

DISCUSSION BULLETIN

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EASTERN EUROPE, THE WORKERS' STATE, AND THE WORLD CRISIS

By George Tobin, New York City

"Radioactive poisoning of the atmosphere and hence annihilation of any life on earth" is possible, says Einstein.

"Faced with the threat of an atomic war and a veritable destruction, stage by stage, of the human race, a world government of councils of workers and poor peasants constitutes the only realistic alternative which gives real promise of peace and abundance." (E. Germain, Fourth International, April 1949).

This is the TOTAL world crisis of our time. Capitalist barbarism approaches its climax -- and the only escape is a "world government of councils," i.e., world control by the workers -- A WORLD WORKERS' STATE.

Eastern Europe cannot be considered in isolation from this total picture. This crisis poses for us several questions:

What is the main task of the epoch -- to reorganize human relations, or to create a state-owned, planned economy?

Since the working class is the only progressive force in modern society, what should we think of a centralized, planned, statified machine, which grinds this proletariat down into the dust? Is such a machine progressive?

The solution we hold up to the masses is the workers' state. Our ability to attract and influence workers depends to a large extent on the correctness of our concept of a workers' state.

Part I -- Let's Get Our Definitions Straight

Definition of Workers' State Being Disputed: The Trotskyists have been studying the workers' state and its degeneration for over twenty years. Yet the present discussion indicates that our leaders cannot agree among themselves on the DEFINITION of a workers' state.

The Minority's Definitions: ". . . The statification of all the means of production, transport and exchange (including foreign trade) constitutes the social foundation of proletarian power," writes Pablo.

". . . In a country where the rule of the bourgeoisie as a class has been broken AND the principal sectors of the economy nationalized we must place the state in the general category of 'workers' state'," writes Comrade Hansen.

Comrade Pablo says, ". . . This statification can never be attained in a capitalist state." But Hansen disagrees. He writes: "If the bourgeoisie still constituted the ruling class, then nationalization by itself would not make these countries workers' states." (Pablo, International Information Bulletin, Dec. 1949, p. 6,5; Hansen, Internal Bulletin, Feb. 1950, p. 33, 18).

In reply, the Majority shows us capitalist states which conform to these definitions of a "workers' state"; and to workers' states

which do not. It points to Mussolini's fascist republic in North Italy, which statified all industry and broke the rule of the Italian bourgeoisie.* It points to the Paris Commune and to Russia from

*We can also note that before 1941 the Yugoslav monarchical state "owned and ran the railroads, telephone and telegraph communications, radio stations, the canals, river shipping and warehousing facilities and the tobacco, cigarette-paper, match and salt industries. It owned and operated lumber mills, the only paper-making factory then in the country, several factory-farms, the biggest of the iron and steel mills, many of the larger coal mines, all munitions works, the sugar factories, several hotels and a few aircraft plants. The state had publishing interests, operated the only news agency in the country, and ran most of the hospitals, and operated power plants, gas works, water works and other municipal enterprises." (Frank Gervasi, New Republic, Dec. 12, 1949, p. 14).

November 1917 to July 1918 -- both had no state property. It concludes that the Minority sees Stalinism capable of abolishing capitalism -- thus leaving no historic role for the Fourth International.

The Majority's Definition: ". . . Only the nationalization of the means of production resulting from the proletarian revolution (is the) criterion for the existence of a workers' state," writes Comrade Germain (International Information Bulletin, Jan. 1950, p. 9).

According to the Majority, capitalism exists in Eastern Europe... but the bourgeoisie has been expropriated.

The Minority answers by recalling what was said in the resolution adopted at the Seventh Plenum of the IEC: the one thing which prevents the "buffer" countries from being workers' states is -- the lack of "real planning." Thus the Majority is accused of the same charge it levels at the Minority; its perspective of structural assimilation to the SU allows for the bureaucratic-military abolition of capitalism by Stalinism. The Minority also emphasizes the essential identity of the satellites' economic and political life with that of Russia.

Both Definitions Questionable -- A Basic Analysis Needed

The Majority's chief criticisms of the Minority definition are serious. So are the Minority's major objections to the Majority view.

With this state of affairs among specialists on the question of the workers' state, it is time to reexamine our basic concepts.

The discussion thus far appears to have concentrated on the legal superstructure in East Europe, on the shifts of ownership from one group of monopolists to another monopolist (the state). It has not dealt adequately with the real economic foundation -- the production relations between the classes in the factories.

The discussion raises questions like these: What is the real meaning of "nationalization"? Is state property qualitatively different from private property? What is the essence of capitalism? What is the character of the epoch? What is progress? What is reaction?

What are the progressive forces in modern society? What are the reactionary forces? What is workers' power? What is a workers' state? Is it a workers' state if its main activity is the enslavement of the working class?

Let us submit some of these ideas to a semantic analysis.

What Is "Nationalization"?

A word meaning -- taking over by the nation, "Socialization," "collectivization" mean -- taking over by society, i.e., the people, collectively.

But today the nation, society, is divided into classes. Industry which is taken over by the state, becomes in reality not the property of the nation or society or the people -- but of the ruling class, which controls the state. This is so regardless of what is written in the law-books.

"Statification" is a more accurate term.

Statification by a WORKERS' state means -- industry is taken from the hands of the capitalists and into the hands of the working class. To the extent that the workers' state moves toward a classless society, there is progress toward real socialization.

What about statification by a CAPITALIST state? This is favored by many workers who know the private capitalists to be the enemy. But they think the state is the instrument of the whole nation, and therefore -- of the workers, actually or potentially. They do not know it is a capitalist state.

An example: When a worker wants to "defend his home," he means something progressive. But when he supports an imperialist army he is helping reaction, despite his progressive intentions.

Another example: Millions favor a world government; they want to abolish national boundaries. That is progressive. But when they demand that Truman and the UN set up such a government, they are unwittingly helping American imperialism become the monopolistic ruler of the world. That is reactionary.

A worker who demands "nationalization" by the present state, is thinking: remove these capitalists; replace them by "representatives of the people." A more advanced worker thinks: replace the capitalists with control by the workers (through unions or factory committees).

Labor bureaucrats mean something else by "nationalization": replace the capitalists by state functionaries, and continue production on capitalist principles (as in England).

". . . The nationalization of railroads. . . is being advocated in America, in France and other countries as a panacea by the simpletons and charlatans of reformism. . . A transfer of the principal branches of industry and transport from the hands of individual trusts into the hands of the 'nation,' i.e., the bourgeois state, that is, into the hands of the most powerful and predatory capitalist

trust, signifies not the elimination of the evil but only its amplification." -- Manifesto of the Second World Congress of the CI (Trotsky, "The First Five Years of the Communist International," p.111)

Statification by the Capitalist State Has Two Aspects: (1) Physically -- further centralization, planning, rationalization of production by the state agents of capital; (2) Juridically -- the transfer of legal ownership to the state. This is usually the legal expression of the last stages of the above centralization process. But it also spreads illusions that the bourgeoisie as a class is being expropriated.*

*Only in an extremely rare case (the Mexican oil industry for a short time) does ownership by the bourgeois state remain purely juridical, while actual control is by the workers.

The state monopoly of all industry under the control of a small group of men would not be physically different from monopoly divided among a few giant trusts -- all controlled by the same handful of individuals through interlocking directorates. In both cases the relations at the point of production are the same.

In a completely statified capitalism, the industrial bureaucrats would FUNCTION as capitalists. They would try to get from the workers as much surplus value as they could. Most of it would be re-invested in industry -- resulting in accumulation of capital, rising organic composition of capital, and the tendency for the rate of profit to fall. The basic laws of motion of capitalist economy would prevail.

Trotsky denied the possibility of complete statification under capitalism, when he wrote in "The Revolution Betrayed": "State capitalism means the substitution of state property for private property, and for that very reason remains partial in character." (p.246)

Recent history, however, seems to have another verdict:

COMPLETE STATIFICATION IS POSSIBLE UNDER CAPITALISM -- without impairing the capitalist character of the economy, e.g., Mussolini's republic; Burma. Let us note also that huge profits flow into the Vatican from its industrial, banking and landed wealth in Europe. There is no "private property" in the Vatican. Neither the Pope nor the Cardinals nor Bishops own individual shares of stock or bonds in the Vatican's wealth.

Our difficulty lies in the fact that the capitalism we are accustomed to is characterized by private property in the means of production. We see individuals and groups of individuals controlling different segments of industry. Their right to such control (including transfer to others) is recognized and enforced by the state. This right is called "ownership of property." Each such individual, in effect, wears a tag marked "capitalist."

Today, however, some of these persons no longer wear the tag. The agents of capital pretend to have expropriated capitalism -- in order to win the confidence of the masses and be able to expropriate the latter.

The Real Meaning of "Nationalization" in Post-War Europe

Germain writes (in Fourth International, Sept. 1946, p.273):
". . . The opportunist leaders helped the bourgeoisie liquidate workers' attempts at expropriation. Admitting at first the fait accompli of the expropriations, the Stalinist and Reformist leaders tried to undermine the workers' committees who controlled and, in fact, managed these factories. This they accomplished by sending in government commissars, who under their disguises, were really 'Trojan horses' of the capitalist state introduced into the bastions of a new workers' order. Soon the Stalinists and Reformists discovered that these factories ought to be 'given to the nation,' that is to say, 'nationalized.' Employing all types of economic, political and military pressure, the Stalinist leaders eliminated workers' control (and) management; finally complete control and management of the enterprises was vested again in the bourgeois state. All this was finally consummated by the payment of handsome 'compensation' to the former proprietors. In this way the opportunist leaders transformed real expropriations by the workers into financial operations profitable to certain capitalist groups. That is what happened in France, Italy, Czechoslovakia, and in several regions of Germany."

This happened in West Europe and in East Europe. Germain writes (in Fourth International, April 1949, p.106 -- his emphasis): "When the old state machinery was destroyed in Yugoslavia, Poland, and partially in Czechoslovakia and Bulgaria, the workers in these countries in numerous cases seized the factories and even the power itself.

"The establishment of the regimes labeled 'progressive democracies' thus consisted in a veritable political expropriation of the proletariat, through the reintroduction of the machinery of the bourgeois state (parliament, irremovable judiciary, standing army, corps of functionaries, etc.). This was intended not so much at 'appeasing' Western imperialism (we can see it better today) as to keep the proletariat in a tight bureaucratic straightjacket."

"Nationalization" here meant that the factories were taken from the workers and given to the CAPITALIST state. Earlier in the same article, Comrade Germain tells us: ". . . Nationalization in these countries does not in any way whatever place the means of production in the hands of the producers, the workers. The means of production remain at the disposal of the bureaucrats, the functionaries of the 'party,' the state and the economy whose rights in the factories are far greater than yesterday's bosses and against whom the worker has no means of defense. . . "

THE SAME FORCE WHICH STATIFIED PROPERTY, AT THE SAME TIME DROVE THE WORKERS INTO DEEPER SUBJECTION.

It appears then that state property and private property are not qualitatively different, opposed social orders -- just as large-scale monopoly is not sociologically different from small-scale capitalism.

We know that capitalism is not static. Its organization changes from laissez-faire to monopoly -- and then into state-monopoly -- as a result of the centralization of capital. But through all these changes the basic laws of capitalism continue to dominate the economy.

Let us examine the views of our great teachers on this matter. Marxists do not follow them blindly -- but we do consider their opinions carefully, for they have proved their ability in problems of society. Those who wish to differ should make sure of a solid theoretical basis for their disagreements.

MARX & ENGELS: STATE CAPITALISM IS COMING

"This limit would not be reached in any particular society until the entire social capital would be united, either in the hands of one single capitalist, or in those of one single corporation." (Marx, "Capital," Vol. I, p.688)

". . . Neither the transformation into joint-stock companies (or trusts) nor that into state-property, eliminates the capitalist character of the productive forces. . . The modern state, regardless of its form, is essentially a capitalistic machine, the state of the capitalists, the ideal collective capitalist. The more productive forces it takes over into its possession, so much more does it become the actual collective capitalist. . ." (Engels, "Anti-Duhring," p.290).

LENIN ON STATE CAPITALIST MONOPOLY: "At present the post-office is a business organized on the lines of a state capitalist monopoly. Imperialism is gradually transforming all trusts into organizations of a similar type. Above the 'common' workers, who are overloaded with work and starving, there stands here the same bourgeois bureaucracy." ("State and Revolution," p.43 -- my emphasis -- GT).

Lenin says further, on page 57: ". . . The bourgeois reformist view that monopoly capitalism or state-monopoly capitalism is no longer capitalism, but can already be termed 'state Socialism,' or something of that sort, is a very widespread error. The trusts, of course, have not created, do not create now, and cannot create full and complete planning. But, however much of a plan they may create, however closely capitalist magnates may estimate in advance the extent of production on a national and even international scale, and however systematically they may regulate it, we will remain under capitalism -- capitalism, it is true, in its new stage, but still, unquestionably, capitalism." (My emphasis -- GT).

Lenin did not wait for juridical statification to be completed; for the entry to be made in the law-books. He saw the physical centralization and fusion of industry with the state, and said that we had already entered "the era of vast state-capitalist and military trusts and syndicates." In 1917 he said: "Nationalization of industry has advanced not only in Germany, but also in England. Monopoly, in general, has evolved into, state monopoly.

". . . The war has accelerated the development of capitalism; it advanced from capitalism to imperialism; from monopoly to nationalization. . .

"Present economic conditions have caused the disappearance of planless capitalism. Up to the war there were monopolies, trusts, syndicates; since the war we have had state monopoly."

PLANNING POSSIBLE UNDER CAPITALISM, SAY ENGELS AND LENIN

". . . Engels pointed out that to characterize capitalism as something distinguished by its planlessness, means to overlook the role played by trusts. . . Engels' criticism was that 'when we come to the trust, then planlessness disappears,' though there is capitalism. This remark of Engels is particularly appropriate now, when we have a military state, when we have state-monopoly capitalism. The introduction of planning into industry keeps the workers enslaved none the less, though it enables the capitalists to gather in their profits in a more planful way. We now witness the metamorphosis of capitalism into a higher, a regulated form of capitalism."

This is in "The April Conference," on pages 23 and 29. This conception of Lenin's pervaded the Manifesto of the First Congress of the Communist International, written by Trotsky: "The state-ization of economic life. . . has become an accomplished fact. There is no turning back from this fact -- it is impossible to return not only to free competition but even to the domination of trusts, syndicates and other economic octopuses. Today the one and only issue is: Who shall henceforth be the bearer of state-ized production -- the imperialist state or the state of the victorious proletariat?" ("The First Five Years of the Communist International," p.23).

Is the Growth of the Productive Forces Progressive?

Isn't statification progressive -- regardless of who dies it -- because it advances the productive forces?

Marxists have never denied the economic superiority, the greater efficiency and productivity, of large-scale monopoly production as compared with small-scale. Complete centralization by the capitalist state is even more efficient than private monopoly.

CAPITALISM INCREASES PRODUCTIVE FORCES TODAY

Lenin says in "Imperialism" (Collected Works, Vol. XIX, p.193): "It would be a mistake to believe that this tendency to decay precludes the possibility of the rapid growth of capitalism. It does not. In the epoch of imperialism, certain branches of industry, certain strata of the bourgeoisie and certain countries betray, to a more or less degree, one or another of these tendencies. On the whole, capitalism is growing far more rapidly than before. But this growth is not only becoming more and more uneven in general; its unevenness also manifests itself, in particular, in the decay of the countries which are richest in capital (such as England)." (My emphasis -- GT).

German capitalism from 1933 to 1944 achieved the highest level of its productive forces in history, quantitatively as well as in qualitatively new techniques. American capitalism has made 1929 look puny. Plastics, television, trans-ocean air travel, radar, synthetic rubber, "electronic brain" computers, V-rockets, snorkel subs, scientific gas-chambers, jet propulsion, supersonic flight. . . The crowning achievement of capitalism is atomic power. The uranium nucleus split, hydrogen is being tackled, and mankind trembles. The US government is working on a project to build an artificial moon to circle the earth.

In these more grandiose works, American capitalism practices state property, apparently convinced of its superiority.

AND BRINGS MORE MISERY TO MASSES.

This improved technology tends, ultimately, to raise the masses' consciousness. But under capitalist rule today, it produces slaughter for the proletariat, the only progressive force in society; it brings destruction to its homes and cities.

American production feats are used by capitalist propagandists as proof that their social system is progressive. They point to experimental atomic power plants, and to isotopes in medical research-- and they claim that US capitalism will develop atomic energy to meet the vast needs of the masses. They lie -- to cover up the fact that 99% of the atomic industry is preparing mass murder.

