

THE
RUSSIAN
QUESTION

RESOLUTIONS OF THE
1941 CONVENTION ON
THE CHARACTER OF
THE RUSSIAN STATE

25t

PUBLISHED BY: NATIONAL EDUCATIONAL DEPARTMENT

[1946?]

WORKERS PARTY of U.S.A.

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I N T R O D U C T I O N

The defeat of the Left Opposition, led by Trotsky, and the consolidation of the total power in the hands of the bureaucracy in Russia in the period of 1927-30 placed before the revolutionary Marxists the question of the class character of the Russian state. Was it still a workers state even if the working class had been deprived of any means of controlling it? If it was, by virtue of what reason could it still be a workers state? If it was not, what kind of a state is it? Is it a capitalist state, even if private property in the means of production and a class of private capitalists has not been restored? Is it perhaps neither a workers state nor a capitalist state but some new kind of social order? Can there be a social order in our epoch which is neither capitalist nor socialist (or in transition toward either)?

It was on the basis of these questions that the international Trotskyist movement concerned itself with what became known as "the Russian question". The great amount of attention devoted to this question by our movement under the guidance of Comrade Trotsky brought scorn and ridicule upon us from Left Socialist and centrists groups. The latter saw in this situation proof that the Trotskyists were hopelessly entangled in the "Russian orbit" and would never be able to feel at home in the problems of the workers of their own countries. They saw in our occupation with the "Russian question" proof that we were but an offshoot of "Russian Communism" and could only live and exist on the basis of Russian political questions. However, history has a strange way of playing pranks upon those who mistake their shortsightedness in questions of theory for "being practical". Thus with Norman Thomas, Lovestone, J.B.S. Hardman, Tyler, Zam and others in this country and Fenner Brockway, Thalheimer, Brandler, the German SAPers, Pivert, Nin, Maurin and others in Europe. They sought to keep the Russian question "to its proper proportion", i.e. make it merely the question of one country among the questions of many countries. They sought to avoid the "fate" of the Trotskyists in becoming part of the "Russian orbit". However, while they managed to leave the Russian question alone, the Russian question refused to leave them alone. The result is that today, with the exception of those centrist politicians who have gone over to Stalinism, most of the others have made a cult out of "fighting Russian influence" or, what has become known as "Stalino-phobia". The "Russian question" has become the sole axis of their politics.

The Trotskyists early recognized that the "Russian question" had become the major theoretical question of our epoch. It represented the problem of what is to become of the one-sixth of the world that had been wrested away from capitalism by the proletarian revolution, the one-sixth of the world where capitalism had been abolished and a nationalized economy had been established. If the proletarian revolution was delayed for any length

of time what would happen in a country where the proletariat was politically crushed but where nationalized property remained intact? If Stalinism was merely a transition back to capitalism, how would private ownership be restored? Was a declining and disintegrating world capitalism still robust enough to force its own social order upon Russia, either by means of war or by means of economic pressure. If capitalism proved too weak to do this and yet the proletariat proved too weak to overthrow capitalism, could the bureaucratized nationalized economy of Russia make inroads upon world capitalism? In short, what are the international implications of one-sixth of the world where capitalism remains economically expropriated and the proletariat remains politically expropriated.

Trotsky answered the questions posed by the victory of the Stalinist bureaucracy by stating that Russia was a "degenerated workers state". (See "Revolution Betrayed" for the fullest statement of Trotsky's view.) He saw in the Stalinist bureaucracy, not a new ruling class, but a workers bureaucracy that ruled, not over, but on behalf of the workers. The bureaucracy had become a "privileged strata" or a caste that lived by "robbing and cheating" the workers. While the workers had been politically crushed and expropriated, the nationalized economy that had been established by the Russian Revolution remained. The economy continued to operate on the basis of state planning. The bureaucracy continued to build and expand the nationalized economy. On this basis Trotsky concluded that the economic foundations of the workers state remained and therefore Russia remained a workers state. However, the despotic rule of the Stalinized state was evidence of the degeneration of the revolution; it was therefore not a healthy workers state but a "degenerated workers state". The rule of the Stalinist bureaucracy was equated, by Trotsky, to the rule of the Bonapartist regime in France following the French revolution, i.e., a regime that politically expropriated the bourgeoisie but left bourgeois property intact. In another analogy with the French Revolution, Trotsky stated that the victory of Stalin over the Left Opposition represented the Russian version of the victory of the Thermidor over the Jacobins or the victory of the right wing of the revolution over the left. However, Trotsky pointed out, the Russian Thermidor, just as in France, left the economic gains of the revolution intact. Trotsky saw the fate of the Stalin bureaucracy linked with the fate of the nationalized property. Though the role which the bureaucracy played would weaken the nationalized economy, the bureaucracy would in the last analysis find it necessary to defend the nationalized economy against capitalist restorationist attempts from within or without. Since Russia was a workers state, the Russian workers and the world's workers had to give it unconditional defense against all capitalist enemies, according to Trotsky. The Trotskyists stood pledged to give military and material aid to the Russian state in case of a war with a capitalist power though they withheld any political support to the Stalin regime. They summed up their position under the slogans "For the unconditional defense of the Soviet Union! Against the Stalin regime!"

