to disappear with the first rays of dawn. The Bolsheviks would last twenty-four hours, a week, a month, a year. The period had to be constantly lengthened. The rulers of the whole world armed themselves against the first workers' State: civil war was stirred up, interventions again and again, blockade. So passed year after year. Meantime, history has recorded fifteen years of existence of the Soviet power.

FIFTEEN YEARS OF THE SOVIET REGIME

"Yes," some opponent will say, "the adventure of October has shown itself to be much more substantial than many of us thought. Perhaps it was not even quite an 'adventure.' Nevertheless, the question—What was achieved at this high cost?—retains its full force. Have the dazzling promises which the Bolsheviks proclaimed on the eve of the Revolution been fulfilled?"

Before we answer the hypothetical opponent let us note that the question in and of itself is not new. On the contrary, it followed right at the heels of the October Revolution, since the day of its birth.

The French journalist, Claude Anet, who was in Petrograd during the Revolution, wrote as early as 27th October, 1917:

"The maximalists [which was what the French called the Bolsheviks at that time] have seized power and the great day has come. At last, I say to myself, I shall behold the realisation of the socialist Eden which has been promised us for so many years. . . . Admirable adventure! A

privileged position! And so on and so forth. What sincere hatred was behind the ironical salutation! The very morning after the capture of the Winter Palace, the reactionary journalist hurried to register his claim for a ticket of admission to Eden. Fifteen years have passed since the Revolution. With all the greater absence of ceremony our enemies reveal their malicious joy over the fact that the land of the Soviets, even to-day, bears but little resemblance to a realm of general well-being. Why then the Revolution and why the sacrifices?

Permit me to express the opinion that the contradictions, difficulties, mistakes and insufficiency of the Soviet régime are no less familiar to me than to anyone. I, personally, have never concealed them, whether in speech or in writing. I have believed and I still believe that revolutionary politics as distinguished from conservative, cannot be built up on concealment. "To speak out that which is" must be the highest principle of the workers' State.

But in criticism, as well as in creative activity, perspective is necessary. Subjectivism is a poor adviser, particularly in great questions. Periods of time must be commensurate with the tasks, and not with individual caprices. Fifteen years! How long is that in the life of one man! Within that period not a few of our generation were borne to their graves and those who remain have added innumerable grey hairs. But these same fifteen years—what an insignificant period in the life of a people! Only a minute on the clock of history.

Capitalism required centuries to establish itself in the struggle against the Middle Ages, to raise the level of science and technique, to build railroads, to make use of electric current. And then? Then humanity was thrust by capitalism into the hell of wars and crises. But Socialism is allowed by its enemies, that is, by the adherents of capitalism, only a decade

and a half to install on earth Paradise, with all modern improvements. Such obligations were never assumed by us.

The processes of great changes must be measured by scales which are commensurate with them. I do not know if the Socialist society will resemble the biblical Paradise. I doubt it. But in the Soviet Union there is no Socialism as yet. The situation that prevails there is one of transition, full of contradictions, burdened with the heavy inheritance of the past, and in addition is under the hostile pressure of the capitalistic States. The October Revolution has proclaimed the principles of the new society. The Soviet Republic has shown only the first stage of its realisation. Edison's first lamp was very bad. We must learn how to discern the future.

But the unhappiness that rains on living men! Do the results of the Revolution justify the sacrifice which it has caused? A fruitless question, rhetorical through and through; as if the processes of history admitted of a balance sheet accounting! We might just as well ask, in view of the difficulties and miseries of human existence, "Does it pay to be born altogether?" To which Heine wrote, "And the fool expects an answer." . . . Such melancholy reflections have not hindered mankind from being born and from giving birth. Even in these days of unexampled world crisis, suicides fortunately constitute an unimportant percentage. But peoples never resort to suicide. When their burdens are intolerable, they seek a way out through revolution.

Besides, who are they who are indignant over the victims of the socialist upheaval? Most often those who have paved the way for the victims of the imperialist war, and have glorified or, at least, easily accommodated themselves to it. It is now our turn to ask, "Has the war justified itself? What has it given us? What has it taught?"