The Vishinskys claim that Russia, unlike America, does use the productive forces for the people's welfare. They talk of atomic energy razing mountains, irrigating deserts. This, too, is a lie. Trotsky wrote: "The growth of the productive forces has been so far accompanied by an extreme development of all forms of inequality, privilege and advantage, and therewith of bureaucratism." ("The Revolution Betrayed," p.112).

The facts show that since the workers were "politically expropriated" in Russia, the rise in the productive forces has brought them increasing misery.* Beria's atomic industry is no more capable

*See economic facts in articles by T. Cliff and F. Forest, referred to on page 17.

of satisfying their needs than is Lillienthal's. Both are machines of death.

We are therefore led to these conclusions:

Only when it is controlled by the emancipated working class, can modern science be used to satisfy the people's needs. This cannot be done by a ruling minority which "politically expropriates" the workers. Every ruling power which develops the productive forces today, does so essentially to provide a better weapon for its war against the working class.

THE TASK OF THE EPOCH IS THE REORGANIZATION OF HUMAN RELATIONS BY THE PROLETARIAT TAKING POWER. Only thus can the ultimate progressive effects of modern technology be realized. Only that is progressive, therefore, which raises the real power and strength of the working class. Whatever weakens that power is reactionary.

State property, planned economy, is more efficient. . . in the hands of whoever controls it, for their purposes. In the hands of the workers, it is a more efficient tool for raising the workers' standards and building socialism. In the hands of an exploiting minority, it can only be a more efficient and brutal instrument of exploitation. . . for waging war on the proletariat.

THE POWER OF THE WORKERS IS TODAY THE ONLY MEASURE OF PROGRESS.

What is the Definition of a Workers' State?

Let us first define a state. Lenin said over and over: "The state is nothing but a machine for the suppression of one class by another."

It is, basically, an apparatus controlled directly or indirectly by the ruling class; it works to preserve and extend the production relations favorable to that class; and is the latter's chief weapon in the struggle with other classes.

The class character of any state can be found by answering these questions: Which class really dominates the state? Whose class interests does it serve?

Subject to the disruption of planning due to the class struggle and conflicts among the rulers, complete stratification and planning are compatible with capitalism, according to Lenin. Something else, therefore, must be the criterion for a workers' state.

LENIN GIVES HIS AND MARX'S DEFINITION OF A WORKERS' STATE: "Already in the Communist Manifesto, in describing what sort of state the victorious proletariat needs, Marx wrote: 'A state, that is, the proletariat organized as the ruling class.'" ("Proletarian Revolution and Renegade Kautsky," p.42).

Lenin comments in "State and Revolution" (p.24): "'The state, i.e., the proletariat organized as the ruling class' -- this theory of Marx's is indissolubly connected with all his teaching concerning the revolutionary role of the proletariat in history. The culmination of this role is proletarian dictatorship, the political rule of the proletariat."

LENIN: A WORKERS' STATE MEANS -- RULE BY THE WORKERS

"If we argue in a Marxian way we must say: The exploiters inevitably transform the state. . . into an instrument for the domination of their class, of the exploiters, over the exploited. . . The state of the exploited must fundamentally differ from such a state; it must be democracy for the exploited, and a means of suppressing the exploiters. . ." ("Proletarian Revolution and Renegade Kautsky," p.32).

The proletarian revolution is a total overturn. Its political and economic aspects are virtually inseparable. The political aspect is described by Lenin thus: ". . . Revolution consists in the proletariat's destroying the 'administrative apparatus' and the whole state machinery, and replacing it by a new one." ("State and Revolution," p.96; Lenin's emphasis).

And the economic aspect, Lenin tells us, is the replacement "of the capitalists and bureaucrats. . . in the control of production and distribution, in the business of control of labor and products," by the workers. (p.83; my emphasis -- GT).

"Accounting and control -- these are the chief things necessary for the organizing and correct functioning of the first phase of

Communist society." (p.83, Lenin's emphasis).

The difference between capitalism and socialism, to Lenin, was NOT statification: ". . . Socialism is nothing but the next step forward from state capitalist monopoly." In other words, Socialism is nothing but state capitalist monopoly made to benefit the whole people; by this token it ceases to be capitalist monopoly." ("The Threatening Catastrophe," p.37, Lenin's emphasis).

Control FROM BELOW is what counts, says Lenin: "There is no other way of earnestly fighting the financial disorganization and the inevitable financial collapse than a revolutionary rupture with the interests of capital and organization of really democratic control, i.e., control 'from below,' control of the workers and the poorest peasants over the capitalists -- that way which all our preceding analysis deals with." (p.33)

Workers' control was not an abstraction for Lenin. He said at the April Conference (p.25 of the latter pamphlet): "I shall conclude by referring to the speech that made the strongest impression on me. I heard a coal miner deliver a remarkable speech. Without using a single bookish word, he told how they had made the revolution. Those miners were not concerned with the question as to whether or not they should have a president. They seized the mine, and the important question to them was how to keep the cables intact so that production might not be interrupted. Then came the question of bread, of which there was a scarcity. And the miners again agreed on the method of obtaining it. Now this is a real program of the revolution, not derived from books."

"THE MAIN THING...THE TRANSFER OF ACTUAL CONTROL TO THE WORKERS"

"It is to the advantage of the capitalists and the bureaucrats to make all kinds of 'boundless promises,' and thus to divert the attention of the people from the main thing, namely, from the transfer of actual control to the workers."

"The workers must sweep aside all high-sounding phrases, promises, declarations, projects evolved in the centre by bureaucrats ready every minute to apply themselves to drawing up the most effective plans, regulations, statutes, rules. . . The workers must demand the immediate establishment of actual control, to be exercised only by the workers themselves."

"This is imperative for the success of the cause, the cause of averting a catastrophe. If this is lacking, the rest is sheer deception." (Lenin, "The Threatening Catastrophe," p.48-9; my emphasis -- GT).

TROTSKY'S PRE-1934 DEFINITION OF A WORKERS' STATE: RULE BY THE WORKERS

Up to 1934, Trotsky's definition was similar to Lenin's. He wrote about Russia in 1930: "Thermidor signalizes the first victorious stage of the counter-revolution, that is, the direct transfer of power from the hands of one class into the hands of another, where-with this transfer, although necessarily accompanied by civil war, is nevertheless masked politically by the fact that the struggle oc-

curs between the factions of a party that was yesterday united. . . Thermidor thus does not signify a period of reaction in general, i.e., a period of ebb, of downsliding, of weakening of revolutionary positions. Thermidor has a much more precise meaning. It indicates the direct transfer of power into the hands of a different class, after which the revolutionary class cannot regain power except through an armed uprising." (Fourth International, Dec. 1946, p.364)

Trotsky in 1930 held that Thermidor had not yet come, and therefore Russia was still a workers' state. He knew that in France in 1794, the shift of power from the plebeian masses to the right-wing bourgeoisie did not change the social order -- capitalism. In a workers' state, however -- if the proletariat loses all power, that ends the workers' state. Later in the same article Trotsky told us: "There is no government beyond classes. In relation to the proletarian revolution Thermidor signifies the transfer of power from the hands of the proletariat into the hands of the bourgeoisie. It can signify nothing else. If Thermidor has been accomplished, it means that Russia is a bourgeois state." (Fourth International, Feb. 1947, p.62).

Even in a degenerated workers' state, thought Trotsky, the workers have enough control over the state to enable them to change the regime WITHOUT an armed uprising. He wrote in 1931: "The recognition of the present Soviet State as a workers' state not only signifies that the bourgeoisie can conquer power in no other way than by an armed uprising but also that the proletariat of the USSR has not forfeited the possibility of submitting the bureaucracy to it, of reviving the party again and of mending the regime of the dictatorship--without a new revolution, with the methods and on the road of reform." ("Problems of the Development of the USSR," p.36)

Then came what Trotsky called "a number of minor civil wars waged by the bureaucracy against the proletarian vanguard." (He wrote elsewhere of dual power in Russia in the '30s. Dual power means -- latent civil war.) The big purges shook every village and factory from top to bottom. The proletariat was politically expropriated, said Trotsky.

TROTSKY'S NEW DEFINITION OF A WORKERS' STATE: STATE PROPERTY

If he were to hold to his original definition, he would be obliged to say that capitalism had been restored in Russia. But Trotsky held that capitalism had to have private property. Not seeing any in Russia, he changed his definition. The essence of a workers' state became -- statification.

Trotsky then reconsidered history in the light of his new definition. In "The Soviet Union and the Fourth International" (1934) he said that the Paris Commune was not a dictatorship of the proletariat, because it did not "overturn property relations," i.e., it did not statify property.

And the Russian workers' state did not begin until autumn of 1918, when industry was statified: ". . . Up to autumn of 1918. . . the social content of the revolution was restricted to a petty-bourgeois agrarian overturn and workers' control over production.

This means that the revolution in its actions had not yet passed the boundaries of bourgeois society. . . Only toward the autumn of 1918, did. . . the workers (go) forward with the nationalization of the means of production. Only from this time can one speak of the inception of a real dictatorship of the proletariat."

Trying to be consistent with his new definition, Trotsky here seems to say: The October 1917 revolution was not a proletarian, but a bourgeois revolution; Lenin and Trotsky presided over a bourgeois state, which they changed into a workers' state in the fall of 1918 by passing a law.

PART II -- DIFFERENT DEFINITIONS TESTED BY EVENTS

Consequences of Trotsky's New Definition

We ran into theoretical difficulties when Russia seized East Poland and the Baltic countries in 1939. That was called, bureaucratic-military transformation of capitalist states into workers' states. Even here Trotsky sought, and thought he found, a deformed civil war of the workers as the motive force. For he was aware that Marxism stands or falls on the proposition that only the workers can end capitalism.

In any case, we were told, this couldn't happen on a large scale.

Now it has happened on a large scale. The IEC wrote: "The transition between capitalism and Soviet society has resulted not from a proletarian revolution, but from a military-political overturn which eliminated the big bourgeoisie and the bulk of the middle bourgeoisie." (International Information Bulletin, June 1949, p.17)

Here the Majority says that 90 million people are being liberated from capitalism, and the bourgeoisie has been eliminated -- from above, without the action of the workers. The Minority sees this transition as already completed.

Comrade Hansen tries to escape theoretical danger by finding in East Europe a bureaucratically operated civil war, "like a flame thrower against isolated detachments." This equates the manipulation from above of workers in chains, with the most profound revolution humanity has ever known.

This departure from our norm for the overthrow of capitalism, we are now told, can't happen in industrial countries. It cannot occur in Western Europe. If it could, says Comrade E.R.Frank, "it would follow that Stalinism is the wave of the future which is destined to usher in the new society."

Comrade E.R.Frank here has issued a promissory note which he may have to redeem sooner than he thinks. Czechoslovakia is an industrial country. So is Eastern Germany, a part of Western Europe. In case of war the Russian army could occupy all Europe; and as a military measure against the friends of the US it may satisfy all property in France, Germany, Italy.

In effect, Comrade E.R.Frank appears to be relying on American imperialism as the sole force which denies to Stalinism the possibil-

ity of abolishing capitalism on a world scale.

IMPLICATIONS FOR OUR MOVEMENT

Both Majority and Minority leave the door open to several conclusions: (1) If the Stalinist bureaucracy can liquidate the bourgeoisie in Eastern Europe, then IN PRINCIPLE it can do the same for the rest of the world; (2) if we consider this overturn as made from above, without the revolutionary action of the masses, we are led to the possible replacement of world capitalism not by real workers' power but by the Stalinist tyranny (regardless of the label we put on the latter). This is, in essence, the outlook of Shachtman's theory of "bureaucratic collectivism," and means the abandonment of the revolutionary perspective.* (3) Even if we consider that Stalin-

*Pablo speaks of a "period of transition from capitalism to socialism. . . which can extend for centuries"; in which the workers' states, in the midst of capitalist encirclement, "can reach the point of complete political expropriation of the proletariat." This is attributed to Trotsky -- in the face of Trotsky's warnings that capitalism must triumph in a bourgeois-encircled workers' state within a time much shorter than "centuries."

ism did it through a deformed revolution of the masses, we grant it a revolutionary role. We cannot then avoid the conclusion that the Stalinist parties can lead successful revolutions. We must then re-evaluate (as some comrades have already done) the orientation on the prospects of the Fourth International, based on Trotsky's thesis sixteen years ago that the Stalinist parties are utterly incapable of leading revolutions.

These appear to be logical results of Trotsky's 1934 revision of the classic Marxist definition of a workers' state. They bring our movement to the cross-roads.

The Marxist-Leninist Definition Applied to Eastern Europe

Our only alternative is to return to the concept of Marx, Engels and Lenin -- which we can summarize thus:

Wherever the workers are wage-slaves, subject to the modern machine -- there is capitalism.

The new society can be created only by the WORKERS FREEING THEMSELVES BY THEIR OWN ACTION, setting up their own control over the machine.

A state is a workers' state only if it is actually CONTROLLED by the working class.

Let us see how this applies to Eastern Europe.

THE POSITION OF THE WORKING CLASS IN SOCIETY

Since we are a workers' party, our first job is to look at the position of the workers.

Begin in America. If reaction has its way, the present purges, blacklists and trials will pave the road for harsher steps: a totalitarian military dictatorship. . . the FBI becoming a full-fledged Gestapo. . . outlawing of the SWP and all other workers' parties. . . a super-Taft-Hartley law outlawing unions; setting up company unions; enacting the death penalty for strikers. . . conscription of huge forced-labor brigades to dig underground sites for war industries. . .

Of course the workers will put up a lot of resistance, and will probably be successful. If, however, they should be defeated, and these things should come to pass -- the American working class will have reached the position in society occupied today by the proletariat in Eastern Europe -- where, the Minority says, the workers are in power as the ruling class, even though politically expropriated.

A question suggests itself: If the workers have no control at all over the state -- and this state is the sole owner of the means of production -- isn't it obvious that the workers have no more economic power than political power?

The workers there have nothing but their labor-power.

Where else, on earth, does the working class have an economic and political position similar to that behind the iron curtain? Only under a FASCIST regime!

The comrades are saying that a workers' state -- or one which is abolishing capitalism and is in "transition" to a workers' state -- can be just as cruel, as oppressive, as barbaric -- as the most reactionary form of capitalism.

Many a worker will think: "If that's a workers' state, I'll have none of it. Why should I take the risks and sacrifices of fighting for that? Better to string along with capitalism."

LET'S BE DIALECTICAL ON NORMS AND FACTS

Our norm defines day by the shining of the sun. When the sun is obscured by clouds, it is still -- day. But when it gets so dark that we see the stars -- then the norm is negated, and we have night. Nowhere in history has the working class been more brutally suppressed than under Stalinist rule today. How can we call that a "workers' state," however deformed?

From its birth the workers' state represents new heights of freedom for the masses. The vestiges of class exploitation are just that-- vestiges. If, however, these grow to a point where they are dominant; and the working class loses all control, falling back to the old subjection; and the main activity of the state is to strengthen the relations of inequality instead of fighting them -- then how can that state be considered a workers' state, an instrument of the proletariat for the building of socialism?

Eastern Europe is no exception to Marxism. The state there, like every state, is controlled by a class. Not the working class -- which has not the slightest bit of control. That state works to pre-

serve and extend the production relations under the rule of the bureaucracy; these relations are favorable not to the working class -- for whom they mean increased exploitation -- but to the ruling class which gets the profits. The state in Eastern Europe serves the ruling class in its struggle with other classes -- first of which is its own proletariat; it also fights its capitalist rivals, but will always unite with them against the workers. Such a state, by the Marxist-Leninist definition, is NOT a workers' state.

The Majority agrees that the states in Eastern Europe are not workers' states.* Comrade Stein, in the Internal Bulletin (Oct. 1949, p.20) says that "a good part of their industry is actually operated

*It has referred to them as capitalist states which are in transition toward workers' states (by structural assimilation to the SU). But in Yugoslavia, says Germain, there is a "workers' and peasants' government" but neither a workers' state nor a bourgeois state.

". . . The state apparatus reconstructed in 1944-45 was not a workers' state apparatus." (p.8) ". . . For Yugoslavia between 1944 and 1948 . . . the exceptional weaknesses of the bourgeoisie has no longer permitted the reconstruction of bourgeois state power." (p.34) (International Information Bulletin, Jan. 1950)

as capitalist trusts for the profit of the Kremlin."

The IEC Plenum (International Information Bulletin, June 1949, p.12) says there is "planning exclusively for the profit of the Soviet bureaucracy and of the parties holding power in the 'people's democracies'."

CAPITALISM WITHOUT CAPITALISTS?

Capitalist exploitation exists, but no bourgeoisie is in power, says the Majority.

