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TWO POSITIONS ON THE RUSSIAN QUESTION

(We publish herewith two documents by the "Revolutionary Communists of Germany" (RKD) in France on the Russian question. This group at one time was in full agreement with the 14 Points of the "International Contact Commission for a New Fourth (Communist) International", and collaborated closely with us. Its material on the national question in Europe and some of its polemics against Trotskyism were mature and excellent contributions to the science of Marxism. In recent years, due to the war, we have not heard from these comrades. Since the termination of hostilities we are informed that they have completely revised their position on the Russian Question. While they have published a considerable amount of material on the matter we are able, at this time, only to print the key summaries of that position entitled "Resolution on the Russian Question" and "The Counter-Revolution triumphs in Russia".

Following the two articles are the "Revolutionary Workers League" comments on the material with which we disagree.)

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===== THE COUNTER-REVOLUTION TRIUMPHS IN RUSSIA =====

The following exposé is a summary of the position of the RKD on the Russian question which is dealt with in Part IV of our programmatic platform ("The Russian Experience").

The "Times" organ of English finance capital acclaims the latest changes in Russia in the following manner: "The hymn breathes not the hateful revolt of the International, but confidence in Russia which has become conscious of its strength and asserts it in its internal struggles, in its fight against the invader... It sanctions the complete return to Russian tradition and the total absorption of the nation in its immense task... It closes the series of deep-going transformations already accomplished, such as the re-establishment of the officers body, the abolition of political commissars in the army, Stalin's adoption of the title of Marshal, the dissolution of the Comintern, the restoration of the Russian church, etc..."

1.- Marxists know that these latest changes are only a small part and crowning of a political as well as economic counter-revolution, one would not be possible without the other, the two are but one. Since the NEP and especially since the death of Lenin the proletariat has lost one position after another, so as to fall again under yoke of exploitation and oppression by international capitalism.

2.- The proletarian revolution is thoroughly different from the bourgeois revolution. The bourgeoisie, exploiting minority, can temporarily abandon its political power for the benefit of a feudal, fascist or social-democratic clique, while at the same time conserving its economic power. The bourgeoisie owns the means of production before it conquers political power. The proletariat, exploited and working majority, on the contrary cannot abandon its political power without losing its economic power at the same instant. The proletariat has to conquer political power in order to gain ownership of the means of production; without political power the proletariat can neither direct nor control the means of production. In losing political power, the proletariat also loses economic power and vice-versa. The economic and political power falls back into the hands of a "bureaucracy" which in reality ceases being a simple bureaucracy but forms the new owning and exploiting class.

3.- Consequently all theories which aim to explain the fate of the proletarian revolution in Russia with the fate especially of the bourgeois Revolution in France ("bonapartism", "Thermidor") and thus want to justify the defense of counter-revolutionary Russia are confusing, superficial, and false and must be rejected. In France the then-revolutionary class (the bourgeoisie) stayed in power despite Napoleon; in Russia the revolutionary class of today (the proletariat) has lost the power, is beaten and defeated.

4.- The soviets, the representatives democratically and directly elected by all the workingmen and women, always subject to recall and control by the working masses, completely share the fate and the living standard of the workers; they are the only possible instruments of political and economic workers' power. Since the actual suppression of the soviets, that is to say the proletarian State, the political and economic power of the proletariat has been suppressed all at once.

5.- Consequently the new proletarian revolution which is necessary in Russia, the 4th Russian revolution, must re-establish, deepen and continue October 1917, must be social and political at the same time, must be part of the world proletarian revolution.

6.- Marxists base their analyses and conclusions not on outward forms (Planning, nationalization, state-ization) but on the real contents (exploitation and oppression of man by man, of one class by another). Marxists base their analyses and conclusions not on official statistics of the bureaucracy, but on testimony of revolutionary proletarians who have seen and lived the true fate of the working class. There is no contradiction between Marxist-Leninist theory and the actual and social interest of the working class; the theory expresses and brings to consciousness the social interest, the social interest finds its full expression in the theory. A theory which does not satisfy the proletarian interests is not a Marxist-Leninist theory, but a distorted Marxism-Leninism in the interest of the ruling class. The Marxist-Leninist theory is and remains the theory of the world proletarian revolution. There is no contradiction between the immediate interest and the historic interest of the working class; the one and the other demand the defeat and fall of the present dictatorship of the new exploiters and oppressors in Russia as well as in the whole world, the re-establishment of the dictatorship of the proletariat.

7.- Marxism begins its analysis of a social state with the study of the condition of the working classes, the relations between these classes and the means of production. It then examines the condition of the non-working classes, their relations to the means of production and the relations between the working classes and the idle classes. It finally considers the entire superstructure of society; foreign and interior, military and cultural policy, dominant and secret ideologies, arts and sciences, repression and legislation, etc. etc. Finally a parallel analysing the present regime and the preceding regimes on the one hand, and the other regimes of imperialist society on the other is necessary. The conclusion will impose itself.

8.- Directly or indirectly Trotsky, Serge, Giliga, Krivitski, Tarov, Yvon, etc. testify that the proletarian October revolution has been liquidated and that the counter-revolution has triumphed. Depending on the date of their departure from Russia (1928-1937) and according to their respective concepts, their judgements and commentaries are more or less uncompromising and severe.

9.- Let's summarize the main facts. After the expropriation of private capital by the revolutionary proletariat another expropriation took place, that of the revolutionary proletarians by the new exploiting State. This second expropriation was accompanied, conditioned and expressed by the bourgeois counter-revolution which re-established the principle of class exploitation, that is to say, again puts into opposition a minority of exploiters who do not work but dispose (without any control and without any restriction) of the means of production and consequently of the entire political power, to the majority of proletarians and peasants who work and own nothing but their labor power, who are deprived not only of all political or economic power or control, but often of the least economic and political rights as well....

Such is the fundamental characteristic of all class society in general (slavery, feudalism, capitalism) and of imperialist capitalism in particular. This characteristic is at present identical in all countries, including Russia. We shall also see the phenomena which distinguish present Russia from the other capitalist States, it is a matter of secondary differences and shades.

In Russia as elsewhere the workers are appendages of the means of production which are in the hands of the non-workers. The workers are watched while working and searched when leaving. The superstructure, the ideologies, and class consciousness correspond to those of any society of capitalist exploitation. The same thing is true as far as all culture, legislation and repression are concerned.

10.- All forms of exploitation (slavery, serfdom, monopoly and imperialist capitalism) are to be found in Russia, but all these forms are dominated by the hegemony of international finance capitalism.