The reactionary historian, Hippolyte Taine, in his eleven-volume pam-

phlet against the great French Revolution describes, not without malicious joy, the sufferings of the French people in the years of the dictatorship of the Jacobins and afterward. The worst off were the lower classes of the cities, the plebians, who as "sansculottes" had given of their best for the Revolution. Now they or their wives stood in line throughout cold nights to return empty-handed to the extinguished family earth. In the tenth year of the Revolution, Paris was poorer than before it began. Carefully selected, artificially pieced-out facts serve Taine as justification for his destructive verdict against the Revolution. Look, the plebians wanted to be dictators and have precipitated themselves into misery!

It is hard to conceive of a more uninspired piece of moralising. First of all, if the Revolution precipitated the country into misery, the blame lay principally on the ruling classes who drove the people to revolution. Second, the great French Revolution did not exhaust itself in hungry lines before bakeries. The whole of modern France, in many respects the whole of modern civilisation, arose out of the bath of the French Revolution!

In the course of the Civil War in the United States in the '60's of the past century, 50,000 men were killed. Can these sacrifices be justified?

From the standpoint of the American slave-holder and the ruling classes of Great Britain who marched with them—no! From the standpoint of the negro or of the British working man—absolutely. And from the standpoint of the development of humanity as a whole—there can be no doubt whatever. Out of the Civil War of the '60's came the present United States with its unbounded practical initiative, its rationalised technique, its economic energy. On these achievements of Americanism humanity will build the new society.

The October Revolution penetrated deeper than any of its predecessors into the Holy of Holies of society—

into its property relations. So much the longer time is necessary to reveal the creative consequences of the Revolution in all spheres of life. But the general direction of the upheaval is already clear: the Soviet Republic has no reason whatever to bow its head before the capitalist accusers and speak the language of apology.

In order to appreciate the new régime from the stand-point of human development, one must first answer the question, "How does social progress express itself and how can it be measured?"

THE BALANCE SHEET OF OCTOBER

The deepest, the most objective and the most indisputable criterion says—progress can be measured by the growth of the productivity of social labour. From this angle the estimate of the October Revolution is already given by experience. The principle of socialistic organisation has for the first time in history shown its ability to record results in production unheard of in a short space of time.

The curve of the industrial development of Russia, expressed in crude index numbers, is as follows, taking 1913, the last year before the war as 100. The year 1920, the highest point of the civil war, is also the lowest point in industry—only 25, that is to say, a quarter of the pre-war production. In 1925 it rose to 75, that is, three-quarters of the pre-war production; in 1929 about 200, in 1932 300, that is to say, three times as much as on the eve of the war.

The picture becomes even more striking in the light of the international index. From 1925 to 1932 the industrial production of Germany has diminished one-and-a-half times, in America twice; in the Soviet Union it has increased four fold. These figures speak for themselves.

I have no intention of denying or concealing the seamy side of Soviet economy. The results of the industrial index are extraordinarily influenced by the unfavourable develop-

ment of agriculture, that is to say, in the domain which essentially has not yet risen to Socialist methods, but at the same time has been led on the road to collectivisation with insufficient preparation, bureaucratically rather than technically and economically. This is a great question, which however goes beyond the limits of my lecture.

The index numbers cited require another important reservation. The indisputable and, in their way, splendid results of Soviet industrialisation demand a further economic checking-up from the standpoint of the mutual adaptation of the various elements of economy, their dynamic equilibrium and consequently their productive capacity. Here great difficulties and even setbacks are inevitable. Socialism does not arise in its perfected form from the Five-Year Plan, like Minerva from the head of Jupiter, or Venus from the foam of the sea. Before it are decades of persistent work of mistakes, corrections and reorganisation. Moreover, let us not forget that Socialist construction in accordance with its very nature can only reach perfection on the international arena. But even the most favourable economic balance sheet of the results so far obtained could reveal only the incorrectness of the preliminary calculations, the faults of planning and errors of direction. It could in no way refute the empirically firmly established fact—the possibility, with the aid of Socialist methods, of raising the productivity of collective labour to an unheard of height. This conquest, of world historical importance, cannot be taken away from us by anybody or anything.

After what has been said it is scarcely worth while to spend time on the complaints that the October Revolution has brought Russia to the downfall of its civilisation. That is the voice of the disquieted ruling houses and the salons. The feudal-bourgeois "civilisation" overthrown by the proletarian upheaval was only barbarism with decorations *a la*

Talmi. While it remained inaccessible to the Russian people, it brought little that was new to the treasury of mankind.