Marxists have hitherto thought it necessary, under capitalism, that there be a class of capitalists to do the exploiting -- to manage the factories, to drive the workers and receive the profits. . . and to reinvest the bulk of the latter in industrial expansion.

Germain explains that at times a workers' bureaucracy functions as a capitalist. He gives several examples. Here is another. The Brotherhood of Locomotive Engineers owns a hotel in Cleveland, which it operated with scabs during a hotel workers' strike. Yet the leaders of this union put up a militant fight for the railway engineers against their bosses. (If they didn't, they'd be ousted from office by the railwaymen.)

Now suppose this union were the owner of one-sixth of the railroads. . . and ruthlessly exploited the rail workers, crushed their right to strike, eliminated all workers' committees. . . and suppose the bureaucrats sent thugs to help other rail bosses break strikes... after which, suppose they seized other railways and wiped out union standards. . . In that case we would have not a union, but a company union.

This could be the picture if the rail workers had as little control over that union as the hotel workers. But the bureaucracy is today a workers' bureaucracy precisely because it is sufficiently dominated by the railwaymen, and therefore compelled to defend their concrete interests, even if inadequately.

In Eastern Europe things are different. The workers there have essentially the same relation to the means of production, and to the bureaucracy, as do the workers in Russia. The bureaucracy in East Europe performs every function in the process of production that would be performed by a bourgeoisie; and it does so in Russia also.

Marx said that capital is a function, a social relation between classes. In "Wage-Labor and Capital" he underlined: "It is only the dominion of past, accumulated, materialized labor over immediate living labor that stamps the accumulated labor with the character of capital."

What changed in production when Stalinist bureaucrats replaced the old owners? What difference is there in the process in the factories, in the functioning of the economy, between East Europe and Russia? Or between East Europe now and Mussolini's republic?

The answer is -- no significant difference. The real physical relationship of the Stalinist bureaucracy to the working class, in the spheres of production and consumption -- vitally affecting the life, work and death of the workers -- this relationship is basically identical to that existing between the bourgeoisie and the proletariat in the Western countries.

CAPITAL AND LABOR BEHIND THE IRON CURTAIN

When the workers in social production have no control over the means of production, the only thing they have is their labor-power. The means of production then must be capital -- and the workers wage-slaves. The bureaucracy's urge for power and privileges is but the reflection in its mind of the objective self-expansion of capital, which drives it to develop industry as fast as possible. It can do this only by keeping workers' wages down to a minimum -- the value of their labor-power. The workers can't change this because they have no control.

From this flow inexorably all the laws of capitalism. The law of value dominates.* The ruling principle in the economy is the pro-

*Unlike a workers' state, where it does not dominate the economy, though wage and money forms are used.

duction of surplus value. Living labor is subordinated to dead labor; consumption subordinated to capital accumulation; variable capital subordinated to constant capital. The state exercises the functions of a monopolistic corporation.

The rise of constant capital relative to variable, causes the rate of profit to drop. (This occurs regardless of how the profits are divided within the ruling class -- equally or unequally, through free market or state regulation.) The greater their production, the

greater is the misery of the masses -- ultimately forcing them to choose revolution or face destruction.*

*For the facts and figures on the economy in Russia, see "The Nature of Stalinist Russia" by T. Cliff; RCP Internal Bulletin, June 1948; and F. Forest's "An Analysis of Russian Economy," New International, Dec. 1942, Jan. 1943, Feb. 1943; "The Nature of Russian Economy," New International, Dec. 1946, Jan. 1947.

It follows, from these relations of production, that Eastern Europe must be considered part of a vast state-capitalist trust run from Moscow.

In 1937 Trotsky wrote: "Should a bourgeois counter-revolution succeed in Russia, the new government for a lengthy period would have to base itself upon nationalized economy." ("Not a Workers' and Not a Bourgeois State?" -- my emphasis -- GT).

If this had happened, would the new government have behaved any differently from the present bureaucracy? It would not. How can we, then, say with assurance that the present Kremlin regime is not such a bourgeois government?

A bourgeois counter-revolution, Trotsky said in 1930, would be accompanied by civil war "between the factions of a party that was yesterday united." And in 1935 he wrote that there was civil war by the bureaucracy against the proletariat.

All conditions for a capitalist restoration have been met. It follows, then, that it did occur. It took place when the working class was politically, and hence also economically, expropriated. The degeneration has been completed -- and capitalism restored -- as Lenin and Trotsky predicted in the event the world revolution were delayed.

This provides us with the key to the solution of the Eastern Europe dilemma.

PART III -- WHAT HAPPENED IN EAST EUROPE

Revolution and Counter-Revolution in Europe

At the war's end, workers and peasants in many areas of Europe formed committees, seized factories and land, built mass parties, and raised the cry, "Socialism!" Then came the counter-revolution. In West Europe, the workers were set back, but they still retain their unions, their parties, their rights more or less. (We say that Western Europe is capitalist.)

In Eastern Europe, on the other hand, the workers were not merely set back. They were crushed. Their unions smashed, parties outlawed, their rights wiped out, under the reign of slave-labor camps and firing squads. Every attempt at class struggle, every attempt to revive workers' organizations, meets the most bloody terror from the state-boss. (This, comrades call a workers' state -- or a state in transition thereto. Isn't this dragging the concept of the workers' state through the mud?)

How explain the elimination of the native capitalists? It follows from our preceding analysis that the Russian bureaucracy, functioning as an imperialist bourgeoisie, used its army to impose its rule over these lands. Moscow kept the native capitalists as junior partners in crushing the revolution and rebuilding the bourgeois state.

Once this was accomplished, the Kremlin eliminated the native capitalists and installed outright quislings. (As Hitler did in Poland.) Society and the state remained bourgeois.

This was the case in Yugoslavia too, with a difference: Here the CP bureaucracy had more of an independent base in the country, and was strong enough to break with Moscow in 1948.

What Took Place in Yugoslavia?

"The Yugoslav Partisan movement originated as an indubitable movement of the masses, whose worker-peasant sections aspired not only to drive the Nazi conquerors out of their country, but to abolish the rule of the rapacious and reactionary landlord and capitalist cliques represented by King Peter and his Government-in-Exile." (1944 SWP convention).

This convention described the role of the CP thus: "In Yugoslavia, the Stalinists, headed by Tito, took the leadership of the revolutionary mass movement under the guise of aiding and organizing it and then proceeded to bend it to their own reactionary purposes."

The program adopted by the Partisan conference in Bihac in 1942, under the leadership of the Yugoslav CP, provided: "(1) Liberation of the country. . . and winning. . . true democratic rights for all the peoples. . . (2) Inviolability of private property. Provision of every possible opportunity for individual initiative in industrial and economic enterprise. (3) No radical changes whatsoever in the social life and activities of the people except for the replacement of reactionary village authorities and gendarmes by popularly elected representatives. . . ." (American Mercury, Nov. 1945)

This program, and complete unity with the Allies and their war aims, was reaffirmed by Tito and his aides throughout the war. Tito had faith "in the great alliance of the Soviet Union, Great Britain and the United States -- an alliance of the greatest States in the world, which have devoted all their strength to serve humanity." (NY Times, Nov. 13, 1944. See also the Times of Dec. 5 (Magazine), Dec. 9, 10, 14, 15, 22, 24, 1943; Jan. 8, March 8, April. 11, May 5, 22, June 25, Oct. 22, Nov. 11, 25, Dec. 2, 20, 1944; Mar. 11, Apr. 16, 18, July 17, 18, 19, Aug. 6, 1945).

On May 24, 1944, Churchill hailed Franco, the King of Italy, the Greek monarchists; and Stalin for wiping out "the Trotskyite form of communism." In the same speech Churchill said: "We have proclaimed ourselves strong supporters of Marshall Tito. . . Marshal Tito has largely sunk his communistic aspect in his character as a Yugoslav patriotic leader. He has repeatedly proclaimed that he has no intention of reversing the property and social systems which prevail in Serbia. . . ." (See other Churchill speeches on Feb. 22, 1944 and Jan. 18, 1945).

At the time there was no mention of "proletarian brigades."

The Tito-Subasitch agreement in June, 1944 established unity with the Royal Government. Said the 1944 SWP convention: "The Stalinists have betrayed the aspirations of the masses; they have already united with the hated regime of King Peter, set up a class-collaborationist government, and have proclaimed their intention of preserving the capitalist setup, dominated by the same old crew of monarchists, landlords and capitalists. Utilizing the slogan of national liberation, the Stalinists are working to deliver the Yugoslav masses into the hands of their oppressors."

WHAT WE SAID THEN

In October, 1944 the Russian Army entered Belgrade, and its bayonets at last brought success to the coalition regime's war on the masses. The new bourgeois state took the factories from the workers. E.R. Frank wrote in Fourth International, Nov., 1946: ". . . No sooner was the present Tito government installed than it began to emulate all the other Eastern European police regimes in its savagery and terror. . . An atmosphere of fear pervaded the capital. . . The dreaded secret police, the OZNA, were operating everywhere. Tito is imitating Stalinist Russia even to copying the elegantly cut uniforms of the Kremlin bureaucrats and weighing down his military tunic with countless shining medals. . .

"Yugoslavia resembles the USSR far more than any other Eastern European country, because, arising on the crest of a social revolutionary movement which wiped out the power of the capitalists and landlords, it proceeded to consolidate its rule by bureaucratizing the mass movement, destroying the democratic rights of the toiling masses, suppressing the workers' committees and independent organs of expression, and ruling by police measures and terror." (p.336)

Further on, Frank speaks of "the creation of a huge capitalist-like governmental bureaucracy composed of old pre-war bureaucrats, dispossessed landlords and factory owners, Stalinist functionaries, 'reconstructed' fascists, monarchist generals and the like." (p.343)

This reactionary bureaucracy is the leading core of the Yugoslav CP. Its power over the masses is the result of a counter-revolution--the reestablishment of the bourgeois state. (The 1948 World Congress of the Fourth International declared that capitalist states were rebuilt in all the East European countries -- Yugoslavia included.)

SHALL WE TAKE TITOIST "FACTS" AS GOOD COIN?

Compare what our party wrote above with what is being said today. Pablo quotes approvingly and at length Kardelj's version of events, including this paragraph: "Many people who were sent to Yugoslavia in 1944-45 as 'friends of the national liberation struggle' had their masks torn off and were shown to be common spies of foreign imperialism. They got in touch with the remnants of broken reactionary groups and together with them set up spy centers and supplied enemies abroad with 'information' about Yugoslavia; they fabricated slanders, attempted to organize diversionary actions and sabotage under the direct leadership and help of foreign imperialist intelli-

gence centers, hired terrorists and attempted to organize renegade groups." (International Information Bulletin, Dec., 1949, p.11)

If we don't recognize this language, the following should refresh our memory: Speech of Micunovic at 5th Congress, Yugoslav CP, July 26, 1948: ". . . Trotskyists and other capitalist spies. . . were being organized by reaction in order to deepen still further the rift in the present anti-imperialist camp. . . "

Vlahovic, member of the Central Committee of the Yugoslav CP, called the Fourth International "a gathering of imperialist spies" -- in an official statement on the anniversary of the Republic, Nov. 29, 1949.

IS YUGOSLAVIA A POLICE STATE?

Apparently not -- for Tito and Kardelj are leading it to greater democracy, according to Comrade Pablo. (Yet Borba just recently boasted of Tito's help in organizing the Czech, Rumanian and Bulgarian secret police.)

The Militant now reprints material from a Titoist organ in America published by L. Adamic.* Which shall we believe? Adamic's

*A petty-bourgeois Yugoslav nationalist, ex-admirer of the Kremlin -- who now upholds Tito, while flaying Russia's "Red imperialism."

statement that there is "no 'terror'" -- or The Militant writing about Tito on July 5, 1948: "The hands of this shady adventurer drip with the blood of hundreds of Yugoslav Trotskyists and other militants whom he murdered. . . "

Whom are we to believe? Kardelj -- or our own Albanian comrade who wrote (Fourth International, January, 1949): ". . . The Yugoslav Stalinists. . . (formed) a clique blindly obedient to their orders. Needless to say, their first directives were to eliminate by assassination the genuine Marxist-Leninist revolutionists."

Our comrade reports that militants were denounced as Trotskyists, traitors and spies. He speaks of "The cowardly assassination of hundreds of Marxist-Leninist revolutionists" by the Tito machine. He gives names of dozens of leading Albanian revolutionists who were murdered.

Hundreds -- for a country with one million population!

To Comrade Pablo, the Yugoslav CP was left centrist already during the war. (Fourth International, November, 1949)

Our Albanian comrade, speaking of Tito's rule over Albania before his break with Moscow, has another characterization: "Stalinism has not only substituted itself for fascism but has far surpassed fascism in its methods and politics."

FACTS -- OR WISHFUL THINKING?

We grasp at straws to support an incorrect position. We laud the "workers' councils" in Yugoslav factories -- overlooking their

role as covers for new speed-up laws freezing workers to their jobs under heavy penalties. (It should be noted that "workers' councils," chosen much more democratically, exist in the factories of Austria, West Germany and other capitalist countries.)

We speak of national equality in Yugoslavia -- and forget Tito's demand for Carinthia and \$190,000,000 from Austria. . . his appeal to the Allies to force Hungary to pay reparations. . . his completely chauvinistic propaganda at home.

We see "left centrists" -- and don't see the be-medalled Marshal and his bureaucrats, receiving the homage of crowds compelled to chant "Hero-Tito". . . "We are Tito's, Tito is ours". . . "Tito, Our All for Thee !"

The comrades who criticized the Titoists for not analyzing the material sociological base of the Russian bureaucracy -- commit the same error with respect to the Yugoslav bureaucracy. For a quarter century Trotskyism has fought Stalinism on two main points: (a) For world revolution -- against the theory of "socialism in one country." (b) For workers' democracy -- against bureaucracy.

Tito may pretend friendship for Trotskyists -- in order to mollify the Yugoslav masses who want socialism. But his bureaucracy will not deviate, on these two basic points, from the substance of Stalinism. He will continue: exploiting the masses; his one-party totalitarian police regime; his role in the UN.

CAN THE YUGOSLAV CP BECOME REVOLUTIONARY?

Trotsky put the Stalinist bureaucracies in the same category as the reformist labor fakers. Could the main body of Menshevik leaders have become Bolsheviks, under the revolution's impact? Can the Greens, Murrays and Reuthers become revolutionary socialists? Marxists have always considered these bureaucrats so reactionary that they could not be reformed -- but had to be replaced by a new leadership.

Trotsky wrote in "Stalinism and Bolshevism": "To the extent that the political center of gravity has shifted from the proletarian vanguard to the bureaucracy, the party has changed in its social structure as well as in its ideology." He goes on to say that there is "between Bolshevism and Stalinism not simply a bloody line but a whole river of blood."

This, says Trotsky, shows "not only a political but a thoroughly physical incompatibility between Bolshevism and Stalinism. How can this be ignored?"

This is just as applicable to the Yugoslav bureaucracy.

We have an excellent opportunity in this falling out among the Stalinist bureaucrats and their exposing each other. We should use it to free the workers from the ideological shackles of Stalinism, including the Belgrade variety; to drive home our positive lesson on the need for workers' democracy and workers' control, as against reliance on bureaucrats. The struggle of the Yugoslav people for free-

dom must be distinguished from the bureaucracy's defense of its power threatened by Moscow. Even if we consider Tito's fight against Stalin progressive, our support must be critical. (People who hail the Thieves' Den at Lake Success as a force for peace, and substitute it for the international organization of the proletariat, have never before been called centrists by us.)

In these times many bureaucrats will pretend to be socialists. But OUR PLACE IS WITH THE WORKERS, who are speeded up and frozen in their jobs -- NOT WITH THE BURFAUCRATS who enjoy the privileges. An overfriendly attitude on our part toward the Titoist bureaucrats may give us the illusion for a time of being with a "mass movement" -- but it can only help keep the workers tied to the ideology of Stalinism (Tito branch); and can only rouse the Yugoslav masses to distrust us.

PART IV -- CONCLUSIONS

The Total World Crisis

On April 3, 1950, General Marshall said that the cold war ranks with "any military campaign in history." The same day the Chairman of the House Appropriations Committee called the budget a "war budget," saying, "The country is at war. . . ."

World War III is now being fought on the fronts of economics, politics, diplomacy, propaganda and espionage.* The Big Two divide

*The prevailing theory in the Movement is that this conflict is basically a struggle between capitalism and a workers' state. It follows that the cold war is, at bottom, a battle to the death between capitalism and socialism. This is certainly not a trifle. One wonders why this idea does not appear in our press.

the world -- and all other ruling strata are subordinate to one or the other. BOTH are piling up bombs and heading for the hydrogen blow-up. Both Washington and Moscow are ruled by madmen whose main activity is directed toward the destruction of the entire human race.