In abolishing the dictatorship of the proletariat, Russia could but revert to the imperialist phase of capitalism. The analysis of imperialism made by Lenin is absolutely applicable to present-day Russia. Speaking of tsarist Russia, Lenin proves that the latter, despite its backwardness, its semi-colonial and almost colonial character, despite the absence of a finance capitalism - exporting capital, was nontheless an imperialist power, being part of the international chain of imperialism.

The same applies to modern Russia, with this difference; that the latter commands a much more developed industrial base, colonizes Siberia, Iran, Mongolia, intends to colonize the Near-East, China, and Eastern Europe; that it has concentrated all the means of production and exploitation in the hands of the exploiting state.

Present Russia with more gigantic means than tsarist Russia continues, aggravates and deepens effectively and consciously the imperialist foreign and domestic policy of tsarism.

11.- Collective property as far as it is the property of the working majority does not exist in Russia. It exists as "collective" property of the exploiting minority. We have to do with an accentuated form of modern capitalism, a possible but avoidable form, a form predicted by Marx and Engels (see the Anti-Duhring) and noted by Lenin in many instances (see the last volumes of the complete works). This form of exploitation and oppression is known under the name of: State capitalism.

12.- All these facts determine our revolutionary defeatist position in Russia. Russia is not only a very important link in the international imperialist chain, but also a gendarme recognized by world imperialism in Europe and Asia. This recognition does not exclude but includes deep differences between the Anglo-American powers and Russia. These differences are of an imperialist nature and express the competition among the robbers. To interpret them as ideological differences means to deceive and disorient the working class. The left wing of the Russian Trotskyites, a pretty strong wing which includes the most active and most decided elements, ("militant-Bolsheviks") has broken with defensism. With them we fight for the defeat of the new Russian imperialism, the gendarme of world imperialism, the executioner, the exploiter and oppressor of the Russian workers, the grave-digger of the Russian, Spanish, Chinese, and German revolution; in short, of the world revolution.

Consequently an abyss separates the defensists from the defeatists; this is no longer an academic question but the most burning question at present. For or against the continuation of the massacre on the Eastern front, for or against the defeat of the military dictatorship in Moscow as elsewhere, for or against the liberation of 15 million deported proletarians, for or against the revolt of the famished and bleeding masses who again and again are thrown into the battle for the glory and victory of a regime and a system which represents the domination of the class enemy.

Defensism or defeatism in Russia are finally summarized in the question: triumphant counter-revolution or world proletarian revolution.

1944

RESOLUTION ON THE RUSSIAN QUESTION

1.- In the absence of an autonomous, proletarian organization, the crushing of the left oppositions by the Stalinist faction of the Russian CP (Bolshevik) was the termination of the counter-revolution. As a matter of fact it meant

the decisive victory of a privileged social layer fighting for the consolidation of its privileges over the last remnant of proletarian power. It proved the impossibility of realizing socialism in a single country, in accordance with the predictions of Lenin and Trotsky. The counter-revolution, strengthened afterwards by the physical destruction of the vanguard and the total suppression of the Soviets, has liquidated the workers State and has substituted a political form corresponding to the new social relations.

2.- The fall of the dictatorship of the proletariat, suppressing even the least workers' control over the collective property, realizes the economic expropriation of the proletariat on the one hand, and on the other hand realizes collective property of the dominant class. The juridical fictions about property, the illusions of the masses, the technical character of planning and the speed of accumulation do not in the least change the fact that State capital, in all its forms (money, material, merchandise) functions as a means of extracting surplus-value for the benefit of the consumption and accumulation of the dominant and exploiting class. This exploitation, independently of private accumulation and its mode of transmission (inheritance), is sufficient to define Russia (not Soviet Russia) as a bourgeois society in which capitalist contradictions develop increasingly: Pauperization of the proletariat parallel to the scope of the productive forces through the further development of bourgeois norms of distribution.

3.- Stalinist internal and external policy since the counter-revolution cannot be characterized as centrist (zig-zags); it is on the contrary the consequent expression of the interests of the new bourgeoisie in its struggle against the revolutionary Russian and world proletariat. This strategy interprets the alliance of the Russian bureaucracy with the world bourgeoisie despite the inevitable competition which opposes the "USSR" to one or the other imperialism in turn; financial exports (appropriation of Suez stock 1944) are testimony to the fact that the structure of Russia does not separate it from the last stage of capitalism: imperialism. Structural assimilation of annexed countries (SE. number 4-5 of "IVth I.") when it occurs, is not a new form of revolution, a substitute for proletarian revolution, it is a violent form of capitalist conquest and concentration; it has no other meaning than that taken by the internal fight against private property since 1927, it is the colonial counterpart of this fight.

4.- While Stalinism is but the political weapon of imperialism, the "Red" army is only its military weapon which continues its policy by its own means: war. Every victory of the bureaucracy in the imperialist war increases the exploitation of the Russian proletariat and world counter-revolutionary forces. Thus the Russia proletariat and the world proletariat have an absolute interest in fighting for the defeat of Russian imperialism which is bound to the defeat of all other imperialism; this, in war time, is the indispensable condition for proletarian revolution. Therefore it is necessary for a Marxian Russian party to engage in the class struggle aiming at the destruction of the bureaucratic state and the establishment of the dictatorship of the proletariat on the basis of increased productive forces. Revolutionary defeatism is but the consequent form taken during the imperialist war by the permanent class struggle that the proletariat has to wage against the Stalinist State (economic strikes, strikes in the army, insurrectionary strikes, civil war for the seizure of power).

5.- One of the causes of the defeat of the proletarian opposition in Russia has been its domination by Trotskyism. The dominant bureaucratic social composition of the latter has evidently kept it from characterizing its own defeat as the defeat of the proletariat, and on a world scale, from characterizing Stalinism as the expression of Russian State capitalism. The leadership of the Trotskyite movement has nearly always belonged to its right wing, excluding the seceding elements, called ultra-leftists including the Revolutionary Communists, that is the representatives of the proletariat. Trotskyism expresses the interests of a frustrated and discontented fraction of the bureaucracy.

6.- In the Trotskyite struggle against Stalinism, this structure has determined the intense use of the weapon of reformist criticism, but without a real effort to change it into armed criticism; thus "political opposition" was substituted for revolutionary defeatism; thus personal literary activity was substituted for the immediate material struggle of the masses. After having contributed, through passiveness, to the stabilization of Stalinism, Trotskyism invents the consoling utopia of Stalin's "paralysis" and his automatic fall, whether there be a defeat or a victory. By contributing to camouflage the Stalinist counter-revolution to make it look like "socialist edification", by calling the masses to the "unconditional" defense of the falsely called "soviet" union, Trotskyism has done everything to block the class struggle road to the Russian, foreign and colonial proletariat; to idealize Stalinism, to weld the masses to the world counterrevolutionary leadership, to insure the crushing of Trotskyism itself and the failure of its so-called Fourth International. The workers have never understood, and rightly so, that they should be asked to fight against the external political organ of the State by the very people who proclaim it to be a workers State, a Soviet State, a socialist State, except in the interest of their clique...! That is the mystery, - we have not gone into it very deeply - of the "mistakes", of the verbal dilettantism, the "inability", the numerical weakness, the non-proletarian composition of the Trotskyite Fourth International, which, by the way, was founded after the defeat on a world scale of the proletariat.