The above views were seriously challenged in our movement in the United States for the first time in 1937 when James Burnham and Joseph Carter proposed a resolution to the founding convention of the Socialist Workers Party which stated that Russia could no longer be considered a workers state and that "unconditional defense" was no longer possible. They designated Russia as a "Stalinist state" in which the nationalized and planned economy was still progressive as against capitalism and could, under certain circumstances, still be defended by revolutionary Marxists. Resolutions were presented to the same convention by several minor groups in the party which likewise designated Russia as a non-workers state but gave various descriptions of the class character of the Russian state, including the view that Russia had degenerated to feudalism. The polemics at this time already revealed some of the theoretical difficulties in the workers state position. While the defenders of the majority position reduced the proof of the working class character of the state to the statement that "nationalized economy equalled the workers state", Trotsky added that "the character of the economy as a whole depends upon the character of the State power." The latter, he indicated, depended not merely upon the existence of nationalized economy, but upon whether the economy was being used to develop the foundations for a Socialist society. Another difficulty arose when Comrade Shachtman separated himself from the National Committee majority on the question of whether the "degenerated workers state" in Russia could fight a reactionary war by stating that the latter was a distinct possibility and pointed to the example of a hypothetical attack by Russia upon China over the control of Mongolia.

The very outbreak of World War II was signalled by a new development in the "Russian question"—the Hitler-Stalin pact for the division of Poland. The pact and the ensuing war kindled a new dispute on the "Russian question" in the SWP which, in the light of the monolithic concept of the party held by the Cannon majority, led to a split and the formation of the Workers Party. The fight on the Russian question in 1939-40 revolved around Russia's role in the war and the question of "unconditional defense". The Minority took the position that Russia was engaging in an imperialist war which the bureaucracy had entered on behalf of its "prestige, power and revenues" and that revolutionists could not be defensists in such a war. Trotsky and, above all, Cannon sought to avoid a discussion of politics (i.e. Russia's role in the war) and until the Minority was willing to discuss theory (i.e. the class nature of the Russian state). Though an increasing number of Minority supporters felt less sure about the validity of the "workers state" designation (or openly stated that they no longer adhered to it as did Comrade Johnson), the faction as a whole chose to lay aside the theoretical question temporarily and make issue the question of "defensism" or "defeatism" in relation to Russia's participation in the war in Poland and Finland. This view was shared by Burnham and Carter who decided to refrain from raising their views on the class nature of Russia and join in a bloc with the Minority on the political question. When the split

occured and the Workers Party was formed, the party stood committed to a theory of "conditional defense" and formal acceptance of the theory that Russia was a "degenerated workers state." However, the feeling was widespread in the party that this could only serve as a temporary solution until the party was able to discuss and reflect upon the basic question of the class character of the state.

Some six months after the founding of the Workers Party, Comrade Shachtman introduced into party discussion a document that summed up the theory he had developed on the class nature of the Russian state (New International, Dec., 1940). This document described Russia as a "bureaucratic collectivist state" in which the bureaucracy is the new exploiting class. Shortly after, Comrade Johnson introduced a document that offered a different position (New International, April 1941). This document described Russia as a Fascist state existing on the basis of capitalist economic relations. Comrade Carter took a third position which, while accepting the designation of Russia as a "bureaucratic collectivist state", took issue with Shachtman's contention that the existence of the nationalized economy made "bureaucratic collectivism" a superior economic system to capitalism and possible of defense against imperialist attacks that would restore capitalism. (The "degenerated workers state" theory was represented in the discussion by a small group of comrades led by Milton Alvin and M. Bartell. These comrades left the party immediately after the convention and returned to the SWP. Their resolution was omitted from this collection since its point of view is the classical position of Trotsky on the question and is both well known and easily available in other sources.)