ONLY THE WORKERS OF THE WORLD, TAKING POWER INTO THEIR OWN HANDS, CAN STOP THEM.

The workers are held back from power by two centers of counter-revolution -- one in Washington, the other in Moscow. BOTH wage war against their own proletariat, the only progressive class today -- trying to slash its standards, regiment and militarize it, destroy all its rights. Both war against the masses outside their borders, by all means from economic blockade to mass murder. Both bring more statification in economy and totalitarianization in politics, in a desperate effort to cope with the mounting crisis. Both face the world proletariat and colonial peoples as their main enemy.

And both are being challenged by the masses, most spectacularly the billion people of Asia, who are openly resisting all imperialism and making it unmistakably clear that they will submit neither to American nor Russian domination.

This is the towering reality -- the TOTAL world crisis of the mid-twentieth century. . . and the beginning of its solution. We are but dimly aware of it. We are not making its full import known to the workers.

Everything which strengthens the economic power, or the political power, or the military power, of either of these counter-revolutionary machines, is REACTIONARY.

This stratification in Eastern Europe strengthens a force which subjugates and massacres the workers.

The power of the working class is the only solution. Whatever strengthens that power -- is progressive. Whatever weakens it -- is reactionary.

The Defense of Yugoslavia's Independence

Trotsky opposed any defense, political or material, of the Czechoslovak state when it was threatened by Hitler -- and he gave the following reasons: (1) Even apart from outside imperialist influence, Czechoslovakia was an imperialist state in its own right, dominated by its own monopoly capital. (2) Outside imperialist influence made it a pawn in Big Power politics. (3) Socialists who defend it thereby show lack of faith in the workers' ability to defeat imperialism by proletarian revolution. (New International, Nov. 1938, p.328)

Trotsky's position was based on this: the bourgeoisie in this epoch subjugates nations -- it cannot bring or preserve national independence. Real national liberation is possible today only as the result of a mass movement led by the proletariat.

Our study has concluded that the 1944-5 counter-revolution set up state-monopoly capitalism in Yugoslavia, and that its bureaucracy functions as a bourgeoisie. This class analysis must govern our tactics.

When it was forced by the Cominform blockade to link up with Western economy, Yugoslavia was shown to be completely dependent economically on the Big Powers. It cannot, therefore, be really independent politically -- for only a revolutionary workers' state, appealing to the world proletariat for support, can maintain genuine and complete political independence of imperialism in such circumstances.

The mere fact of Tito's dependence on imperialism does not in itself prove anything as to the progressiveness or otherwise of his struggle. It is the degree of dependence which is decisive. The petty colonial bourgeoisie (e.g., in Indonesia) is partly dependent on imperialism -- but also subject to so much pressure from the masses that it can move (inconsistently) toward national freedom.

For a country in Europe like Czechoslovakia, according to Trotsky, this is impossible. Here the bourgeoisie is so reactionary, so completely tied to imperialism -- that even when it fights for independence from one empire, it actually functions as agent of another

imperialism. This is doubly true today when the Big Power antagonisms take the form of "cold" war.

IS TITO'S STRUGGLE PROGRESSIVE?

Tito, like the German rulers, utilizes the Big Power conflicts to extract concessions and build up his state. Unlike the native states in Asia, Tito's state can never even remotely express the interests of the masses -- for its basic principle, flowing from its counter-revolutionary nature and origin, is the crushing of the toilers under the totalitarian heel. It can use them only as cogs in its machine.

It therefore follows that, to the extent that the Yugoslav bureaucracy enters into conflict with Moscow, it must express the interests only of its own and American imperialism -- and must call on the latter for support, despite speeches of "independence." It does not and cannot really call on the world proletariat for aid. Tito and Atlee both talk "socialism" -- but neither can lead a progressive struggle against Stalinism.

The initial reaction of The Militant was the correct one, when it wrote on July 19, 1948: "Tito and Stalin want the workers to choose between them. . . Regardless of what Tito and Stalin want, the workers will surely reject this trap of choosing between the type of gold-braid worn in Belgrade as against the type Stalin prefers in the Kremlin."

A sociological examination will show that Tito's bureaucracy is essentially identical to Stalin's, except for language. Its real dispute with Moscow is over the division of the profits squeezed from the Yugoslav people. The Yugoslav state, party and army cannot be reformed, transformed or democratized. They must be destroyed by the people and replaced by genuine workers' and peasants' councils.

The news of slowdowns, desertions and guerrilla struggles in Eastern Europe gives promise that one day the masses will break their chains and go forward to their own class power. This alone will secure Yugoslavia's national freedom -- the independent action of the masses inside and outside the country, including the Russian toilers, in joint struggle against all Big Powers and native rulers. There is no short-cut to Yugoslav independence. Its true defense is not compatible with support of any kind to Tito's reactionary state.

How to Remove the Obstacles to Growth

A whole generation of workers have been poisoned with the teaching that the road to a new society lies through bureaucratic filth and terror -- that socialism and democracy are opposites. Workers have been led to depend on bureaucrats, instead of relying on their own self-activity.

The Trotskyists should fight this poison. They should counterpose the workers' state as the state of the liberated workers -- to the widespread belief that it is a police state, benevolent or otherwise.

The boss press dins into the workers' minds that "socialism" means -- austerity in England and GPU in Eastern Europe. And our

press. . . seems to be inhibited from telling the masses what "socialism" really means -- because, in part, we ourselves see some element of workers' state in that barbarism.

How can we tell the workers that the ending of capitalism means their liberation -- when we tell them that capitalism has been or is being ended in Eastern Europe -- and this means further degradation for the workers?

The Movement is hampered by its tortuous rationalizations about a "counter-revolutionary workers' state," flowing from the theory that state ownership and planning as such are progressive.

A BETTER ROAD

A discussion is taking place throughout world Trotskyism, which is deeply concerned with these momentous problems of the mid-twentieth century. Comrades who take the Movement and their ideas seriously, realize the need for a study of these questions from all points of view. All comrades should be encouraged to think about these matters and say what they think, for the fullest discussion is needed to prepare our cadres ideologically for the tasks ahead.

Our understanding will be aided if we distinguish real social content from organizational and legal forms -- and, at a time when state control is gaining around the globe -- we recognize:

1. Wherever the workers are wage-slaves, subjugated to the modern machine -- there is capitalism.

2. State property is as reactionary as private property, unless it is controlled by the workers themselves. Without workers' control it is but a step in the centralization-process of capital -- increasing the power of the bourgeoisie and its state against the workers.

3. The new society can be created only by the WORKERS FREEING THEMSELVES BY THEIR OWN CONSCIOUS ACTION and establishing their own control over the machine. This alone can break the present stalemate in society.

4. The Trotskyist movement must be the vanguard. It must show the masses in detail how the workers' and peasants' committees will solve the concrete problems of society, and use the advances of science for the good of all. It must stress the real meaning of workers' democracy and workers' planning. It must cut through the "nationalization" mess. It must take socialism from the realm of abstraction and make it real to the workers.*

*For elaboration on this point see SWP Internal Bulletin, Vol.X, No.4, June 1948, p.22-25.

Adopt this position, and the puzzling phenomena behind the iron curtain can be more easily explained -- without contradictions or confusion.

Suppose we were to do this. Wouldn't we be able to expose all this fake "socialism" in England and in Poland more effectively?

Wouldn't it be much easier to tell the workers that socialism, and the bridge to it, the workers' state, mean FREEDOM -- the emancipation of the workers from crippling subjection to an alien power -- their conversion from slaves of the machine to its masters?

Wouldn't this give the workers a better goal worth fighting for, multiplying the attractive power of our Movement?

The atomic clock has struck the eleventh hour. Let us correct our theory, so that we can grow unfettered into a force of millions. If we fail to do this, we may not have another chance.

April 14, 1950

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THE DISTINCTION BETWEEN "STATE" AND "SOCIETY"

Its importance in the discussion of the nature of the buffer states, and its implications and conclusions for Marxist theory.

By Dennis Vern, Los Angeles, Calif.

The two different positions on the nature of the buffer zone states are now established with considerable clarity. The resolutions of the IEC, the report of Comrade Stein to the NC and the discussion documents of Comrades Germain and Wright, on one side, and the discussion documents of Comrades Hansen, Pablo and Frank, on the other, serve to expose the methodological and practical differences separating the two positions. To this should be added, of course, the very revealing discussion in the National Committee.

This document will support the general thesis that all the buffer zone states are workers' states. The author has some subsidiary differences with the Minority. These will appear below. It appears very forcefully, however, that the Majority position develops from important deviations away from the Marxist method. By no means adequately versed in the various nuances of philosophical methods, we have defined these methodological errors of Germain, Wright and Stein in our own thinking, as deviations away from materialism in the specific form of subjectivism and impressionism. If there are better terms for all of this, we should be happy to learn them.

Consciousness and Comrade Stein

In illustrating the methodological errors of the Majority let us refer first to Page 15 of Comrade Stein's report to the Plenum. Here appears the following remarkable statement: "An inseparable part of Comrade Trotsky's definition of the class character of the Soviet Union was always the fact that 'the social revolution, betrayed by the ruling party, still exists in property relations and in the consciousness of the toiling masses.'" (Stein's emphasis)

Stein does not indicate the source of this quotation but it can be found on page 255 of "The Revolution Betrayed" (Doubleday-Doran edition). Trotsky here discusses two hypotheses for the future of the USSR: regeneration by political revolution, or bourgeois restoration. He then lists nine aspects of Soviet life influencing its development in both directions. Point Six is the one that Stein quotes. But Trotsky's third point reads: "norms of distribution preserving a bourgeois character lie at the basis of a new differentiation of society." Is this point likewise an inseparable part of Trotsky's definition of the class character of the Soviet state? Stein would not say so, we are certain, but the "state capitalists" might.

Stein confuses two questions. Trotsky is here defining the Soviet Union as a transition society between capitalism and socialism. This is indicated by the heading of the section with the sub-title: THE QUESTION OF THE CHARACTER OF THE SOVIET UNION NOT YET DECIDED BY HISTORY. The nine factors that Trotsky lists are factors characterizing the Soviet society as transitional and influencing its

development in both directions. For the future of the USSR, the consciousness of the working class is a factor of extreme importance. As points Eight and Nine declare: "on the road to capitalism the counter-revolution would have to break the resistance of the workers" and "on the road to socialism the workers would have to over-throw the bureaucracy."

A society which is transitional from capitalism to socialism can only have the political regime which we have designated as a Workers' State. All societies transitional from capitalism to socialism will have workers' states. As societies, however, and here lies Stein's error, they will not all exhibit all the characteristics exhibited by the USSR in its transition as listed by Trotsky. They will exhibit some of these characteristics and not exhibit others. They will doubtlessly produce characteristics of their own. Stein is wrong if he thinks the class character of the Soviet state is defined by any one or by all of these features. It is defined as a transitional society by all of them.

This mixing up of two different definitions serves a definite and obvious methodological function. It enables Stein to introduce the factor of consciousness into a definition of the class character of the Soviet state. This factor can then be employed toward the buffer states. It is a bit surprising but elsewhere in his report (page 14) Stein quotes Trotsky again: "Weak as our native bourgeoisie is, it is conscious, and for good reason, that it is a section of the world bourgeoisie, and that it constitutes the transmission mechanism of world imperialism." (Vern's emphasis) Trotsky, as is well known, did not deduce from this that the Soviet Union was a capitalist state. It is obvious that he deduced the same thing from the consciousness of the bourgeoisie that he deduced from the consciousness of the proletariat, namely that a sharp struggle was implicit in the situation. But for Stein the consciousness of the Russian proletariat becomes an inseparable part of our definition of the class character of the Soviet state.

This is not a materialist method. With this method we could establish the present French state as a workers' state because still present in the consciousness of the French proletariat is the consciousness of the Paris Commune. But why stop at national boundaries since consciousness does not itself stop there? Since both the Paris Commune and the October Revolution exist in the consciousness of the world working class, we could thus proclaim the World Socialist Federation. Comrade Stein, of course, will never arrive at such a monstrous conclusion. But his criterion of consciousness does. With this method of defining the class character of the state, we must inevitably commit serious errors.

This unhappy effort to employ consciousness as a criterion in a sphere where it has no application -- the analysis of the class character of the state -- permeates Stein's entire report. On page 4 he declares: "No mistake is possible in establishing the existence of a worker's state once the revolution has taken place. Nobody made that mistake after the October 1917 revolution. To recognize the existence of a workers' state at that time it was not necessary to study the statistics on nationalizations, or whether planning had been established, or if there was a monopoly of foreign trade." The objective factors, you see, need not be considered. ". . .everybody

knew there was a workers' state in Russia. Above all the Russian proletariat knew it; it was imbued with socialist consciousness; it was led by a confident party which the workers trusted." These subjective factors, we see, are the important ones.

Let us remind the comrade that these subjective factors existed, let us say, on October 15th (old calendar), that is, ten days before the insurrection. But if we decide the class character of the state on the basis of these subjective factors, then why was an insurrection necessary ten days later? Did it represent, perhaps, only some "qualitative leap" in the consciousness of the masses or the confidence of the Bolshevik Party? Not at all. That was already accomplished. The insurrection, the crowning and irreplaceable act of the Revolution, was necessary in order to accomplish certain objective tasks, to destroy the Provisional Government and establish the single power of the Soviets. This was accomplished by objective, material organizations and groups. If the insurrection had failed to create these objective factors in which was expressed the power of the working class, then "everybody would have realized" that the Russian state had not yet been transformed. The socialist consciousness of the proletariat and the confidence of its party could be declared adequate only on the basis of these objective factors. But this amounts to a declaration that it is the objective factors that we consider in this sphere and not the subjective ones.

The class consciousness of the proletariat is doubtlessly the single most important element in history and in politics. That does not mean, however, that it is a universal yardstick, everywhere and always applicable. The consciousness of the class is a ceaselessly changing factor. Its particular quality at a given moment can only be estimated by reference to objective facts. The consciousness of the Russian workers, adequate for the successful consummation of the insurrection, was not adequate, we recall, to prevent the subsequent strangulation of the Soviets by the Bureaucracy. The Bolshevik Party lost its confidence and the trust of the workers. At every stage in this process the subjective factors were expressed by objective facts: the consolidation of the bureaucracy, the purges, etc.

We would not dare construct a political program without paying close attention to the consciousness of the workers. But we should also not, in our movement and to its National Committee at that, attempt to define the nature of a given state, be it Russian, French, American or Hungarian, on the basis of mass consciousness.

The Subjective Factors and Comrade Wright

In the document of Comrade John Wright, "The Importance of Method, etc.," we find the following: "The plenum discussion brought to the fore a rather glaring self-contradiction in the approach of the minority supporters of the 'workers' state thesis.' Their viewpoint leaves little room, if any, for the role of the subjective factors. . . The role of the working class, the program, the party and the leadership, was so minimized by them, that it is, in effect, simply cancelled out. . ." (p.1) And again: ". . . our Trotskyist school of thought has rejected as false the notion of approaching economic factors. . . as if they led an independent existence, as if they could be weighed and evaluated. . . separate and apart from

their class roots and class content, independently of the methods of economic leadership. . . and independently of the political program and leadership involved." (p.6) And further: "It is only by correctly establishing the inter-relationship between the primary subjective and objective factors in a situation that it will be possible to lay bare the true nature and the results of the highly complex and contradictory events now unfolding in Eastern Europe." (pp. 8-9)

If all Wright wanted to do was to establish a proper relationship between the objective and subjective factors, and if he correctly did that, we could scarcely object. But what Wright does is throw out the objective factors altogether. It is not correct to say that we reject the notion of approaching economic factors as independent factors which can be weighed and evaluated independently of "the methods of economic leadership." We have repeatedly approached economic factors in precisely that way. For example, in Russia we have declared that the productive forces are so backward that generalized want is inescapable except by linking up the Russian economy with world economy. This conclusion and analysis is developed apart from the matter of whether the Czar, Kerensky, Lenin and Trotsky, or the Stalin bureaucracy stands at the helm, that is, outlines the methods of economic leadership.

When we come to outline a program of action in response to this economic analysis, however, the subjective factors that Wright lists come into immediate application. From the class roots of the bourgeoisie and the nobility, both the Czar and Kerensky proposed, in actuality, that Russia become a giant colony of imperialism. From their working class point of view Lenin and Trotsky proposed to link Russia up into a World Socialist Federation. Two different subjective factors, political programs, were projected from the single factor of Russia's backwardness. This is not surprising. Objective reality is contradictory through and through. But the objective factors rise above the subjective factors in the final analysis.

The example of Russia's economy and the way Marxists have approached it serves to sketch the spheres in which objective and subjective factors have their particular validity. Comrade Wright indicates that he will say more on this matter. That can only be, in one way or another, instructive for the whole movement.