7.- The contradictory character of Trotskyism is expressed with particular clarity in the opposition of two concepts of revolution:

- 1) the proletarian revolution characterized in its pure form and extent by the Marxian theory of the permanent Revolution, defined by L. Trotsky;
- 2) the bureaucratic revolution from the top and from the outside by "Red Army" Stalinism and characterized as "structural assimilation" by the SE (therefore defense of the annexations of the "USSR"...after the fact). The second concept includes the destruction of the vanguard and the real organs of the dictatorship of the proletariat (Wilno soviet). In fact, it idealizes the Russian capitalist structure.

8.- This idealization impregnates the Trotskyite program and is manifested particularly in the "transitory" claim for the "nationalization" of the most concentrated capital by the bourgeois state. But this bourgeois nationalization, though technically progressive, is the supreme anti-working class weapon of the bourgeoisie. The latter tends everywhere toward accomplishing its fusion with its own State and to identify itself with the bureaucracy. (nationalizations are being prepared and accomplished by De Gaulle, Mussolini).

We have here, in the end, a bourgeois approximation to Stalinism; concentration and total armament of the bourgeoisie in a period of civil war.

9.- The measure of the reformist reactionary character of the bourgeois "nationalization" is given by the opportunism of the English Workers International League ("Verite" of the POI., supplement to the August 1943 issue). According to these rightwing Trotskyites, of whom the POI approves without reservation, the application of the nationalization, central theme of a completely reformist and social-patriotic program, would justify putting the English and European proletariat into the service of "purified" English imperialism for the prosecution of the war.

This is but a caricatured form of the abandonment of revolutionary defeatism in the "democratic" countries and the countries allied to Russia. What is left of "Bolshevism-Leninism" in this, or even of hostility against the Stalinist dictatorship?

10.- The lack of consequent Marxian analysis which would have armed a real International during the world crisis and the revolutionary eruptions previous to 1939 was the main cause of the counter-revolution, which in turn was the condition for the second imperialist war. While this war is in full liquidation, its transformation into civil war occurs very slowly. Once more the inevitable world revolution risks being defeated. Nothing is being done to dissuade the workers from their illusions about the "Russians". The Trotskyites are the first to proclaim that annexation by the "USSR" is structural assimilation to socialism. The most advanced workers hope for a passive revolution from the top, which they delegate to Stalin, his army and his parties.

Under these conditions the supreme political obstacle for the working class becomes the Trotskyite slogan of "unconditional defense of the USSR", which is an academic disguise for a policy of treason, the mobilization of the workers in the service of Russian imperialism, the idealization of the counter-revolutionary Russian Army ("The flags of the Red Army will be joined to our red flags". Verite of the PCI number 2), therefore the strengthening of the imperialist front against the Russian and world proletariat.

11.- At this decisive moment when the future of the world revolution is in the balance, the "Revolutionary Communists" are determined to fight till the end to win over all the advanced workers to the essential points of Marxism-Leninism in the period of Stalinist counter-revolution. Only in this way will it be possible to build a revolutionary Communist International.

IS THE SOVIET UNION CAPITALIST?

A Few Comments on the Material by the RKD

The essence of the two documents of the RKD that we have published can be summarized in the following:

- 1- "The proletariat, exploited and working majority cannot abandon its political power without losing its economic power at the same instant.
- 2- "Since the actual suppression of the soviets, that is to say the proletarian state, the political and economic power of the proletariat has been suppressed all at once."
- 3- The NEP started the counter-revolution in 1923 and the "crushing of the left oppositions (in 1928) by the Stalinist fraction of the Russian CP was the termination of the counter-revolution."
- 4- The Soviet Union is a capitalist state which follows an imperialist policy.

Such is the essence of the present revisionist position of the RKD. Nothing here is really new. As a matter of fact the Bordighists have held to such a theoretical position for a long time. The implications of this theory is far reaching indeed. Its logical conclusion can only be that capitalism is still capable of giving impetus to the productive process, that it can still unleash production from the fetters imposed upon it, that it can still play a progressive role in history. Burnham, it must be remembered started with a somewhat similar position and was forced to end up with his "Managerial Revolution."

We are not, of course, accusing the comrades of the RKD of such a development. As a matter of fact they still stand close to us on most of the major questions of the day, so far as we know. But politics has its own logic and one principled error if extended can only lead to a complete break with Marxism. Let us hope that on the basis of political discussion these comrades can again be brought around to a correct position on this subject.

WHAT IS A PROLETARIAN REVOLUTION?

A Proletarian Revolution is not a single act of the seizure of state power, although such seizure of power is a major part of the PROCESS of Proletarian Revolution. The Proletarian Revolution is a process through which capitalist production for profit is replaced by production for use and whereby the exploitation of man by man is progressively replaced by a common social exploitation of the forces of production thereby leading eventually to the liquidation of the instrument of class oppression, the State. The Proletarian Revolution, however, is a CONTINUOUS process which:

- a- Must deepen and develop internally.
- b- Must carry out some of the progressive tasks still outstanding from the bourgeois revolution.
- c- Must spread internationally.

Failure of the Revolution to spread internationally will of course hinder its development internally. That is more true of the Proletarian Revolution than any other, but it was likewise true of other Revolutions. The failure of the Napoleonic invasions of central and eastern Europe undoubtedly hindered the world-wide development of capitalism.

The failure of the Proletarian Revolution in three dozen revolutionary situations since 1918 has led to the degeneration and decline of the Soviet Union.

The point at issue however is:

WHAT IS THE CULMINATING POINT AT WHICH THE WORKERS STATE IS TRANSFORMED BACK INTO A CAPITALIST STATE!

For the Bordighists and for the RKD the expulsion of the left-opposition (Trotsky) from the Communist International was such a culminating point. For us the expulsion of the Marxist left opposition was only PART of a process which has not yet been completed.

For the RKD the culmination point is reached when certain POLITICAL changes occur - when the proletariat is deprived of DIRECT CONTROL over the state. For us the culmination point is reached when a forceful counter-revolution not only destroys the political vestiges of the October Revolution but its ECONOMIC roots as well. Economics, for us, is the decisive factor in the historical process.