But even with respect to this civilisation, which is so bemoaned by the white émigrés, we must put the question more precisely—in what sense has it been destroyed? Only in one sense; the monopoly of a small minority in the treasures of civilisation has been done away with. But everything of cultural value in the old Russian civilisation has remained untouched. The Huns of Bolshevism have shattered neither the conquests of the mind nor the creations of art. On the contrary, they carefully collected the monuments of human creativeness and arranged them in model order. The culture of the monarchy, the nobility and the bourgeoisie has now become the culture of the historic museums.

The people visit these museums eagerly. But they do not live in them. They learn. They construct. The fact alone that the October Revolution taught the Russian people, the dozens of peoples of Tsarist Russia, to read and write, stands immeasurably higher than the whole former hot-house Russian civilisation.

The October Revolution has laid the foundations for a new civilisation, which is designed, not for a select few, but for all. This is felt by the masses of the whole world. Hence their sympathy for the Soviet Union, which is as passionate as once was their hatred for Tsarist Russia.

Human language is an irreplaceable instrument not only for giving names to events but also for their valuation. By filtering out that which is accidental, episodic, artificial, it absorbs into itself that which is essential, characteristic, of full weight. Notice with what sensibility the languages of civilised nations have distinguished two epochs in the development of Russia. The culture of the nobility brought into world currency such barbarisms as *Tsar*, *Cossack*, *pogrom*, *nagaika*. You know these words and what they

mean. The October Revolution introduced into the language of the world such words as *Bolshevik*, *Soviet*, *Kolkhoz*, *Gosplan*, *Piatiletka*. Here practical linguistics holds its historical supreme court!

The most profound meaning of the Revolution, but the hardest to submit to immediate measurement, consists in the fact that it forms and tempers the character of the people. The conception of the Russian people as slow, passive, melancholy, mystical, is widely spread and not accidental. It has its roots in the past. But in Western countries up to the present time those far-reaching changes which have been introduced into the character of the people by the Revolution, have not been sufficiently considered. Could it be otherwise?

Every man with experience of life can recall the picture of some youth that he has known, receptive, lyrical, all too susceptible, who later becomes suddenly under the influence of a powerful moral impetus, stronger, better balanced and hardly recognisable. In the development of a whole nation, such moral transformations are wrought by the Revolution.

The February insurrection against the autocracy, the struggle against the nobility, against the imperialist war, for peace for land, for national equality, the October insurrection, the overthrow of the bourgeoisie and of those parties which supported it, sought agreements with the bourgeoisie, three years of civil war on a front of 5,000 miles, the years of blockade, hunger, misery and epidemics, the years of tense economic reconstruction, of new difficulties and renunciations—these make a hard but a good school. A heavy hammer smashes glass, but forges steel. The hammer of the Revolutions is forging the steel of the people's character.

"Who will believe," wrote a Tsarist general, Zalewski, with indignation, shortly after the upheaval, "that a porter or a watchman suddenly becomes a chief justice, a hospital attendant the director of a hospital,

a barber an officeholder, a corporal a commander-in-chief, a day worker a mayor, a locksmith the director of a factory?"

"Who will believe it?" But it had to be believed. They could do nothing else but believe it, when the corporals defeated generals, when the mayor—the former day worker—broke the resistance of the old bureaucracy, the wagon-greaser put the transportation system in order, the locksmith as director put the industrial equipment into working condition. "Who will believe it?" Let anyone only try not to believe it.

For an explanation of the extraordinary persistence which the masses of the people of the Soviet Union are showing throughout the years of the Revolution, many foreign observers rely, in accord with ancient habit, on the "passivity" of the Russian character. Gross anachronism! The revolutionary masses endure privations patiently but not passively. With their own hands they are creating a better future and they are determined to create it at any cost. Let the enemy class only attempt to impose his will from the outside on these patient masses! No, better, he should not try!

THE REVOLUTION AND ITS PLACE IN HISTORY

Let me now in closing attempt to ascertain the place of the October Revolution, not only in the history of Russia, but in the history of the world. During the year 1917, in a period of eight months, two historical curves intersect. The February upheaval—that belated echo of the great struggles which had been carried out in past centuries on the territories of Holland, England, France, nearly all over Continental Europe—takes its place in the series of bourgeois revolutions. The October Revolution proclaimed and opened the domination of the proletariat. World capitalism suffered its first great defeat on Russian territory. The chain broke at its weakest link. But it was the chain that broke, and not only the link.