But at issue in the present discussion is the class character of the buffer states. In discussing this matter, Wright accuses the Minority of "cancelling out" the role of the working class, the party, and the leadership. Wright himself intends to restore these factors to the analysis of the class character of the buffer states. But this is a sphere in which the subjective factors have no application. The class character of the state is, let it be said again, an objective fact. Like an economic analysis it can be ascertained only by cancelling out the subjective factors. Surely Wright knows that we have always proceeded in precisely that way. Many times we have all been confronted with one or another example of the devil's work of the Stalin gang and demanded to answer: is this compatible with a workers' state? We then proceeded to abstract from such a discussion of the class character of the USSR the subjective factors of Stalin's leadership and emphasized certain objective facts: the collectivized economy, monopoly of foreign trade, etc.

When we came to the task, however, of formulating our activity in relationship to the USSR, of constructing, this is to say, a political program, then we restored the subjective factors to their primary place. When Stalinist workers reasoned that because the USSR was a workers' state, therefore, it was necessary to support the Stalin line, then we, if you please, did to a certain extent cancel out the objective factors. We pointed out that the Stalin line led to reliance on the world bourgeoisie, would lead to defeats, etc. We emphasized in this sphere the subjective factors.

Yes indeed! A correct balance between objective and subjective factors is necessary in "laying bare the true nature" and all of "the results of the events now unfolding in Eastern Europe." Who says no? But Wright does not establish this correct balance, because what is at issue in the present discussion is the class character of the buffer states. But this is a question which is not determined by the subjective factors. The class character of the state is determined from objective factors and exists independently of the subjective factors.

If some one has drawn the conclusion that because the buffer states are workers' states, it is therefore necessary, to one degree or another, to support the Stalin line, or to extend it to other areas, or to join the Stalin party, then the discussion would unfold primarily around subjective considerations. But Pablo, Hansen and Frank have not, to our knowledge, drawn these conclusions. If some one else has, and if Wright is directing his remarks at him, then let this person not be nameless. And let's not mix up the two questions.

Elsewhere in his article (p.8) Comrade Wright confronts us with a quotation from Trotsky which asserts that "altho the political mechanics of the revolution depends in the last analysis upon an economic base (not only national but international) it cannot be deduced with abstract logic from this economic base." Introduced into the present discussion, without conscientious application, this quotation can only have the net effect of bulwarking the assertion that the class nature of the buffer states is deduced from subjective factors. But Trotsky is not defining the state. He merely asserts that the political mechanics of the revolution cannot be abstractly deduced from the economic base. That's what the Stalinists did in China. Because the economic base demanded the solution of bourgeois-democratic problems, the Stalinists assigned the leading role in the revolution to the Chinese bourgeoisie and subordinated the proletariat to it.

This has nothing whatsoever to do with the buffer zone. The political mechanics of the buffer zone cannot be deduced with abstract logic from its economic base. We readily admit this. We assert, moreover, that no one has openly challenged this. Let us save this matter until we get into a discussion in which it has some validity. In the meantime, the nature of the buffer states can only be ascertained by cancelling out the subjective factors. The nature of the state, again and again and again, is an objective fact. If we cannot demonstrate this objectively, then we cannot demonstrate it at all; and the idealists will indeed have won a point from us.

Origin and Comrade Germain

In his quite tedious and formalistic document (International Information Bulletin, Jan. 1950), Comrade Germain writes: "On the

whole in his theoretical writings dealing especially with this question" -- (the class nature of the USSR) -- Trotsky shows a preference for the formula 'nationalized property established by the revolution' whose meaning has been clarified above." (p.10) From this we derive the present stress on origin. The USSR is a workers' state because it has collectivized industries established by revolution. This is then translated into the buffer states: since the collectivized economy there was not established by revolution, therefore they are not workers' states. And so on.

This happens to be wrong in fact and in essence. Factually the writings of Trotsky which are available to us do not support it even to a small degree. On the whole, whatever Germain may know about Trotsky's preferences, Trotsky nevertheless, in writing about the USSR, stated that because of the collectivized economy and the relations created around them the USSR remained a workers' state. This definition runs through all of Trotsky's writings; the qualification produced by Germain is seldom encountered. Beginning with "Problems in the Development of the USSR," the draft thesis of the International Left Opposition; continuing in his 1937-38 opposition to Craipeau and the Burnham-Carter amendment; and culminating in the struggle with the Burnham-Shachtman opposition in 1939-40 -- in which Trotsky was, of necessity, very careful and precise -- it is impossible to find the preference which Germain imputes to Trotsky. We are of the opinion that this preference is, in fact, Germain's.

In essence, as well as fact, the statement is incorrect. The origin of the USSR, very useful in considering its future development, can in no way be itself an element in the class definition of the Soviet State. This can readily be seen from a little reflection. The USSR, we must remember, originated not only in the October Revolution but in the First Imperialist War, the Counter-Revolution of 1906-7-8, and the Revolution of 1905. If we then ask ourselves why the October Revolution is more important as a point of origin than these other indubitable points of origin, then we can only answer that it was the October Revolution which gave the present Soviet State certain objective characteristics and erased other characteristics given it by the war and the counter-revolution.

No matter what subjective path we take, we thus arrive with an inevitable regularity to the objective characteristics of the state. If the class character of the buffer states cannot be objectively ascertained, then it cannot be ascertained at all.

This stress on origin, somewhat recently adopted, apparently stems from a laudable if unsuccessful attempt to employ the method which Trotsky described in 1940 (In Defense of Marxism, p.52): "If Burnham were a dialectical materialist, he would have probed the following three questions: (1) What is the historical origin of the USSR? (2) What changes has this state suffered during its existence? (3) Did these changes pass from the quantitative to the qualitative?"

If we employed this method in the sphere of the subjective factors, we would conclude that Trotsky did, as a matter of fact, conclude that the changes suffered by the USSR had passed from the quantitative to the qualitative. He founded the Fourth International and called for the overthrow of the Soviet leadership.

That his analysis was conducted on the field of the objective factors is obvious from the question with which he concludes that paragraph. "That is, did they" -- the changes suffered by the USSR -- "create a historically necessary domination by a new exploiting class?" (Vern's emphasis). Domination, exploitation and class, we submit, are factors that are determined objectively. If we consider origin at all it is in the connection of establishing the existence of objective factors. From these, and not from the origin, we determine the class nature of the state. Germain's employment of the subjective factors is not superior to Stein's and Wright's.

Objective Reality and Stein, Wright and Germain

It thus appears that each of the proponents of the Majority position have been led to propound criteria which are not, as a matter of fact, materialistic but idealistic. That from such methods incorrect results must inevitably flow is too obvious to require comment. These errors are expressed in the night-mare character of the Majority position on the buffer states. But reality is exposing the fallacy of that position. As Engels says somewhere, we can consider a shoebrush as a mammal without the shoebrush for that reason developing lacteal glands.

It appears, likewise, that each of these proponents of the Majority position has been led to do damage to the ideas of Comrade Trotsky, either by taking them out of their proper context into areas where they are not applicable or by reading into them what is simply not there. They thus examine not reality, but the various reflections of reality which arrive in these so very fallible human heads of ours.

We might demonstrate this by imagining that a group of us, through some miracle, were suddenly dropped by parachute into an absolutely strange land whose language and history were completely unknown. If we found in this strange land that committees of workers were the base of the state power, that the industries were collectivized and operated according to a plan, then the majority of us would have no hesitation in declaring ourselves in a workers' state. Stein, Wright and Germain, however, would demur. Stein must, with his own methods, determine if the workers retain the consciousness of a revolution. Wright must examine the subjective factors: the methods of economic leadership, the program of the ruling party, etc. And Germain must learn if these collectivized productive forces originated in revolution or were achieved in some other manner.

The majority of us would reply to these comrades, as we do reply to them now: the questions that you raise are of great importance when we come to decide our future activity toward this state. But the class nature of this state is obvious from this specific workers' control and these specific collectivized industries, that is, by the objective factors.

The Subjective Reality and Stein, Wright and Germain Again

Comrade Wright refers to the Germain document as "brilliant." Comrade Stein bases himself to a great extent upon this document. But let us remember that approximately one-third of Germain's article is

devoted to Yugoslavia, designates it a capitalist state, and asserts that any other definition would present us with "insurmountable methodological difficulties" in case of war between Yugoslavia and the USSR (p.39). We must fall back, we are told, upon "boldness in action" and "prudence in theory." On our part we have regarded theory as a guide to action. The timid and doubtlessly "prudent" theory of socialism in one country led to timid and prudent collaboration with the bourgeoisie, etc. What kind of method is it, a most important subjective factor by the way, which justifies a given line because it avoids methodological difficulties?

The IEC, to its credit, did not act in accord with any prudent theory but boldly and successfully approached the Yugoslav events and gained considerable advantage for our movement. (If Comrade Germain was part of this then we must give him due credit for having proved "better than his theories.") In doing so it was compelled to discard the schema of a capitalist Yugoslavia, an arrested revolution, the methodological difficulties, etc. In the best and only final test of theory, about a third of Germain's document has already been repudiated.

The document closes with the following observations: the conditions which enabled the Stalinists to obtain control over Eastern Europe are listed: "(a) The USSR attained an overwhelming economic and military superiority over these bourgeois countries; (b) capitalism found itself in an advanced state of decomposition there because of the war, etc.; (c) the workers' movement did not experience a strong enough upsurge to free itself from the Stalinist straitjacket. Unusual as these conditions may be, they are intimately bound up with the very character of our epoch. In the event of the outbreak of a new world war. . . the same fundamental conditions would be repeated throughout all Western Europe and South East Asia. . . the sociological definition of our comrades then becomes. . . a perspective of the growth and increasing development of Stalinism in the years and decades to come." (p.40)

This is a handling of the subjective factors far from "brilliant." The disastrous program of Stalinism is regarded as capable of defeating American imperialism and over-running Europe and Asia. The working class of Germany, France and Italy is completely ignored. It is assumed that the Fourth International will not find a way to these masses. It is precisely here, where the subjective factors enable us to view the future with considerable clarity, that Germain drops them unceremoniously and considers only the objective factors: decomposition of capitalism, military and economic weight of the USSR, etc.

The subjective factors determine the course of history in regard to the USSR and imperialism. The Stalin line cannot insure victory. The German, French and Italian workers will not remain under Stalin's yoke. The Fourth International will find a road to these workers. The Fourth International answers these questions, as Trotsky put it, by the fact of its existence. But the validity of the Fourth International is determined by the extent to which its program corresponds with reality. For that reason a correct analysis of the buffer zone is a task of great importance.

The Historical Origin of the Buffer States

The present states originated in the expansion of the USSR. The USSR in our movement is defined as a Workers' State. It became a workers' state, not when it instituted planning, not when the land was nationalized or economy collectivized, and not when it became independent of the world market (it will never achieve that); Russia became a workers' state at the moment when the struggle of the working class destroyed the bourgeois state and based a new state upon the organs of the working class, the Red Guards, Red Army, Soviets, etc. In fact the term workers' state has no other meaning than that: an organ of coercion (state) in the hands of the working class.

The Stalinist bureaucracy, however, expropriated the working class politically and transformed the Soviet power into a totalitarian apparatus. In spite of that we have continued to designate the USSR as a workers' state, prefixing the adjective "degenerated" to indicate this work of the bureaucracy. To those who reasoned: no workers' power -- no workers' state, we answered: neither the bureaucracy nor imperialism has destroyed the collectivized economy or the monopoly of foreign trade. Did we then reason: collectivized economy equals workers' state? Not exactly. Nor did we reason that the collectivized economy was more important for the World Revolution than the political power of the workers. There is not one of us who would not restore the private property of the bourgeoisie as it existed in 1917, if we could at the same time restore the freely functioning Soviets and the Bolshevik Party of Lenin and Trotsky.

The collectivized economy is what remains of the October Revolution. In designating the class character of the state, the collectivized economy is more important than the destroyed social laws or the seven-hour day, simply because economics, in the long run, determines politics. For a century Marxism has defended that assertion against all the other schools of sociology. Politics is not immediately nor directly determined by economics, nevertheless it is determined by economics. This applies with full force to the Soviet state. Its politics are immediately and directly determined by the greed, fear and cowardice of the bureaucracy. But in the final analysis, the workers' economy has its say. The political power of the USSR, in the long run, is the political power of the working class.

In that way, for us, is the class character of the USSR decided. Collectivized economy does equal a workers' state. Not in the flat and lifeless form of an equation, but through the impression of the economy on politics. As long as the bureaucracy is based in a stable fashion on the collectivized economy it will be forced, against its will and nature, into conflict with the bourgeoisie. Colliding with the bourgeoisie, it is unconsciously in collision with private property. When this collision begins to generate heat, the bureaucracy is forced to seek support among the working class.

This is doubtlessly very hard on the poor bureaucrats who would much prefer comradeship with Truman, Churchill, and Co. and have only superior attitudes toward the workers. But their likes and dislikes, in the long run, are not decisive. The independence of the bureaucracy, though considerable, is nevertheless limited by the workers' economy.

The situation in the buffer zone, correctly understood and evaluated, offers fresh confirmation of our definition of the USSR as a workers' state. Let us reflect, neither the Greek, the Danish or the Turkish state has excited any discussion. Imperialism, excluding the Stalinist bureaucracy from these areas, has created regimes obviously capitalist politically and socially. Only where the bureaucracy has been able to establish itself do we have the political and economic drive against the bourgeoisie.

It is obviously one-sided, undialectical and therefore wrong to say with Wright: "It is the counter-revolutionary essence of Stalinism which has come to the fore in Eastern Europe." Or to say as Stein does: "What is the origin of these so-called workers' states? . . . Their origin is in counter-revolution, isn't it?" The origin of the Greek state is likewise in counter-revolution. Its development, however, has been quite different from the buffer states. The reason for that is not hard to find: the counter-revolution in the buffer states stems from the counter-revolution going on in the USSR. But this counter-revolution has not yet been consummated. The bureaucracy incarnates not only counter-revolution but revolution as well. And it is obvious that both "essences" of the bureaucracy have come to the fore in Eastern Europe.

The role of the Stalinist bureaucracy was not "unforeseen" by us. It develops from the dual character of the bureaucracy itself. Its degeneration is expressed in the buffer zones by the liquidation of the workers' movements. But there is more to the USSR than the degeneration of the bureaucracy. The October Revolution, as Hansen puts it, still carries burning coals. The collectivized economy is the base for the activity of the bureaucracy. In the final analysis this economy determines politics. Thus the bureaucracy has broken the rule of the bourgeoisie in Eastern Europe. These events could develop, and can be explained, only on the basis of our definition of the USSR as a workers' state.

We are discussing, then, the expansion of a degenerated workers' state. Let's not forget that. Above all, let us build ideological barricades against anyone who thinks that the role of the Kremlin in Eastern Europe can be analyzed apart from this analysis of the USSR. The development of the petty-bourgeois opposition in 1939-40 is sufficient demonstration that this cannot be done without theoretical capitulation to imperialism. Comrade Wright makes no contribution to Marxist "method" when he tells us that "In evaluating the class nature of the USSR, our opponents of 1939-40 denied completely the role of the economic foundation." That is not true. In evaluating the class nature of the USSR, in 1939-40, Shachtman, Abern, Johnson and Co. agreed that because of the collectivized economy the USSR was a workers' state. All their documents attest this. What they affirmed, in contradiction to the Marxist method, was that the class nature of the USSR was of no importance in assessing the role of the USSR in the war and in the invasion of Poland, Finland and the Baltic countries.

This role of the USSR, the petty-bourgeois opposition asserted, was "foreseen by no one" was "counter-revolutionary" and "imperialist." (They lifted the role of the USSR to a higher stage of "capitalism.") They asserted, at every turn, the independence and the

primacy of the subjective factors: the disorientation of the world working class, the crushing of the "Vilna" soviet, the bourgeois program of the Kuusinen government. They belabored us, at some length on the "plunder" of Poland and the Kremlin's collaboration with the Baltic bourgeoisie.

The petty-bourgeois opposition asserted, this is to say, in 1939-40 substantially the same things that Wright and Stein assert in 1950. Unfortunately this is undeniable.

The Buffer States Before the Invasion

The buffer states before the invasion were all capitalist states. This we readily admit. However, it is no part of Marxism to pin that label on them and consider that we have said all that it is necessary to say. They were not only capitalist states, they were part of imperialism. We live in a world dominated by the reality of world economy. World economy, on its part, is not merely a sum of various national economies, but is a mighty, independent reality based on an international division of labor, on productive forces far too mighty for national limitations, upon the creation and growth of powerful ties between the nations. Imperialism, dominating world economy, has subjected the national to the international.