The dispute is not academic. The whole science of Marxism is at stake. We are being told by the RKD that economics was the determining factor in all history UP TO NOW, but since the October Revolution in Russia the determining factor there is now POLITICS. We cannot subscribe to a position which throws historical materialism completely out of the window.

THE POLITICAL CRITERIA

Let us look a little closer. The State is an instrument of the ruling class at all times. But the forms of state power are as limitless as the stars. The forms will depend on the specific gravity of the class struggle at the moment; how evenly are the contending classes of society matched; how sharp is the open struggle; and, what is the level of economy.

What are the roots of Stalinist bureaucracy, of the viciousness and terror of this state power? We are dealing here with an ISOLATED workers State - with an isolated PROLETARIAN REVOLUTION WITH A POLICY OF BUILDING SOCIALISM IN ONE COUNTRY, in other words, which moves forward in some respects and moves backward in the major respects. It is a Revolution which does not continue itself adequately by extending itself outward; thereby it creates an international relationship of class forces extremely adverse to the Revolution itself. This adversity - reflected inside the Soviet Union - creates the circumstances which forces the revisionist regime in the Soviet Union to take such terrible toll in the population in order to defend itself.

History is filled with many such examples of States that take vigorous action against their own class. Engels and Lenin both dealt with this phenomena frequently. Marx gave an excellent example of it in the "18th Brumaire of Louis Bonaparte". In order to attempt to defend its HISTORICAL interests a state may have to take DIRECT action against major sections of its own class. The absolute Monarchs had to do so. Louis Napoleon had to do so. There have been countless other examples.

Is the Proletarian State different from any of these others in this respect? According to the RKD they are. But why? So long as there are states the state will be subject to the pressure of the class struggle. Is the Proletarian subject to such pressure? Of course it is. The fact is that the Proletarian State, too, represents the interests of the ruling class ONLY IN THE HISTORICAL SENSE. At any given moment in its development it may be taking stringent measures against its own class - particularly when the world relationship of class forces is adverse as it is now.

A different leadership in the Soviet Union, with a Marxian program, would have an entirely different axis, one of World Revolution. It would have an entirely different program within the Soviet Union, one of constantly raising the standard of living of the proletariat and oppressed and at the same time closing the gap in differences in income. Such a leadership, such a subjective factor, would in itself be a focal point in changing the world OBJECTIVE situation, thereby altering the internal situation in the Soviet Union as well.

But Stalinism leads the Proletarian Revolution BACKWARDS. It has not COMPLETELY liquidated the Revolution.

Just consider the fundamental theoretical problems posed by the Russian question:

- 1- Is it possible for a state of society to exist BETWEEN capitalism and the Dictatorship of the Proletariat?
- 2- Are there two or three decisive independent forces in Society? Is Stalinism a new phenomenon, a new class? Was Marx wrong in his Communist Manifesto, when he claimed there were only two decisive classes in society, or was there something of major importance that he did not understand or visualize?
- 3- Can there be a PROGRESSIVE economic order, one operated on the basis of planned plenty and growth, rather than organized planned scarcity and retirement of the means of production - can there be such an order that is NOT a Socialist order? If so, then Nomad and the technocrats and Burnham are correct and Marxism is all wrong.
- 4- Are there two types of socialism, democratic and totalitarian? And if so, is totalitarian socialism a kin of fascism, equally vile and venomous?
- 5- Can power be achieved by the proletariat peacefully? Does violence always lead to Stalinism? Is "Leninism" a blood relation of Stalinism? Can a counter-revolution be achieved peacefully, with mere police measures?
- 6- Is the state really an instrument of the ruling class, as Lenin pointed out, or can there be states which serve all classes or states which serve no classes, except the bureaucratic state machines?

If there can be an economic order BETWEEN capitalism and the Dictatorship of the Proletariat, which advances the productive machine, then we as revolutionists are bound to support it. Furthermore, we are forced to conclude that other classes beside the proletariat can be and in fact are progressive - whether they be the "managerial class", the "technocrat class", etc. Our concentration on organization of the proletariat, here in the U.S. as well as elsewhere, would thus be an outmoded or false strategy.

The "Russian question" is the most difficult social problem ever posed, precisely because of the arrested proletarian revolution, moving backward and dominated by a reactionary clique. Too many people make rash, quick and "new" DISCOVERIES ABOUT THE SOVIET UNION everyday. If you check any of these "theories" you will find that few, if any of them, deal scientifically with Soviet economics.

THE ECONOMIC CRITERIA

Let us look into the economic criteria. Capitalism is a decadent economic system which is based on private appropriation, wage labor, and production for the market.

The basic sickness of capitalism is overproduction of both goods and capital. The inability of the capitalist system to reinvest its liquid capital in the productive process during the imperialist stage of capitalism is its most glaring illness. It therefore has to search constantly for new markets and spheres of influence.

The crisis of overproduction creates not only a sharpened struggle with the proletariat but a constant conflict within the ruling class as well. The ruling class finds it impossible to unite permanently against its main enemy, the proletariat, and consequently a stage is reached when the bourgeoisie can no longer rule by the old means, when they are hopelessly torn with conflict, and when it becomes possible for the proletariat to intensify its struggle and make a bid for power.

Let us take just these five major characteristics of capitalism and see how they apply to the Soviet Union.

- 1- Private appropriation. STATE appropriation is still the rule in the Soviet Union. The bureaucracy steals a very large portion of the produce of the state, but the state as a whole appropriates the products of labor and the major section of it remains with the state as such. It is neither like laissez-faire capitalism, nor "stato" capitalism. Private appropriation is very limited in Russia. In the major sectors of industry and trade it is non-existent. The state still has a monopoly of imports and exports, of foreign investments (which are small and almost negligible compared to the investments of capitalist states), of railroads and all other industry.
- 2- Wage labor. Remuneration for labor power was originally set by the state not on the basis of the value of labor power but in line with productivity of society as a whole. Stalinism has warped this process probably more than any other and has unquestionably discriminated against the lower paid workers. On this question it must be admitted unequivocally that the Revolution has made very little progress.
- 3- Production for the Market. There is no doubt that soviet economy does not at all follow the laws of capitalist economy. As a matter of fact, Soviet foreign trade has fallen to one-third of the trade of 1913, while its total production has increased to twelve times that of 1913 (these are 1940 figures). The comrades of the RKD must tell us how a "capitalist" country REDUCES its world trade deliberately and yet has a gigantic INCREASE in production, without an internal crisis. Either Marx and his laws of capitalist economy were incorrect, or the Soviet Union is not a capitalist state. There are no other alternatives.