Capitalism has outlived itself as a

world system. It has ceased to fulfil its essential function, the raising of the level of human power and human wealth. Humanity cannot remain stagnant at the level which it has reached. Only a powerful increase in productive force and a sound, planned, that is, Socialist organisation of production and distribution can assure humanity—all humanity—of a decent standard of life and at the same time give it the precious feeling of freedom with respect to its own economy. Freedom in two senses—first of all man will no longer be compelled to devote the greater part of his life to physical toil. Second, he will no longer be dependent on the laws of the market, that is, on the blind and obscure forces which work behind his back. He will build his economy freely, according to plan, with compass in hand. This time it is a question of subjecting the anatomy of society to the X-ray through and through of disclosing all its secrets and subjecting all its functions to the reason and the will of collective humanity. In this sense, Socialism must become a new step in the historical advance of mankind. Before our ancestor, who first armed himself with a stone axe, the whole of nature represented a conspiracy of secret and hostile forces. Since then, the natural sciences hand in hand with practical technology, have illuminated nature down to its most secret depths. By means of electrical energy, the physicist passes judgment on the nucleus of the atom. The hour is not far when science will easily solve the task of the alchemists, and turn manure into gold and gold into manure. Where the demons and furies of nature once raged, now reigns ever more courageously the industrious will of man.

But while he wrestled victoriously with nature, man built up his relations to order men blindly almost like the bee or the ant. Slowly and very haltingly he approached the problems of human society. The Reformation represented the first victory of bourgeois individualism and rationalism in a domain which had been ruled by

dead tradition. From the church, critical thought went on to the State. Born in the struggle with absolutism and the mediaeval estates, the doctrine of the sovereignty of the people and of the rights of man and the citizen grew stronger. Thus arose the system of parliamentarism. Critical thought penetrated into the domain of government administration. The political rationalism of democracy was the highest achievement of the revolutionary bourgeoisie.

But between nature and the State stands economic life. Technical science liberated man from the tyranny of the old elements—earth, water, fire and air—only to subject him to its own tyranny. Man ceased to be a slave to nature, to become a slave to the machine, and, still worse, a slave to supply and demand. The present world crisis testifies in especially tragic fashion how man, who dives to the bottom of the ocean, who rises up to the stratosphere, who converses on invisible waves with the Antipodes, how this proud and daring ruler of nature remains a slave to the blind forces of his own economy. The historical task of our epoch consists in replacing the uncontrolled play of the market by reasonable planning, in disciplining the forces of production, compelling them to work together in harmony and obediently serve the needs of mankind. Only on this new social basis will man be able to stretch his weary limbs and—every man and every woman, not only a selected few—becomes a citizen with full power in the realm of thought.

But this is not yet the end of the road. No, it is only the beginning. Man calls himself the crown of creation. He has a certain right to that claim. But who has asserted that present-day man is the last and highest representative of the species *Homo sapiens*? No, physically as well as spiritually he is very far from perfection, prematurely born biologically, with feeble thought and has not produced any new organic equilibrium.

It is true that humanity has more than once brought forth giants of thought and action, who tower over their contemporaries like summits in a chain of mountains. The human race has a right to be proud of its Aristotle, Shakespeare, Darwin, Beethoven, Goethe, Marx, Edison, and Lenin. But why are they so rare? Above all, because almost without exception, they came out of the upper and middle classes. Apart from rare exceptions, the sparks of genius in the suppressed depths of the people are choked before they can burst into flame. But also because the processes of creating, developing and educating a human being have been and remain essentially a matter of chance, not illuminated by theory and practice, not subjected to consciousness and will.

Anthropology, biology, physiology and psychology have accumulated mountains of material to raise up before mankind in their full scope the tasks of perfecting and developing body and spirit. Psycho-analysis, with the inspired hand of Sigmund Freud, has lifted the cover of the well which is poetically called the "soul". And what has been revealed? Our conscious thought is only a small part of the work of the dark psychic forces. Learned divers descend to the bottom of the ocean and there take photographs of mysterious fishes. Human thought, descending to the bottom of its own psychic sources, must shed light on the most mysterious driving forces of the soul and subject them to reason and to will.

Once he has done with the anarchic forces of his own society man will set to work on himself, in the pestle and the mortar of the chemist. For the first time mankind will regard itself as raw material, or at best as a physical and psychic semi-finished product. Socialism will mean a leap from the realm of necessity into the realm of freedom in this sense also, that the man of to-day, with all his contradictions and lack of harmony, will open the road for a new and happier race.