This was not always true. Marx lived the major part of his life in an era when the national capitalist economy was the dominant reality and when imperialism was primarily a tendency of the economy. The analysis in CAPITAL is primarily the analysis of a national capitalism. The Communist Manifesto is devoted likewise to the description of national class struggles. Imperialism, foretold by Marx and Engels, was nevertheless not dealt with by them inasmuch as they felt that the socialist revolution would be successfully achieved before imperialism would develop into the world system.

On the basis of CAPITAL and THE COMMUNIST MANIFESTO, Russian and other "orthodox" Marxists could and did write: what characterizes the Marxist theory is the fact that capitalism is a necessary stage which all nations must pass through; what characterized Marxism in respect to revolutions in backward countries is the insistence that the bourgeoisie must become a new ruling class, destroy feudalism, create productive forces, and lay the basis for bourgeois democracy.

Lenin and Trotsky risked their reputations as orthodox Marxists in order to use Marx's method in an illumination of Russia's class struggles. The revisions introduced by them into this "orthodox" Marxism was along the lines of recognizing the reality of world economy and imperialism. The phrase in the MANIFESTO about the advanced country only holding up to the backward country the mirror of its own future, in no case, says Trotsky, can be taken literally.

In the HISTORY he writes: "The theory of the repetition of historic cycles rests upon the orbits of old pre-capitalistic cultures, and in part upon the first experiments of capitalist development. A certain repetition of cultural stages was, in fact, bound up with the provincial and episodic character of the whole process. Capitalism means, however, an overcoming of these conditions. It prepares and in a sense realizes the universality and permanence of man's development.

By this a repetition of the forms of development by different nations is ruled out. Although compelled to follow after the advanced countries, a backward country does not take things in the same order. . . . The development of historically backward nations leads necessarily to a peculiar combination of different stages in the historic process. Their development as a whole acquires a planless, complex, and combined character." (p.4)

The economic forms which express "the universality and permanence of man's development" is found primarily in trade between the various nations, linking up the advanced and the backward in the unity of the market; in the export of capital and machinery in which these achievements of the advanced countries are made available to the backward areas (at a certain cost, to be sure); in the seizure of raw materials and spheres of influence.

To the flat, abstract and unrealizable sociological definition of a bourgeois revolution Lenin and Trotsky counterposed the correct and concrete sociological definition of the first stage of the world socialist revolution. The necessary revisions of orthodox Marxism were formulated in "The Theory of Permanent Revolution." History validated them to the full.

It is not our purpose to dwell over long on this. What it is necessary to show is that schema necessarily drawn from the development of an abstract national capitalism, must be modified, amplified and in some cases cast out altogether when we seek concrete application in the world of imperialism. It is necessary to understand this in dealing with the buffer states.

Politics is concentrated economics. If, on the economic plane we find that imperialism takes the backward countries in tow, forces them to make leaps, sets the advanced forms beside the primitive, then we must recognize that this by no means stable economic base, concentrated into the political development, must inevitably produce politics and politicians, state powers and parties that must in every case be analyzed in the concrete.

In 1938 Trotsky wrote: "In the industrially backward countries foreign capital plays a decisive role. Hence the relative weakness of the national bourgeoisie in relation to the national proletariat. This creates special conditions of state power. (Vern's emphasis) The government veers between foreign and domestic capital. . . . This gives the government a Bonapartist character. . . . It raises itself, so to speak, above classes. Actually it can govern either by making itself the instrument of foreign capitalism and holding the proletariat in the chains of a police dictatorship, or by maneuvering with the proletariat and even going so far as to make concessions to it and thus gaining the possibility of a certain freedom toward the foreign capitalists." (August 1946 FI, p.239)

We can establish with little chance of error that in the buffer zone it was the first "special condition of state power" that was realized. From the time of the Versailles Treaty up to the Second Imperialist War, we see an unbroken series of police dictatorships, the dominance of the army in political affairs, parties and leaders who were openly known as the local representatives of this, that or

the other imperialist group, bonapartism, not as a regime of crisis but as the "normal" scheme of things. With the rise of Hitler, with German imperialism absolutely dominant in these regions, we had the creation of open police regimes as sections of the Nazi state.

The buffer states, prior to the invasion, were not normal capitalist states in the sense that the American or the French state can be regarded as normal. These were special kinds of bourgeois states, without roots in the nation; bourgeois states that represented, not a native ruling class based on its own economy, but German imperialism. This is the second point of the origin of the present buffer states.

The "Conquest of Power" in the Buffer Zone

The Red Army entered Eastern Europe in struggle with the German Army. The Red Army, let us remember, is the Army of a degenerated workers' state. The Nazi Army was the army of imperialism. The struggle between the Red Army and the German Army achieved, therefore, the character of class struggle. This situation, we might remark in regard to Comrade Frank's schema of "regimes of dual power" in the buffer zone, is as close to dual power as the situation ever got. The class struggle between the Red Army and the Nazi Army resulted in the expulsion of the Nazi armies from the buffer zone. But the Nazi Army was the "armed men" of the buffer states. The expulsion of the Nazi Army was at the same time the destruction of the buffer states.

What remained was a few remnants of an apparatus whose armed forces were gone and whose economic base had never been in the specific countries anyway. It would indeed be hard to break up and shatter a state power more effectively. As a matter of fact, this process of destroying the armed forces of the bourgeoisie and preventing the economic power of the bourgeoisie from being exerted on the state apparatus is precisely the task of the revolution. Those tasks were achieved in the buffer zone, not through "action prolonged in extent and depth," as Germain puts it, and not on a national basis, but was achieved in the war, itself a class struggle. We consider that the length and depth of this struggle was completely adequate for the destruction of the bourgeois state, considering that these bourgeois states were completely dependent upon imperialist support.

The process of breaking up and shattering the bourgeois state by means of violent revolution was insisted on by Lenin, not because of some mystical property of the bourgeois state, and not from any personal predilection for violence. This can be seen from the fact that Marx himself felt that the bourgeois states in England and America could be peacefully occupied by the proletariat. But the development of imperialism expressed by the First Imperialist War caused the bureaucratization and the militarization of these two states. Through these factors the bourgeoisie was able to bend the apparatus of the state to its purpose regardless of the popular will. Lenin therefore included England and America in the "bloody lump" against whom the revolution was directed.

When militarization is gone, when the apparatus is unable to carry out the will of the bourgeoisie, and in the buffer zone the bourgeoisie had no will for the simple reason that it had few economic positions and no imperialist overlord, then the bourgeois apparatus

retains its bourgeois character only through the personal attitudes and antipathies of the bureaucrats. These, however, are not hard to change, functioning in accord with the dictum: whose bread I eat his song I sing.

Expelling the Nazi armies the Red Army became, in the testimony of Germain, "the sole, solid factor" in the buffer states. The Red Army, and the bureaucracy it sustains and introduced into the buffer zone, are organs of a workers' state. At the moment when the buffer states were based on the Red Army, regardless of the past history of this, that or the other apparatus stooge, at that moment the state power became the state power of a workers' state, degenerated, deformed or what you will.

The backward areas do not repeat cycle by cycle the histories of the advanced countries. They leap over stages, compress stages, and do not take them in the same order. That has been, up to now, the work of the imperialist nations. The essence of socialist economics, will not consist in the destruction of the world market and world economy with its countless ties between the nations; it will only remove the predatory character of exploitation from this process, and invest the process itself with an harmonious nature.

This fact, which would be considerably more evident if the USSR were a completely healthy workers' state, exists even under the degenerated rule of the bureaucracy. Toward the buffer zone the USSR plays the role of an advanced nation. The bureaucracy has nothing like this in mind at all. But the bureaucracy is not independent of its economic base. The collectivized economy enables the USSR to force the backward areas to make leaps, compress stages, etc.

The action, prolonged in extent and depth of hundreds of thousands of producers is taking place, not before the seizure of power or during it, but afterward. Yugoslavia illustrates this. Poland, Czechoslovakia, Bulgaria, Hungary and Rumania have caught up with the USSR. Yugoslavia, with a political revolution against Stalin, has outstripped it a bit. The USSR is an advanced country toward these countries because of the October Revolution "not yet definitely assassinated by the bureaucracy." We return inevitably to our definition of the USSR as a degenerated workers' state.

A Marxist Analysis -- Or Revisionism?

Having arrived at this conclusion: that the buffer states became workers' states at the moment when the armed forces of the degenerated workers' state became the armed forces of the buffer states, let us leave aside, for the moment, whatever practical difficulties are evident, and ask ourselves the question: is this analysis theoretically supportable upon the basis of Marxism?

We consider it obvious that the class character of the USSR must be considered an indispensable factor in the situation. Anyone who considers the USSR to be a capitalist state will naturally also designate the buffer states as capitalist states. They have, in fact, already arrived at that conclusion. On our part, we should be very cautious in following them in this. We can, in actuality, follow them to this conclusion only by deciding that the class nature of the

USSR is not a factor in the development in Eastern Europe. We would have to declare in 1950, this is to say, what Shachtman declared in 1940: that, in this connection, the class nature of the USSR "does not matter."

If we should thus declare that the character of the USSR is not an indispensable ingredient of the buffer zone development, we would be saying, in effect, that the economic base of the Soviet Union has been over-powered by the bureaucracy. It is obviously not the economy of the USSR but the political moves of the bureaucracy which would dictate the creation of capitalist states in the buffer zone. If the bureaucracy has, in fact, emancipated itself so completely from its economic base, then we should, as a matter of simple principle, raise for re-evaluation the nature of the USSR and its bureaucracy. The Majority, we sincerely feel, is far from this. But it is a necessary implication from the Majority position.

It might be objected here that what is actually involved is not the question of whether or not the USSR is a workers' state, or whether or not economics determines politics, but whether we have, in the buffer zone, reached the final analysis in which we are agreed that economics does determine politics. Because of its economic base, it might be said, the bureaucracy will eventually either undertake structural assimilation or get out of the buffer zone. Until that final end point is reached the politics of the bureaucracy can be determined by the political desires of the bureaucracy itself.

This construction, at first glance very tempting, in reality only poses the question in a certain form: namely, when do we reach a final analysis? You cannot get more final than a question of life or death. The Nazi-Soviet War raised this matter in all its awful ultimatism: either the USSR will perish and with it the collectivized economy and the bureaucracy based on it, or the Nazis would be defeated. The bureaucracy accepted battle on this ground only in the exact same fashion that the Austro-Marxists accepted the battle with Dolfuss: in the final analysis. Everything that could be done to evade and postpone the show-down was done again and again. But the struggle developed nevertheless. The show-down came, not from the desire of the bureaucracy, but from the existence of the economy.

The small part of this situation which is the buffer zone cannot be considered apart from the entire situation. In addition the situation in the buffer zone was posed as a question of power. That itself is a rather final matter. The bureaucracy, quite capable of collaborating with a bourgeoisie which is present with economic and military strength, has no political need, from any point of view, to collaborate with a bourgeoisie which has no armed forces and whose role in the economy is of no great importance. The question of power was posed, then, as either the present, stable power of the bureaucracy based on the Red Army and the collectivized economy of the USSR, or the absent, non-existent power of the bourgeoisie.

There was, of course, a third force. This was the native working classes. A healthy workers' state would have had no trouble in merging its forces with the native working class and thereby constituting a new regime. But the bureaucracy is a degenerated leadership. Because of this it cannot base itself on the direct and democratic or-

ganizations of the working class. The struggle that ensued between the working class and the bureaucracy, in which the bourgeois leaders naturally sided with the bureaucracy, was actually only a new edition of the struggle that began unfolding long ago between the bureaucracy and the Russian workers. But in neither case did this struggle enable the bourgeoisie to consolidate bourgeois power. The power became, then, the power of the bureaucracy. But the bureaucracy is the leadership of a degenerated workers' state. The buffer zone states by this token became workers' states.

This definition of the buffer zone states proceeds inevitably from the one and only, so to speak, immutable characteristic of a workers' state. We discard, in this connection, consciousness, the subjective factors, origin, as well as planning or collectivization. The final and only indispensable characteristic of a workers' state is that it have its base upon organizations of the working class. In the given case the buffer states must be workers' states because they are based upon organizations which can only be defined, in the last analysis, as organizations of the working class, the Red Army and even. . . the GPU.

Difficulties in this sphere develop, as Pablo correctly understands, from the necessity of deriving the class character of these social forms from secondary roots. The class character of the Red Guard in 1917 could be ascertained by direct and immediate observation. The class nature of the present Red Army cannot be so decided. It is therefore necessary to establish the class character of the Red Army from secondary roots: the nature of the Russian economy. In this way we can establish the class character of the buffer states.

Was the struggle between the Red Army and the Nazi army in actual fact a class struggle? We have seldom referred to the war as a class struggle. Such a designation may seem strange to the comrades. It is not hard to demonstrate that such was indeed the character of the Nazi-Soviet war.

In accord with the reality of world economy develops the reality of the world class struggle. If world economy exists, not as a mere sum of its national parts, but as a forceful independent reality, then the international class struggle is likewise not just a totality of national struggles. The internationalism of our movement does not develop from a concept of national class struggles linked up only by the existence of common problems and the "principles" of revolutionists. The national class struggles enter into the international class struggle, unfolding on the basis of world economy, as uneven, interdependent parts of the whole struggle.

The victory of the proletariat in one country, the creation of a workers' state there, the elimination of the bourgeoisie from the nation, does not mean, therefore, that for the workers in that nation the class struggle has ended. Since world bourgeoisie and world working class wage their struggle, not only on national lines, but on the basis of world economy, the workers who conquer power find that their struggle now cuts across national frontiers openly and unmistakably. Imperialism seeks to destroy the workers' state. On its side the workers' state seeks the overthrow of imperialism. The workers' state is thus, by its very nature, internationalist, being in essence only a fortified position of the working class.

Stalin, of course, does not know this. His bureaucracy, as is well known, bows down before the theory of Socialism In One Country. But Stalin only proposes; it is the economy that disposes. The bureaucracy thus finds itself, very much to its surprise and discomfiture, as the only stable power in Hungary, Bulgaria, etc. We have found in this fact, and correctly so, the refutation, not by theory, but by life itself of Socialism in One Country.

Imperialism, in the form of the German armies, invaded the USSR, a degenerated workers' state. The fortified position of the world working class was forced into struggle with the fortified position of a section of the world capitalist class. From this, and the only decisive standpoint, the struggle that ensued can only be regarded as class struggle. That Stalin and the bureaucracy conducted this struggle in a very poor fashion, disorienting the working class, damaging its confidence in itself and in its socialist future and thereby weakening the struggle itself, is only too evident. Bureaucrats always conduct struggles in that fashion. That is regardless of whether the given bureaucrat is Stalin, Reuther or William Green. Nevertheless, the struggle that they traitorously and weakly conduct against Hitler, Walter Chrysler or a restaurant in Podunk, Arkansas, is a class struggle.

The three ingredients of our analysis thus appear to be theoretically supportable. The USSR is a workers' state and this fact, in the long run, determines the politics of its bureaucracy. The buffer states, before the war, were junior partners, sub-divisions of the Nazi state. The struggle that unfolded between these formations was a class struggle. In that class struggle the nature of the buffer states was transformed. We feel that this is an analysis that develops in full compliance with the requirements of Marxist theory.

"Abstract" Marxism

Arising before us now are the "orthodox" figures of Comrades Germain and Stein. Armed with STATE AND REVOLUTION and THE COMMUNIST MANIFESTO (not at all a bad armor, we might observe, when aimed in the right direction) these comrades direct against the analysis given above certain Marxist criteria. By transforming these criteria into abstractions they employ them in the same way that a drunk employs a lamp post: for support rather than illumination. We will try to show this.

Germain: "According to the Marxist-Leninist theory of the state the transition from the bourgeois state to the workers' state can only come about by means of the violent destruction of the bourgeois state and the establishment of a new type of state apparatus. . . ." (p.21) And: ". . . this cannot be the result simply of decree or of purely administrative measures. . . this requires action prolonged both in extent and depth which can only result from the activity of hundreds of thousands of producers." (p.18)

Stein: "In Marxist theory and in historical experience we know of only one way a workers' state can come into existence -- by way of the proletarian revolution. That is, the proletariat, through its independent mass action, and guided by the revolutionary party, is the only force in modern society able to abolish capitalist rule and

construct a workers' state. We know also from theory, and one might add a century of Marxist practice that the bourgeois state cannot be reformed into a workers' state, but it and all its institutions must be abolished." (p.2)

Matters of this nature have something of a history. This author probably does not know all that has been said or written by Comrade Trotsky on these questions, but we would like to set out against the conceptions of Germain and Stein two historical events which were commented on by Trotsky. If there is more from him on these matters we will be glad to hear of it.