- 4- Overproduction of capital and goods. On this question, too, there is little room for argument. Reinvestment of liquid capital in the productive process within the Soviet Union, SINCE 1928, has truly been phenomenal. There are no large surpluses in the banks that must either be shipped abroad or become a halter around the neck of the economy. The basic evil of capitalism, OVERPRODUCTION, is non-existent in the Soviet Union.
- 5- The conflict within the bourgeoisie. According to the RKD we are to believe that "capitalism" in Russia has been able to UNITE THE WHOLE CAPITALIST CLASS. This is an impossibility under capitalism. In fact the opposite process is true.

The question will undoubtedly be raised: "what about State Capitalism"? Well, what about it? Does State Capitalism (which incidentally is only a theoretical possibility in its extreme form) does State Capitalism eliminate Private appropriation. No, it doesn't. It gives the capitalists bonds instead of stocks. The capitalists get a specific rate of profit (interest) on these bonds and the state stands for the losses. There is no such phenomena in the Soviet Union, although it must be admitted that the bonus systems given to managers represent the embryo of private appropriation. Does State Capitalism change the importance of the market for capitalism; does it eliminate overproduction? No state capitalism has all the vices of private capitalism.

The Soviet Union, on the contrary, is relatively free from such vices. It is not beset by the dangers of overproduction. It has not had since 1928 an economic crisis. It has not been driven by the basic need of markets and spheres of influence. Its whole direction is inward rather than outward. Its whole motion is completely different from that of capitalism. It is the only country in the world which has really BASICALLY altered its economy in the last twenty-five years.

THE OTHER SIDE OF THE PICTURE

It would be senseless, of course, to rest the case here. The degeneration of transition society in Russia has been reflected not just in politics but in economics as well. There have been breaches in private property. PRIMITIVE accumulation of capital has been permitted. There are hundreds of thousands of people in Russia with hoards of money which they cannot re-invest in the productive process today but which they hope to invest as soon as a counter-revolution is successful and private appropriation is again legalized. These people are EMBRYO capitalists. They bear a certain similarity to the feudal lords whom Marx dealt with in the first volume of Capital as gaining a primitive accumulation of capital as a result of the "enclosures".

Private property itself has been legalized in land. Even certain rights of inheritance are again legal. But the major economic bulwarks of October still stand. They are undermined by political and other rotten underpinnings—changes in divorce and marriage, changes in the status of the Church, changes in the governmental form of rule, etc.etc. The whole facade will soon either fall completely or be rebuilt.

But the patient is merely sick. He is not yet DEAD. Therein lies the difference between Marxism and ultra-leftism on this point.

WHAT ABOUT THE SUFFERINGS

No one will dispute the fact that the people of Russia live under tyranny, amongst the worst in history. But that in itself is not the decisive criteria. It means that Stalinism has lost its mass base to such a point that it must take the most stringent measures to keep itself in power; that the pressure of world capitalism from without and the class struggle within the Soviet Union has narrowed Stalinism's roots in the masses to such a point that it can only maintain hegemony over the State by use of an open dictatorship.

That is the political significance. From the point of view of revolutionists we are naturally horrified and opposed to all this. Obviously something is wrong. Obviously something is moving in the wrong direction, but the question is has it already crossed the line back to capitalism. No economic or Marxian criteria can establish any such contention.

THE N. E. P.

It seems to us that the comrades of the RKD have a very mechanical approach to the whole problem. It is nowhere as clearly put forth as on this question of the New Economic Policy, introduced in 1922-23.

Isolated from the world, deprived of one-third of its European territory and more than three-quarters of its industry, and torn by three years of civil war, the Soviet Union was forced to make a retreat. It had to get the wheels of trade started by permitting private trade to flourish again. That was the NEP.

But re-introduction of private trade was circumscribed by the continued state control over the MAJOR sectors of economy, exports and imports, railroads, banks, heavy industry, etc. Lenin made a retreat backward in order to make a few steps forward later. And, as a matter of fact, private trade lasted for five years and then was liquidated. All spheres of trade are now either owned or controlled by the state.

To characterize the NEP therefore, as the beginning of the counter-revolution is mechanism of the worst sort. No process in life goes forward in a straight line. Errors, concessions, and difficulties make the line somewhat jagged. So long as the thing moves upward, however, that is sufficient. In the Soviet Union NEP was only an incident in a whole process that was LIQUIDATING, not establishing, capitalism. It was a departure from the general path made necessary by circumstances; but it was not a fundamental departure.

The political liquidation of the Left Opposition was a nail in the coffin of the Revolution. So were hundreds of other actions of the Stalinist bureaucracy. But the Revolution can be ended only by COUNTER revolution and a complete change in PROPERTY RELATIONS. Such a change has NOT occurred yet, although all things in the Soviet Union are moving in that direction.

THE PRACTICAL SIDE

We of the I.C.C. are opposed to Stalinism. We are for the defense of the Soviet Union against world imperialism from without and its Stalinist and other agents within the Soviet Union.

We are opposed to material aid to the Stalinist regime, such as Trotsky favored. We state unequivocally that without a defeat of the bureaucracy the Revolution cannot be defended.

We were for organization of workers militia and soviets in the cities and towns on an independent working class basis, in opposition to Stalinism. We are for marching separately from and striking together with Stalinist forces against the imperialists where the conditions make such a strategy feasible. We were not opposed to strikes against Stalinism. We call for the arrest of the Stalinist officers in the Red Army and for the election of new officers and proclamation of an internationalist policy. We call for fraternization and for extending the October Revolution.

Unquestionably the comrades of the RKD subscribe to these views. But we differ on one important point. We are opposed to deserting the front and letting the imperialists into the Soviet Union. We called for ousting the bureaucracy and continuing the struggle against imperialism SIMULTANEOUSLY. Wherever we organized independent militia and Soviets we would be for using those forces against imperialism (and incidentally against Stalinism too.)

In the practical sphere the differences with the RKD are not quite as acute, however, as in the theoretical sphere. Both organizations were against Stalinism and against the appeasement policy (capitulation policy) of Trotskyism. But to accept the ultra-left criteria for labelling a society, as propounded by the Bordighists previously and the RKD, would be fatal. It would lay the road open to complete reestimate of imperialism. It would mean a complete revision of Marx's theory of surplus value and historical materialism.

Furthermore it would mean giving up a POTENTIAL bulwark of the World Revolution without even a struggle.

Such ultra-leftism would be disastrous to the interests of our class.

(Note: This document is not a rounded thesis. For a much more extensive treatment of the subject see the **June 1944** and **January, May, and August 1945.**)

U.S. IMPERIALISM AND THE WORLD REVOLUTION

More than ever before, the working-class must now unite in its own self-defense. This must be a key-note for all revolutionary workers in their unceasing efforts to bring about this working class unity. For, the world bourgeoisie has launched what is likely to be the most prolonged and ultimately the bloodiest attack against the workers the world has ever seen.

In the immediately coming period, the capitalist world, with the United States providing its underlying driving force, will act with an ever-increasing coordination and unity against the world working-class and against Soviet Russia. The capitalist world is already showing this unity in its political moves against Russia, in its armed suppression of the colonial peoples and in its proposed international capitalist police force.

There are two reasons for this development:

1. The first is that the United States is now the strongest imperialist nation on earth and has moved into or is moving into most of the weaker nations' former spheres of trade, exploitation and influence.
2. The second reason grows from the first and is its contradiction. It is that the U.S. must now support these floundering nations even while objectively she drives them toward bankruptcy and ruin. For, the ruin which threatens them also threatens the U.S. with one hundred times the intensity. Their ruin must shake the whole structure of world capitalism and bring down the avalanche of world working-class revolt.

Let us now examine in some detail how this contradiction in motion within capitalism must drive it into further concerted attack against the working-class. For, it is against this attack that the world's workers must organize under the banner of a revolutionary Marxian leadership--the only possible defense against this attack.

America's imperialist aggressiveness during World War II has had its inevitable results: This the richest capitalist nation on earth has emerged as the unchallenged strongest capitalist nation on earth, with the largest air force, army and navy in the capitalist world, in control of tremendous permanent bases from Alaska to South America and from Guam across Asia and Europe to Germany and with these forces backed by the largest war production capacity, the United States now stands astride the earth. Since the turn of the century it has been evident that the United States with its tremendous industrial potential would be driven by its inevitable need for world markets to fight with an ever-increasing ferocity for this position.

Uncle Sam now stands in this position.

"Leading British Far Eastern experts" are whimpering that they can "hope only for crumbs from this Sino-America loaf" of Chinese trade and markets, reports an American news reporter in London (F. Kuh in the Chicago Sun, Nov. 14, '45).

In his message to Congress on November 13, President Truman explained that most of the UNRRA relief (\$1,350,000,000) was destined for China. Meanwhile the UNRRA has issued formal notice of positions open on its China staff for every type of industrial specialist imaginable from "industrial civil engineer" to "general sales manager". And Chiang Kai-Chok, using American weapons, is beating down any local opposition to American plans.

In Sumatra it was Dutch and American experts who inspected the oil refineries of Standard-Vacuum and Royal Dutch Shell.

Huge permanent American air bases now stand in Karachi and Calcutta, India; in North Africa; in Greece and Germany. Through these bases and others in South America and on the islands of the Atlantic and Pacific, the United States has a complete world trade route girding the richest latitudes of the globe.

In the coming drive to consolidate its hold on the capitalist world (and finally to move into position to stamp out the transition economy of the USSR) the United States will now use its tremendous economic weight and its newly gained military and strategic might.

But--and here is the dilemma--the triumph of the overlords of American capital must eventually bring the rest of world capitalism to unbelievable depths of pauperism and must finally end in the most titanic struggle of slaves against masters the world has ever seen. We need but to look at the starvation and homelessness throughout Europe, the threat--yes, even the promise--of uprising in Italy and Germany, the mass starvation in India, the food raids on American and Japanese warehouses in Japan, and--the most illustrative example of all--the increased harshness of rationing on the British home islands: then we see what is in store for the future under capitalism.

Thus the U. S. is faced with this contradiction. It must move forward to dominate the world market, slashing at its competitors, crowding them out and finally forcing them to ruin. But the impending collapse of these rival imperialist countries will precipitate a chaos and revolution which even the Stalinists and other fakers cannot hold back.

Looking down the business end of this fact, American capital has had to make and is making a substantial effort to prop up competing imperialist countries which it must eventually destroy. Millions of dollars in non-war "lend-lease" goods (some of which competed against American goods on the market), the loans to Britain and France, the now 50 million loan to Holland, the arming of the police forces of these states (Britain, France, Italy), the Bretton Woods agreements, "relief" to pacify revolution (Athens is now the "best-fed city in Europe", reports an American newspaperman), and the whole United Nations Organization to consolidate these counter-revolutionary activities--these are a measure of the United States effort in this direction. Counter-revolution, at the moment, takes precedence over competition.

However, that is not the end of the dilemma for American capitalism, for within this giant are the same world contradictions multiplied by a thousand. During the war, U. S. productive capacity went far beyond the wildest predictions of capitalist boosters. A national income which was 70 billion dollars during the prosperous years of the nineteen-twenties became 160 billions during the war. There are more machines, more mills, more transport, greater technological refinements; and the contradiction of less and less labor power being used to produce more and more commodities--this contradiction is greater in the American giant than in any ^{other} capitalist nation. And no matter how successful is its present frenzied grab for world markets in which to dump these commodities and surplus capital, it must soon face the culmination of this internal contradiction of capitalism--overproduction and glutted markets, paralysis of the world market, depression and starvation for the masses. This holocaust will descend upon the U. S. with greater force than upon any other nation.

The Position of the Soviet Union in the World Class Struggle and the Increasing Reactionariness and Impotency of the Stalinists.

The second great imperialist war has ended in a welter of working class movements toward revolt which have been beaten without leadership, choked by Stalinist betrayals and crushed by the occupation armies or their puppet police. But even with all these agents at its beck and call the capitalist class finds working-class resistance ever more irrepressible. The British Army with naval support in the harbor is taking more time to capture the town of Soerabaya in Java than the Japanese took to capture the entire Dutch East Indies. With an estimated thirty to forty thousand casualties and the river choked with the bodies of native dead, the Javanese kept hurling themselves against the American tanks and artillery in the hands of British troops. While dockworkers in Australia and in Singapore refuse to load supply ships to be used against the Javanese, Indo-Chinese irregulars repeat the Javanese performance against the French, Japanese and British troops combined. Chiang Kai-Chek, the American puppet, fights 80 million "bandits" in China. In Calcutta angry mobs attack the courthouse where Indian "nationalists" are on trial. In Palestine the Jews revolt against being once again the scape-goat of capitalism. General Eisenhower is forced to announce that the people of Germany are "one step short" of organized resistance to the Allied occupation. U. S. Army officials in Rome warn that "the lid will be blown off" by the Italian workers who still possess "amazingly large quantities" of guns and ammunition but no food and no work. And in the U.S. itself it is swept with a strike wave that the labor fakers are desperately trying to keep from becoming a general strike.