Long ago the Red Army invaded and sovietized Georgia. In 1929 writing against a French comrade, Louzon, Trotsky wrote: "In its time the Red Army invaded Menshevik Georgia and helped the Georgian workers overthrow the rule of the bourgeoisie. To this day the Second International has not forgiven us for it. Georgia is inhabited by Georgians. The Red Army was composed mainly of Russians. With whom does Louzon side in this old dispute?" (Reprinted Oct. 1946, Fourth International) Needless to say Trotsky himself sided with the Red Army. At this time the phrase "Red Imperialism" was born, and the hue and cry about Georgia was not less resounding than was the hue and cry about Poland in 1939-40, or the hue and cry about Czechoslovakia in 1948.

Georgia constituted for some time a trouble spot for the Bolshevik regime. That did not impel any sizeable group of Marxists to raise doubts or denials as to the class nature of the new Georgian state. The Second International dwelt at some length on "Red Imperialism," on the "exploitation" of Georgia, "self determination," etc. Marxism realized, however, that the Georgian state was now a workers' state. A transfer of power had occurred from class to class. On a national, that is, a Georgian basis? Not at all. The majority of Georgians did not support the action, and the new state power was not dependent on Georgian soldiers, or the Georgian economy. Georgia had experienced, to use Stein's term, "Russification." Russia, however, was not merely a national factor, it was primarily a class factor, Russia being a fortified position of the working class. Power passed from the Georgian bourgeoisie to the Russian workers. But the Georgian bourgeoisie was a segment of imperialism. Power passed, therefore, from imperialism to the working class.

In 1939-40 the Red Army invaded Poland. At once the old phrases developed around Georgia were dug out of the moth balls and flung to the wind. The Burnham-Shachtman minority participated in this mobilization against the USSR. Trotsky condemned the invasion because the new factor of the degeneration of the bureaucracy had developed in the USSR since the time of Georgia. But he wrote: ". . . the statification of property relations in the occupied territories is in itself a progressive measure. We must recognize this openly. Were Hitler on the morrow to throw his armies against the East to restore 'law and order' in Eastern Poland the advanced workers would defend against Hitler these new property forms established by the Bonapartist Soviet Bureaucracy." And further: "This measure, revolutionary in character -- the expropriation of the expropriators -- is in this case achieved in a military bureaucratic fashion." (In Defense of Marxism, pp.18,19) And still further, in a shaft directed at the Minority,

Trotsky wrote: "Our innovators cover the holes in their position with violent phrases. They label the policy of the USSR as imperialist. Vast enrichment of the sciences! Beginning from now on both the foreign policy of finance capital and the policy of exterminating finance capital will be called imperialist." (Defense of Marxism, p.58 -- Vern's emphasis).

We recognized that an overturn had taken place in Eastern Poland. The expropriators were expropriated. Finance capital was being exterminated. This was possible only on the basis of the destruction of the bourgeois state. What replaced the bourgeois' state? Obviously only a workers' state. But how was that possible without a revolution? It was possible because power had passed from class to class. On a national, that is, a Polish basis? Again no. Power passed from the Polish bourgeoisie, a segment of imperialism abandoned by its masters, to the Red Army. The Red Army is the army of a workers' state. Power passed from imperialism to the working class.

In the article reprinted in Fourth International already quoted, Trotsky further writes: "Against revolutionary intervention Louzon quite inappropriately advances the old and uncontested principle: 'The emancipation of the working class can be achieved only by the workers themselves.' On a national scale? Only within the framework of a single country? Is it permissible for workers of one country to aid the strikers of another? Can they send arms to insurgents? Can they send their army if they have one? Can they send it, either to help the uprising or in order to prepare an uprising just as strikers send squads to pull out workers that have remained behind?" We can be certain that Trotsky knew that the task of pulling out workers who had remained behind was frequently not a gentle business.

The degeneration of the USSR did not impel Trotsky to change the fundamentals of this position. In 1939 he wrote as follows to Sherman Stanley: "Even a sound workers' state would tend toward expansion, and the geographical lines would inevitably coincide with the general lines of Czarist expansion because revolutions don't ordinarily change geographical conditions. What we object to about the Kremlin Gang is not the expansion, but the bureaucratic, counter-revolutionary methods of the expansion. But because we as Marxists 'look objectively' upon historic happenings we recognize that neither the Czar, nor Hitler, nor Chamberlain had or have the custom of abolishing in the occupied territories capitalist property, and this fact, a very progressive one, depends upon another fact; namely that the October Revolution is not definitely assassinated by the bureaucracy, and that the latter is forced by its position to take measures which we must defend in a given situation." (Defense of Marxism, p.23)

Toward revolutionary intervention the French ultra-left cited the emancipation of the working class as being the task of the workers themselves. Trotsky introduced modifications into this principle tending to underscore the international nature of the class struggle. "On a national scale? Within the framework of a single country?"

But the same question arose in the same form (and in almost the same words) in the 1939-40 discussion. In "The Crisis in the American Party" Max Shachtman wrote: "I repeat I do not believe in the bureaucratic proletarian revolution. . . I do not consider it possible.

I believe it to be scientifically correct to repeat with Marx that the emancipation of the working class is the task of the working class itself. . . The proletarian revolution cannot be made by others than the proletariat acting as a mass; therein, it is distinguished from all preceding revolutions. No one else can free it -- not even for a day!"

Shachtman included an error of his own here. The revolution, he says, cannot be made by "others" than the proletariat. "No one else" can free the proletariat. But what was involved, in 1939, was not a general theoretical exercise in which "others" and "no one else" could remain abstract. The "others" consisted of the Red Army and the bureaucracy. Shachtman refused to define them in class terms: they were simply Russians in Poland and, as a believer in self-determination of peoples, Shachtman was opposed to this "Russification" of Poland. When "others" were defined in class terms, when the Red Army and the bureaucracy are placed as parts of the working class (not the most conscious or democratic parts, to be sure) Shachtman's schema began to topple.

But the main and basic error here is the same one that was made by Louzon a decade earlier. The proletarian class struggle, the Revolution, is conceived along purely national lines. Such a conception is wrong. It is particularly wrong when applied abstractly to "small bits of territory" such as Georgia, Poland or Czechoslovakia. And ten times wrong when these backward countries are drawn into a military struggle.

Since Lenin wrote STATE AND REVOLUTION history has presented us with a big, new fact, a workers' state. It must be admitted that the existence of this workers' state, deploying its own army, based on its own economy, changes quite a few things in the concrete application of Marx and Lenin.

When Lenin wrote, all the participants in the First World War were there as parts of imperialism's "bloody lump," there could be no talk of any progressive or working class content on either side. There was no element of class struggle in the war of either camp. But the creation of the USSR changed all that. The USSR in the war gave the war, on its side, the character of class struggle. The war of imperialism against the USSR achieved the character of counter-revolution. Shachtman refused to admit this. But Trotsky insisted on it in the 1939-40 struggle.

When a war achieves the character of class war it is simply doctrinairism of a very flat and lifeless kind to deny that such a war is capable of transforming the nature of a given state power. A war which achieves the character of class struggle draws the class line as a battle-line, establishes dual power in the juxtaposition of class armies, and delineates the seizure of power as a military victory. To recognize this, one of the accomplishments of the 1939-40 faction fight, is to establish those "revisions" of the Marxist-Leninist theory of the state for which Comrade Germain is curiously, patiently and skeptically waiting.

As a matter of fact, however, Germain himself has already made those necessary "revisions." If the Marxist-Leninist theory has established the criteria formulated by Shachtman, Germain and Stein, it

has likewise established very similar criteria, in reverse, for the process of counter-revolution. That did not cause us to deny that Hitler carried through a counter-revolution in the parts of the USSR which he was able to occupy. This is recognized by a Draft Thesis of the IS adopted in Nov. 1947 in the following words: "The cynicism with which German imperialism exterminated broad layers of the working population, and took over the factories, the mines and the best of the collectivized land aroused an unparalleled resistance of the Russian working class." Here and elsewhere we designated Hitler's work as counter-revolution. This did not take place under a workers' state.

But from an abstract application of the Marxist-Leninist criteria, how can Germain or Stein designate Hitler's work in the USSR as counter-revolution? The movement, as is well known, did not develop from the struggle of native bourgeois elements against the Soviet power. It did not rise in the steps of dual power to the destruction of the workers' state and the creation of a new bourgeois state apparatus. With an abstract use of STATE AND REVOLUTION or the MANIFESTO we would have had to draw the conclusion that a workers' state still existed in the Ukraine enslaved by Hitler.

Shachtman drew an equally monstrous conclusion, with perhaps somewhat more of an excuse, in regard to the Polish events of 1939-40. He denied the reality of the overturn which had taken place there. As a road-block against an understanding of those events he erected the criteria quoted above from "The Crisis in the American Party."

Now, in 1950, with the experience of the 1939-40 fight behind us, Germain and Stein erect the very same road-block in the path of a correct analysis of the buffer states. The striking similarity between the criteria laid down by Germain and Stein and the criteria of Shachtman, all quoted above, should be obvious to the comrades. It is not surprising, therefore, that the Trotskyist analysis of these substantially similar events, should be designated by the Majority, as it was previously designated by Shachtman, as "bureaucratic revolution." We seem to recall a sentence from Marx or Engels to the effect that events happen twice, once as comedy and once as tragedy. We will leave it to the comrades to place these two events, 1939-40 and 1950, under their appropriate headings.

Kintos in Power

Comrade Stein informs us that the bourgeoisie exists in every pore of buffer zone society. Every now and then, and whenever they can, they demonstrate this by jumping the fence out of these "bourgeois" states. And Comrade Wright, in his turn, tells us, with a straight face, that: "It is a big mistake to think that the bureaucracy knows exactly what to do or exactly what it is doing in Eastern Europe. They are proceeding as always in the crudest empirical manner -- from hand to mouth." (p.3) To tell the truth, we had suspected that this was probably the case. Suspecting these facts, we were basing ourselves upon the movement's extensive analysis of the Stalin gang as bureaucrats. And bureaucrats, whether they head the organization of the working class known as the UAW, the PAC, the USSR or whatever initials represent the Bulgarian government, never know what to do (except against the rank and file) and always proceed from hand to mouth, day by day.

Taking power in the buffer zone, the Stalinists, being bureaucrats, naturally had no idea that they were there to stay. The authorities would undoubtedly force them out, the authorities in this case being Anglo-American imperialism. A struggle with the authorities, as is well known, is something to be avoided at all costs. Considering their reign temporary, they functioned in accord with the rule of all bureaucrats: take while the taking's good! The plunder, reparations, and joint stock companies expressed this original policy of the bureaucrats.

Bourgeois politicians, unable to serve a native bourgeoisie or imperialism, naturally discovered an affinity with the Stalinist bureaucracy. It was ever thus! Walter Reuther undoubtedly gets along better with Senators Douglas and Humphrey than he does with many elements of his own rank and file. Bourgeois elements in the USSR gravitated with the regularity of a natural law, to the Stalin machine. If anyone is greatly surprised at all this, he had best go back over some of the fundamental documents of our movement dealing with the development of Stalinism.

Functioning from hand to mouth, knowing neither history nor economics nor politics, bereft of all principles, it is not surprising that the stupid and ignorant louts composing the bureaucracy have failed to even approach the very important national question. The still-standing national frontiers give confirmation, if we needed any, of the truth of Trotsky's opinion that not Stalin but Lenin really wrote "Marxism and the National Question."

Having no facts at our disposal not contained in the documents of the comrades and the resolutions of the IS and IEC, we will not dwell on these features of Stalinism in power. Our task is to try to insure that the comrades, impelled by their natural opposition to Stalin's dirty work, do not fall into impressionism and subjectivism, and draw conclusions that lead, directly or implicitly, toward the overthrow of the Marxist method.

If we have not, in the USSR, derived the class nature of the Soviet state from the plunder, the "marauding parasitism" of the bureaucracy, if we have not changed our analysis of the USSR from the presence in its state apparatus of undoubted bourgeois elements, and if the approach of the Stalin gang to the national question in Georgia, the Ukraine, and elsewhere, has not caused us to consider the USSR a capitalist state, then we have no right to decide from these same features in the buffer zone that the buffer states are capitalist states.

The entire situation in the buffer zone, regardless of how we define the nature of the state there, confirms to the hilt the analysis made by our movement of Stalinism. The necessity and validity of our program of political revolution against Stalin, so superbly demonstrated by the Yugoslav events, is applicable with equal validity to the other buffer states. For the future of the buffer zone societies, as for the USSR, all the subjective factors cited by Comrades Wright and Stein have their burning importance. It does not appear to us that any Minority spokesman denies or minimizes this.

The Real Matter in Dispute -- Problem and Method

We must declare, however, that even if Pablo, Hansen and Frank had committed errors in this respect, we would still consider that their position was supportable against the position of the Majority. The end result of the Majority position can only be the overthrow of the Marxist method. This statement, which may appear an extreme over-emphasis to many comrades, can be demonstrated from the discussion.

It is necessary now to enter a more extended discussion of the nature of the error into which Comrades Germain, Stein and Wright have been led. This error has indeed already been partially exposed by the contributions of Hansen and Frank: in the discussion of the Majority use of real planning Hansen and Frank were able to demonstrate that, in this sphere, there was a certain confusion on the part of the Majority between the planning of a workers' state and socialist construction.

Earlier in this article we were able to show that Stein had misused a phrase from "The Revolution Betrayed" in regard to the "consciousness" of the masses. Stein's use of "consciousness" as well as the conceptions of the Majority in regard to "real planning" serves to lay bare the fundamental error which underlies their position: they make no distinction between the nature of society and the nature of the state power that rests upon it. This is an error which has more than once harshly punished those who committed it.

Let us recall a few fundamental considerations. Society, we have been taught, is an historically established collaboration between human beings who seek in this way to satisfy their wants, insure the preservation of the species of man and of the science and technique developed by previous generations. Society, however, has not attained this collaboration through equalitarian methods. Discordant through and through, human society can function only through the creation of a special apparatus of force known to us as state power. All power, however, is in the final analysis, economic power. The state apparatus thus becomes the instrument of an economic ruling class.

From their different relationships toward the heart of society, its productive forces, the various classes arise and enter into struggle for their share of the social production. But the productive forces are not static; they are in process of constant development. This creates, in turn, shifts in the relationship of forces between the struggling classes. These are inevitably reflected in the state power itself, not at once in the form of a complete change in the class character of the state, but in the adaptation of the various governments, in one form or another, to the changed relationship of forces.

In "normal" periods in the life of society it therefore suffices, in deducing the nature of the state power, to refer merely to the nature of the society upon which it rests. In these "normal" periods also, let us hasten to add, the nature of the state power can likewise be determined from the objective characteristics of the state itself, and should, in strict scientific scrupulousness, be so determined. But history up to now has given us many more periods of correspondence

between state and society than it has of contradiction between them. It was consequently adequate in determining, let us say, the class character of the American state in 1900, merely to refer to the capitalist society.

In "abnormal" periods in the evolution of society, however, this method loses all validity. When the development of the productive forces has proceeded to such a point that not this, that, or the other modification of the relationship of classes is demanded, but a totally new form of the "collaboration" between them, that is, a new society, then the state power begins to reflect, directly or inversely, not the correspondence between state and society, but the conflict between different tendencies within society. In these periods, the epoch of revolution, the class character of the state cannot be ascertained from the social nature of the society.

All the progressive tendencies in society, one after the other, come into conflict with the specific form of collaboration required by the given operation of productive forces. But the state power stands guard over these relationships, juridically and through the employment of its force. The progressive tendencies therefore come into conflict with the state. This process develops in steps of accumulating quantitative changes to the qualitative change in the class character of the state itself: the power is torn away from one class and concentrated in the hands of another.

If we can establish that in "normal" periods the state plays a subordinate role in society and may even, in such periods as the administrations of Harding and Coolidge, be something of a nuisance to all classes, then we must also assert that when society has entered the period of social revolution, the state assumes the primary role. This is particularly true in periods of reconstruction following the transformation of state power: it is not society which now determines the state; it is the state which molds society. To the extent that the new state bases itself upon the progressive tendencies of development, to that extent society moves forward. To the extent that the state fails to do this, to that extent society has the danger of being thrown back.

The transformation of the state power, however, in the buffer zone and in many other areas of the earth, regardless of the leadership involved, cannot produce, in an historical sense, any very startling changes in the nature of their societies. At the heart of these societies are the productive forces. The productive forces cannot be developed as quickly as the state can be transformed. In addition this is an international task. In the transition period from capitalism to socialism, the period of at least our generation, the character of the state power, in many areas, will exhibit considerable difference from the nature of the society.