Like a red backdrop to the whole scene of this world struggle stand the Soviet Union and its warped but yet undestroyed October property relations. The greater the intensity of the world class struggle, the greater is the possibility of the S. U. becoming the base for world revolution. Thus, once again the capitalist nations of the world are solidifying and will continue to solidify into an increasingly determined bloc against the S.U.

Recent events serve to illustrate this: The Stalinist attempt to form "friendly" capitalist governments in Russia's border states, against Anglo-American opposition.

The Stalinist diplomatic drive to gain outlets from southern Russia to the sea.
The sharply divided rule of Germany, Austria and Korea.
The alarm with which the capitalist world greeted the announcement of a Soviet navy.

The Anglo-American use of the atomic bomb secret as a bargaining point against the Soviet Union.

The unilateral American rule of Japan and the Russian boycott of the Allied Far Eastern Control Commission.

These conflicts and the fact that in the United Nations Organization the Soviet Union finds itself now a minority of one, stem from the basic capitalist necessity to encircle and eventually attack the Soviet Union.

The Stalinists become more and more alienated from the masses as the class struggle intensifies. This fact is illustrated in Hungary and Austria where during recent elections they lost the urban vote. In Italy the Stalinist party is split and losing membership because its party heads continue to serve actively in the counter-revolutionary bourgeois government. In the French government with the largest popular vote behind them they bow to the rightist rule of DeGaulle. In China they bow their heads to Chiang's axe, by such treachery to the workingclass as their policing of Shanghai until the arrival of Allied troops.

The same dynamics within capitalism which now intensifies the class struggle also separates the Stalinists from the working class and makes them incapable of ever being anything but a tool in the hands of the bourgeoisie. It is not difficult to see why. They "defend" the S. U. by "cleverly" maneuvering one capitalist state against the other. They ally themselves with one section of the world bourgeoisie against the other. In so doing they are forced to fight for capitalism against the revolutionary impulses of the working class. With their help capitalism remains. But so long as capitalism remains it must attack the S.U. This attack, or threat of it, prompts the Stalinists to repeat this process--fighting for one section of capitalism. And, again they back farther away from the revolutionary proletariat--the only capable and possible defenders of the S. U.

The Task of the Working Class and its Party

This drawing together of the international bourgeoisie against the world workingclass is a tenuous one flowing from the basic contradictions in capitalism. The unexpressible tensions, the fierce international competitiveness which lies just below the surface and pops up here and there to embarrass their unity of action--these very contradictions will soon destroy it. It is based on the present situation in history and cannot last as it is pounded by increasing resistance from the workingclass.

The course of the workingclass vanguard is apparent. It is to organize itself into a world revolutionary party in defense against the mounting attack of the world bourgeoisie upon the worker masses and upon the Soviet Union. Only when such a party exists within the workingclass will it be capable of smashing world capitalism--sending it in disunited flight before the Red Banner.

And the duty of a Marxist League is also apparent. It is to go into the working class and organize this party--not a labor party, not a party of treacherous compromise--but a party of the Revolution.

FASCISM STILL WITH US

(AN EDITORIAL)

The Second World War has ended with a crushing military defeat of the Axis fascist powers but fascism is still with us. We are told by the Stalinists that this "Peoples War" (?) was a war against fascism, and others told us it was a "war to end wars", a war for the "four freedoms". But fascism is digging in and the imperialists are preparing a war against the Soviet Union and the social revolutions, to say nothing about a third world war "after" they settle, or hope to settle, with the workers and peasants of the earth.

It is the worst mockery to speak of the defeat of fascism when fascism thrives in Spain where France and the fascists are in power with the blessing and "lesser-evil concept" of the United States, France and England. It was the Civil War in Spain and its defeat that heralded in the second world war. Fascist Spain's continued existence is more than a symbol of the continuation of fascism in dying capitalist society.

Thousands of German "war criminals" are living in Spain, thousands more are in Japan, Argentina and Portugal, and thousands more are well protected within Germany itself. Fascism has a far greater and wealthier world organization than Marxism.

England under a "Labor Government" helps the Dutch with American lendlease to keep its colonial empire and smash the colonial revolutions in Java and other Asiatic countries. United States helps openly, while Stalinism helps secretly, the Chungking dictators in keeping down the social revolution in China. Stalinism finds itself in the contradiction of being forced to extend its borders for strategical protection against world imperialism and to obtain friendly border nations; while at the same time keeping down the social revolutions within these areas for fear that they will give impetus to the leftward shift of mass action in the Soviet Union itself against the Stalinist bureaucrats.

All these factors make ample and fertile feeding ground for the fascist spaw.

The actions of the United States in Korea matches the British Labor Government in India in keeping down the democratic aspirations of the masses.

In defeated Germany, Japan and Italy, the fascists' underground is an open secret--it has more power even today than the workers in their trade unions and other organizations. Yet these defeated countries were defeated with the aid of the Soviet Union and the slogans about "a people's war against fascism."

In the U.S.A. the increased anti-labor proposals, military conscription and more taxes for the working class, the reconversion set-up with its inflation boom and high profits, the increased racial and nationality antagonisms openly preached by embryo American fascist elements, the kept press giving enlarged publicity to "labor troubles", show which way the press, radio, and government forces are leaning. The shift is from bourgeois democracy to the right -- toward greater dictatorship and fascism.

The second imperialist war has brought a defeat to the fascist nations such as Germany, Italy and Japan but HAS NOT DEFEATED FASCISM.

ONLY A SOCIAL REVOLUTION CAN DEFEAT FASCISM.

The decay of capitalism which was emphasized by the first world war and the successful October Revolution has merely reached a new low with the ending of the second imperialist war. The failure to extend the October Revolution, and the rise of Stalinism as a reactionary force against Marxism, has led to fascism and the second imperialist war. If the workers and peasants do not extend the October Revolution in the present period of "post war adjustments" than a war against the Soviet Union, a war against all of the colonial masses, a war against the proletariat and the social revolution will be intensified--led by United States, Great Britain and France with Stalinism playing its usual treacherous role outdoing the Socialists and other reformists.

Fundamentally the ending of the second imperialist war settled and solved nothing for world capitalism. Temporarily one bloc gained new markets, but it only aggravated the decay and decline of capitalism as the dominating force in society.

Regardless of all the fine talk about the "United Nations Organization" and world councils of justice and peace--power politics and imperialist aggression will dominate the coming period. Regardless of all the fine talk about the last war and more democracy--the struggle is shaping up as a war of capitalism for its survival against the liberation wars of the colonial masses and the proletarian social revolutions.

The workers and peasants in their political and economic organizations have on their side the bulwark of the Soviet Union, what is left of the October Revolution. On the other side the imperialists and their tail, the United Nations Organization, have the growing world fascist element as their right arm and as their left arm the Stalinists and Socialists and Social Democrats, such as the Labor Government forces in England, Belgium, etc.

Documentary evidence reveals definitely and clearly the old RWL thesis that fascism is merely another form for the rule of the leading financial and industrial imperialists of the world. Through their cartels, International Banking and Trade agreements there is not one who is unstained by the bloody fascist butchery.

Polarization to the right and to the left will increase in tempo at the expense of the middle. The process will start all over again at different tempos, in different countries, as the revolutionary crisis develops. The modern facilities both for destruction and production bring with them their own contradictions. The cycle of overproduction, depression and more war is sped up. And along with this development the tempo on the political field is accelerated. The working class of the world is soaked with the blood of the imperialist slaughter, which is still going on in Asia, even though it has subsided in Europe, only to be supplanted by starvation and disease. The issue resolves itself daily into a choice of Communism or Fascism. There is no middle road.

INTERNATIONAL NOTES

FROM FRANCE

Our Union Communiste (Communist Unity) is dead. Dead also is the magazine L'Internationale. We will not rebuild the organization. Some comrades are dead, and among those who stayed in France some have joined the groups which were able better than we to maintain themselves. In any case no one of us have gone over to the Resistance or to collaboration with the German authorities. We all will work now for the regrouping of the vanguard, for the existence of small groups does not correspond any longer to the necessities of the situation. Very probably we shall undertake this reorganization in connection with the comrades of the Bordighist tendency. The theses and resolutions of the coming Congress of Parti Communiste Internationaliste (Internationalist Communist Party) of Italy will serve us as a basis of discussion.

I think you are informed about the formation of the Italian party under the leadership of Bordigha. Their paper in the Northern zone is "Battaglia Comunista". You might try to correspond directly with them.

Thank Comrade Okun for the information contained in his letter of the sixth of August. I have started reading your publications. I regret that you have not changed your position on the USSR, because beside that your activity is inspired by the revolutionary principles which we have in common.

You know that the Trotskyites have presented candidates in yesterday's elections in two sections of Paris. They have made themselves ridiculous. It is really not on the electoral territory that we have to confront the Stalinists and Socialists.

After these elections, the situation in France will become clearer. De Gaulle will no doubt lean on the M.R.P. and the Socialists. The solution of the problem of the Communists' participation or opposition will depend on the orientation that De Gaulle will intend to give his foreign policy, because French imperialism now is a minor imperialism which will not long be able to profit from the rivalries between the big three, and which will have to get under the hegemony of one or the other of these three--probably not that of Russian imperialism.

We are very much interested in the situation in the USA and England because of the extent of the strikes. I hope that your next publications will bring us useful information on this subject.

FROM ENGLAND

The dockers, as you will know, went back to work under a 30 day truce about two weeks ago. They went back with placards simply saying "30"; and each day the placards are changed: "29", "28", and so on. So far as I can ascertain,

they are utilizing the period to consolidate their rank-and-file leadership on a national scale.

The Glasgow dockers situation is peculiar. The TandGWJ does not control them - they split away years ago. However they went on strike along with the rest, and went back with them. But there are also a large number of non-union dockers in Glasgow (non-union simply because the independent union refuses to open its books to them). The independent is extremely craft-conscious. Cards are literally passed on from father to son, and no outsider is admitted. But the non-union lads went on strike with the rest and sent a deputation to the Merseyside (Liverpool). The Merseyside strike committee expressed "sympathy" but refused to allow of their participation in guidance of the movement. The non-union lads appear to be solidly class-conscious. We have a tenuous contact with them thru E. More on this anon.

Other objective things of note hereabouts: the big things cooking are the Indonesian situation (British press very definitely playing up Indonesian news to cover up hot situation in Burma, Indo-China, etc.); the Attlee-Truman Palestine fiasco (most serious political aspect is that the Blackpool Conference of the Labor Party this year virtually endorsed the Zionist position in full and now Attlee is passing the buck); the decision to "nationalize" the cables at a guaranteed rate of interest for the stockholders (if the procedure is to be the same as in the case of the Bank of England, stockholders will receive enough govt. 3% stock to yield the equivalent of the 4% income paid during the past six years. This means that the govt. gives Lb36,000,000 for the Lb27,400,000 of private Cable and Wireless Stock. "Stockholders would be unwise to expect more," says that paragon of understatement, the Investors' Chronicle. Dirty Dalton, even in the eyes of Tribune, Aneurin Bevan's personal "left" labour weekly, "has already become dangerously popular in the City."

EUROPEAN ELECTIONS GIVE REACTIONARIES NEW FOOTHOLD

Returns from recent elections in Europe and the changes in various cabinets indicate that the working class is considerably confused by the actions of the reformists - the Stalinists and the Socialists. Failure of the working class to build a Marxian Party in Europe is making possible victories of the Right.

In France, De Gaulle's Party, the MRP, made a phenomenal showing in the recent elections. Austria, Hungary, Luxemburg, Norway, Denmark and other countries likewise showed victories for bourgeois center parties.

The government of the Socialist, Renner, in Austria was replaced by a government of Leopold Figl, leader of the Catholic-minded Peoples Party. In Italy the Christian Democrat, Alcide de Gasperi, has taken over the Popular Front government from Parri. The shift, all over, is slightly to the right.

What has happened?

In the first period after the end of military hostilities the masses turned far to the left. With hunger, pestilence and other problems facing them they were looking for a radical solution of their problems. The Stalinists and Socialists mouthed left wing words and thereby drew the masses into their orbit. But the

deeds of these reformists do not square with their words. They continue to support capitalism in every respect. They are demanding reforms but within the framework of the bourgeois structure.

No single event attests to this fact more than the agreement of the Stalinists and Socialists on the fundamentals of the draft for a new constitution in France. The two parties place themselves solidly behind the concepts of private property, etc.

Under the circumstances the masses are without leadership; they are being disillusioned. They do not know which way to turn. As a result reaction is regaining its poise, and making a bid for leadership of Europe. The first form of reaction - De Gaullism, Catholicism, etc. - is only a short step to the right, but other forces are already in preparation. The masses are to be felt out further. How much will they yield? How tired are they? How disillusioned? On the basis of that information the reaction - aided and abetted by American and British imperialism - will slip further toward open forms of Fascism.

A Revolutionary Marxian Party is the prime essential in Europe today. Each day of delay means so much more blood spilt in the coming European events.

The results of the present elections are a danger signal. Let us take heed.

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