Is it necessary, at this late date, to bring to the fore these not very new considerations? It is necessary in the present discussion! Stein's report to the plenum is an analysis of buffer zone society. Wright's insistence on the subjective factors can only proceed from the same point of view. They deduce the nature of the state from the nature of society.

However this method, and the deadly dangers flowing from it, can be best demonstrated by further reference to the document of Comrade Germain. On Page 18 we find the following: "In the case of transitional, exceptional situations, it is just as impossible to judge the social nature of the economy by basing ourselves on property relations as by basing ourselves on the question: 'In whose interest is the state acting?' or 'Who controls the groups of armed men?' These transitional situations can only be judged by weighing all of the factors, the predominant mode of production as well as the property relations, the historic origins of the given society and the different variants of development which can be deduced. . . Only such an analysis of the whole. . . permits us to indicate not merely the process of transformation. . . but also the precise point which the transformation has reached." (Vern's emphasis)

It might appear from this that Germain is stating the same considerations that we gave above. With these criteria he is obviously analyzing buffer zone society as is indicated by the terms "social nature of the economy," "transitional situations," and "the process of transformation." Germain has the indubitable right to analyze the buffer zone society. To be sure the nature of the buffer zone states should not be omitted from this. Germain has no right, from the various points of view cited by him, however, to state that such an analysis "of the whole. . . permits us to indicate. . . the precise point which this transformation has reached," if by "precise point" he is going to smuggle in a class definition of the state.

We would suspect that this is, indeed, Germain's purpose when we consult Pages 24 and 25. Here he poses a comparison of the bourgeois revolution and the proletarian, the necessity in the latter of mass action, etc. He tells us that the "economic destruction of capitalism implies the substitution of new relations for tens of thousands of vital economic relations in industry, trade, agriculture, technology, etc." And he concludes this section by stating that this destruction and substitution was carried through in the territories incorporated into the USSR by killing and deporting "capitalists, big and middle peasants, middle classes, etc." This "gives advance indication of the limits of structural assimilation." This economic destruction of capitalism "has only been carried out. . . in the territories incorporated into the USSR." The buffer societies therefore remain capitalist.

All these considerations, useful enough in their place for an analysis of society are of no vital importance in the analysis of state power.

When we arrive on Page 29 to "THE ANSWER" with its heading "The Nature of the Buffer Zone" we can feel confident that now at last Germain will define the class nature of the buffer states. But first comes the buffer societies: "Capitalist society, seriously shattered by the war has been maintained in a special form by the Soviet bureaucracy. . . "

Then comes a truly startling innovation. We are first told that all the governments of the buffer zone have been governments of a new type: Bonapartist governments serving the Soviet bureaucracy. Then we get the following description of these governments, "defending in

the first instance the interests of the bureaucracy which in these concrete cases do not coincide immediately or historically with the interests of the proletariat or of the national bourgeoisie." (p.30, Vern's emphasis). In the next paragraph Germain shows that these governments don't serve the international bourgeoisie either.

Nothing is changed if we accept the very dubious distinction made by Germain on Page 16 between the government and the state. The only time when the government and the state can have a different class character is when dual power has developed along geographical as well as class lines. Such was the government in Saxony-Thuringia, cited by Germain. There a section of the state split away and confronted the bourgeois state across a class line. Situations such as this, very rare, are explainable on the basis of dual power.

But even if we accepted Germain's distinction between government and state, it would not change anything to his advantage. He has still got the task before him of defining both the class nature of the state and the class nature of the government.

Instead we are presented, in the few lines quoted above with the picture of a government serving neither the immediate or the historical interests of either the bourgeoisie or the proletariat. From a comrade proud of his Marxist orthodoxy, this is an unusual accomplishment! We are prepared to recognize governments (or state powers) which serve the immediate interests of the bourgeoisie or the proletariat to the sacrifice of their historical interests; we are prepared to reverse this and recognize governments (or state powers) which serve the historical interests of either class to the sacrifice of the immediate interests, but a government (or state power) which serves neither the immediate or the historical interests of the proletariat or the bourgeoisie is something that no Marxist will admit.

This is not improved when Germain adds on Pages 31 and 32 that "the Bonapartist state serving a force alien to the society. . . does not result in the destruction of the bourgeois state and its replacement. . . but is rather the product of the 'degeneration' (from the capitalist point of view) of the bourgeois state. . ." "That does not at all signify that we have in these countries classical bourgeois countries; that we can say that the bourgeoisie is in power there, or that we can apply to them standards traditionally marking a bourgeois state."

These countries, of course, were never classical bourgeois countries, it was not the bourgeoisie that was ever in power there but the world bourgeoisie. But this is a side issue.

What Germain actually says here is that we have a group of bourgeois states with a class-less character. (If this sounds silly, blame Germain!) The bourgeoisie is not in power. We cannot apply traditional standards marking a bourgeois state. Can we perhaps apply special standards marking a bourgeois state such as we applied to the Nazi state? Apparently not: we have already been told that these governments serve neither the historical nor the immediate aims of the proletariat nor the bourgeoisie. We do not have simply a class-less state, we have a class-less bourgeois state!

As a sop to Marxist conscience Germain adds: "The differences between this 'bastard' that we conveniently call 'bourgeois'. . . and the bourgeois norm, are by no means as great as those differences between the 'monstrousity' that the USSR today represents from the sociological point of view and the 'norm' given by Lenin for a workers' state." (Vern's emphasis)

This proves our point: that the error derives from mixing up state and society. From a sociological point of view the societies of both the USSR and the buffer zone are closer to capitalism than they are to socialism or to a society developing under a healthy workers' state.

But the state power in the USSR has a class character, is a workers' state, and it serves the historical interests of the proletariat by defending in its own way the social foundation established by the October Revolution. But the "bastards" that Germain presents us with have no class character: they do not serve the interests of any class. The differences between the USSR and the norm from this, and the only decisive standpoint, are thus by no means as great, as the differences between the buffer states and the bourgeois norm.

The USSR has a class character as a state power; the buffer states have a classless character. This is where Germain takes us.

This, Comrades Stein and Wright, is where you inescapably arrive with a confusion of society and state! This is what you arrive at when you deduce the nature of the state from the nature of the society!

That this is indeed Germain's error is demonstrated on Page 40 where he writes: "The reasoning of comrades who define. . . the buffer zone as workers' states implies that the USSR has. . . succeeded in stabilizing its domination. . . But this destruction of capitalism, this constitution of workers' states, etc., etc." (Vern's emphasis) Do you see the error here? "This destruction of capitalism, this constitution of workers' states." State and society are neatly identified. If a workers' state exists capitalist society must be at once eliminated. The fact that a workers' state theoretically can, and in many actual cases undoubtedly will, exist on the basis of an economic structure and a social regime primarily capitalist, is neatly lost sight of. From the inescapable capitalist (and feudal) features in the buffer society the capitalist nature of the state is patly derived.

This method, the identification, of state and society, harmless enough in normal periods, can only lead, in our times, to hopeless confusion. If the governments, or the states, in the buffer zone (and we are convinced that in this case they are inter-changeable terms) serve neither the proletariat nor the bourgeoisie, then they are class-less states or governments. Along this line we must arrive at the denial of the class character of the state (as Burnham did) or we must create a new class, the bureaucracy, and present, in all its tawdry elegance, the bureaucratic theory of the state (as Shachtman did).

This is the inevitable conclusion from the position of the Majority. This is its deadly danger.

Germain had the key to the problem of the buffer zone but he discarded it. In his document which takes up all possible questions and more besides, he has a section entitled, "The Criterion." In this section, some twenty pages, Germain chews over nationalization of industry, control over the state, inquires if a revision of the Marxist-Leninist theory of the state is necessary (!!!), takes up the "exploitation of the buffer zone" and the problems of "structural assimilation." All this under the heading of "criterion."

But here is something that he skates rapidly past: "the . . . establishment of soviet power is itself the decisive criterion. . . ." But he then discards this because: "not one of the buffer countries . . . exhibits sufficiently (!!!) clear and simple (!!!) characteristics to permit us to draw a 'self-evident' conclusion. . ." (pp.14,15) This in spite of the fact that he speaks on Page 18 of the power of the buffer states as depending for their "sole, solid factor" upon the weight of the Soviet bureaucracy.

This bureaucracy, we venture to observe, has a class character. So long as it is not transformed into a new ruling class in the USSR, so long as it is based on the workers' (collectivized) economy of the USSR, so long does this rapacious and revolting bureaucracy have a working class character. When it is really the sole factor in the creation of a state power (and it is the task of concrete analysis to determine this), then that state power must take its class character from the bureaucracy. (Yugoslavia was able to break with the Kremlin because its state power was not based solely on the Red Army and the bureaucracy but upon the Partisan armies with their worker-peasant character. Finland and Austria went the other way because their state powers were not based solely on the Red Army, etc. but also upon bourgeois forces, national and international, even though Stalinists formally headed these forces. In China, though it is obvious that Mao is not based on the Red Army and the bureaucracy, it is not clear, to us at least, just what forces he is based on. But that class character will determine the class character of the Chinese state.)

This will seldom be "sufficiently clear and simple" to make it possible for us to draw "self-evident conclusions." The fact that water boils at 212 degrees F. might appear, if we introduced a quantity of chalk into the water, or if we put the water under a pressure, to be anything except "clear and simple." It is not "self-evident" that the introduction of new machinery in an automobile plant will effect the price of cheap clothing in the department stores.

Nevertheless, molecular processes do determine the boiling point of water; value, in the long run, determines prices. When this cannot be ascertained directly from "self-evident" considerations, it has to be deduced indirectly. Such is the task of analysis. Analysis itself would be unnecessary if things were "self-evident."

From this derives the great importance of Marxist criteria. But it becomes evident from the twenty pages of Germain's document presented under this heading that Germain has no criterion for the class nature of the state, only a certain number of "factors" with which he examines society.

The concluding lines of this section attest that: "the evolution of the buffer zone can be understood only if no element is taken in isolation. . . only through an analysis of all these factors can we disentangle the motive forces regulating the development of the buffer zone. . . ." (p.29) One of the prime motive forces is the state. A factor in the evolution will undoubtedly be the class nature of these states. How can we decide that? Upon this question Germain has nothing to say. His definition of the buffer states is derived from his conceptions of buffer society. The Bureaucratic Theory of the State follows from this method. We have no reason to follow a comrade who has obviously lost the Marxist compass, temporarily we trust.

The Test of Theory

It should be obvious that the designation of the buffer states as workers' states not only follows from Marxist theory, but is the only conception capable of explaining the subsequent developments in the buffer zone, the collectivization of industry, the destruction of the bourgeoisie, etc. At the same time, considering the degenerated nature of the Stalin leadership we need not be surprised if this development accompanies a totalitarian drive against the masses, and in all spheres, assumes the inadequate, bureaucratic features which that leadership imposes.

We are told, in final opposition (to this construction that the buffer states are all workers' states, deformed or degenerated) that if we adopt this definition we therefore assign to Stalinism a progressive role for the future. We would like to point out that this objection, not particularly new inasmuch as Burnham and Shachtman played on it in all keys in 1939-40, has not been our conception in the very recent past.

If we have opposed, in this article, many of the present conceptions of Comrade Wright, we are all the more happy, therefore, to be able to solidarize ourselves with other conceptions of Comrade Wright. To the April 1943 Fourth International, Wright contributed a remarkable article entitled, "The Civil War in Yugoslavia." This entire article merits re-reading today. Let us give a few pertinent excerpts:

"In the period of the Stalin-Hitler Pact the Kremlin sovietized Eastern Poland, Bessarabia and the Baltic states. The Stalinist bureaucracy was compelled in the interest of self-preservation to extend the base of the first Workers' State. . . Conditions in the present period of Stalin's alliance with 'democratic imperialism' differ from those in the days of the Stalin-Hitler pact. But the same fundamental forces arising out of the irreconcilable clash between Soviet economy and world imperialism are driving the bureaucratic caste to measures which are revolutionary in their objective (!!!) consequences. . . The record of Stalinism warns that the Kremlin clique at a later stage will try to restrain within its bureaucratic straitjacket and suppress the self action of the revolutionary workers and peasants. . . But given the continued successes of the Red Army and a favorable relationship of forces vis-a-vis London and Washington, the sovietization of Yugoslavia along with sections of Poland and Eastern Europe is, even under Stalin, by no means excluded. . . Preparatory steps in this direction have already been taken.

In Moscow. . . there was organized the 'All-Slav Rally.' This organization is far more elaborate than Kuusinen's puppet regime intended for the sovietization of Finland. Its auxiliaries. . . already have a considerable mass base. . . " (Vern's emphasis)

The validity of these lines is apparent to anyone familiar with the 1939-40 events. They describe the reality of Eastern Europe when the present situation was only in the germ. The validity of this analysis can be demonstrated, moreover, in a fashion that should remove all doubt that it contains a fundamentally correct analysis of the buffer states.

The validity of any science, we know, is predicated on its ability to predict. Let us take particular note, then, of some of Wright's concluding lines: "The revolutionary ferment which has manifested itself in Yugoslavia. . . is only in its initial stages. . . In its further development this workers' and peasants' movement can sweep over the heads, not only of the Mikhailoviches and their allies, but also of the Kremlin clique." (Vern's emphasis) The Tito-Stalin break is forecast here before even the name of Tito had appeared in our press.

Following 1945 we dropped this appraisal, dubbed the buffer states "capitalist" including Yugoslavia. The Tito-Stalin break which proceeded inevitably from our former analysis was not foretold or explained by our present line. We were therefore somewhat disoriented when the break did come: capitalist Yugoslavia versus a workers' state, the USSR, etc., etc. We had used subjective factors to designate Yugoslavia as "capitalist." When objective fact demonstrated that that was false, it dealt a blow at the most important subjective factor of all, the program and the solidarity of our own movement.

All of us made the mistake which Wright describes in his discussion document: "How then is it possible to draw far-reaching theoretical and political conclusions from purely conjunctural situations?"

That is a mistake we have already made. From our impressions of the conjunctural and temporary situation in the buffer zone in 1946-48, from our subjective opposition to the work of the Stalin gang against the working class there, we all drew far-reaching theoretical and political conclusions overthrowing the conceptions worked out for us by Trotsky in 1939-40, the principled basis from which Wright's 1943 FI article proceeded. The proposals of Pablo, Hansen and Frank -- (and Vern) -- are proposals for the restoration of those conceptions.

Conclusions

1. The objective factor of their base upon organs of the working class (Red Army, Stalinist bureaucracy) determines the class character of the buffer states as workers' states. The consciousness of the masses, the origin of the regimes, all the subjective factors, as well as the objective factors of the extent of collectivization, the sufficiency of planning, or the condition of agriculture, are of no importance in determining the class nature of the state.

2. All of the factors cited above, inadequate to determine the nature of the state are of decisive validity in evaluating the evolu-

tion of the buffer societies: forward to socialism or backward to capitalism. These states, like the USSR, head toward political revolution against the bureaucracy, or toward overthrow by imperialism.

3. A reorientation of our movement toward the buffer states is necessary. Their defense against imperialist attack is indicated. Within the buffer zone we prepare the political revolution against Stalin.

4. Any designation of the buffer states as capitalist, no matter how closely life in the buffer zone may approach life in backward capitalist societies (and indeed the USSR itself has this feature) can only proceed from deviations from the Marxist method, and must result in a new definition of the class character of the USSR itself.

* * *

In writing this document we were impelled many times to lay it aside and ask ourselves: is it possible that, against Comrades Germain, Stein and Wright, we have been able to give these unchallenged facts the correct interpretation? Is it not more probable that these comrades, experienced theoretically and devoted to the movement, have indeed made a Marxist analysis and that it is we who are wrong? These considerations more than once impelled us to lay this article aside.

But we always returned to it. The glaring contradictions in the Majority position demands re-evaluation. The methods by which the Majority proceeds are too obviously deviations from our method. From re-evaluation the above analysis proceeded with its own logic.

We could not forget conclusions flowing from the quotation from Trotsky which Wright included on Page 10 of his document: "In such periods political conceptions and generalizations are rapidly used up and require either a complete replacement (which is easier) or their concretization, precision and partial rectification (which is harder)."

It appears to us that the movement has proceeded to the easier way: we regarded that the conceptions and generalizations developed in 1939-40 were, in fact, used up. We replaced them with other conceptions and generalizations which neither flow from our fundamental method and analysis nor enter into our basic program as an harmonious part.

It appears to us that we require, not the replacement of the conceptions and generalizations developed in 1939-40, but their concretization, precision and partial rectification. With the ability at our disposal we have tried to do that. That this is indeed harder is something that is "self-evident." But we are convinced that this is what the discussion requires. We are convinced, if the comrades will forgive us, that the hard way is easier than the easy way.

July, 1950.