In the midst of the party discussion, the German invasion of Russia took place in June 1941. The proponents of all three positions agreed that Russia's role in the war remained that of integrally participating in an imperialist war and the party took a defeatist position toward Russia as toward the rest of the belligerents. Two members of the National Committee (Wilson and Erber) differed with this decision. In agreement with the position proposed by Shachtman on the class nature of the Russian state, they contended that Germany's invasion constituted a threat to reduce Russia to a colony of world imperialism and advocated a revolutionary defensist position. (See Labor Action articles by J. Wilson in July 1941 and New International article by E. Lund in August 1941 issue.)

At the Second National Convntion of the Workers Party in September 1941, the resolution of the National Committee majority (Shachtman position) was adopted by a narrow margin. It has served as the basic guide of the party on the "Russian question", both in answering the political events of the war and Russia's participation in it and in polemic with the "degenerated workers state" theory clung to by the SWP. However, the vast experiences of the Second World War have revealed in the course of five years what several times that long a period of

peaceful development would have revealed in reference to the development of the Russian state and economy. This is above all true in the full flowering of Russian imperialism in terms of the economic policy it has adopted in the countries it occupies. Some views expressed in the 1941 resolution have, therefore, been outlived. In other respects the resolution in its original form has proved inadequate in answering new questions. The party has in various documents of its leading committee in the last several years supplemented the basic position it adopted in 1941. The International resolution of the National Committee for the 1946 convention of the party will, in this sense, bring the position up to date.

The National Educational Committee makes the following resolutions available to the party membership and the working class public as historic documents in the life of our party. A study of them will shed much light upon the fundamental importance of the Russian question for our epoch and will also help the reader to understand more comprehensively the point of view defended by our party today.

Ernest Erber
National Educational Director

[1946]

THE RUSSIAN QUESTION

(Adopted by the 1941 Convention of the Workers Party)

1. The March, 1917, revolution in Russia overturned the Czarist autocracy and established a provisional bourgeois-democratic regime threatened from its very inception by the dual power of the workers and peasants (the Soviets). Having come to power late in history, in the period of world imperialist decay, the bourgeoisie proved incapable of establishing a peaceful democratic regime and of solving the urgent problems of the democratic revolution, above all the agrarian revolution. The Russian bourgeoisie, as the "revolutionary democracy" of Kerensky, disclosed its impotence and its thoroughly reactionary character from the moment it took over state power. It was inseparably bound up with the reactionary imperialisms of Europe and America, it continued the basic imperialist policy of the Romanov dynasty in the war, it was incapable of breaking with the monarchial, semi-feudal and landholding classes and groups, and could remain in power only by summoning up an arch-reactionary military dictatorship (Kornilov). The character of the historically belated "revolutionary democracy" of the bourgeoisie in Russia was even more clearly emphasized when it was overturned in November, 1917, and thereafter sought to restore itself to power: in the course of the civil war it not only united with, but was dominated by the most reactionary classes and elements inside and outside of Russia. The test of events thus showed that there is no durable basis for a bourgeois-democratic Kerenskiad in Russia, that its dissolution by the proletarian revolution can be prevented only by its transformation into a Bonapartist dictatorship or fascism.

2. The Bolshevik revolution of November, 1917, carried out the tasks of the democratic revolution in the most drastic and thorough-going manner known in history, the great French revolution not excepted, sweeping away the last remnants of the monarchial and feudal order and of national oppression. But because at the head of the revolution stood the only class capable, in the Russia of 1917, of carrying out these tasks, namely, the revolutionary working class, it found itself compelled to defend its power by the most radical encroachments upon capitalist private property. The proletarian character of the Bolshevik revolution was determined primarily by the fact that the working class in power proceeded directly from the democratic to the socialist revolution by virtue of the complete expropriation of the industrial and financial bourgeoisie and the nationalization of the means of production and exchange.

In substance, the working class, through its representative democratic organs, the trade unions, the factory committees, and above all the Soviets, established a new type of state, the Workers' Soviet State, the dictatorship of the proletariat, guarded by its proletarian Red Army; and with the political, economic and military expropriation of the bourgeoisie and the landlords, proceeded to lay the foundations of a socialist society.

3. The Bolshevik revolution, in its conception, aims and methods, was a national revolution only in form, but the first victory of the international socialist revolution in essence. The revolution broke world capitalism at its weakest link. The Bolsheviks therefore proclaimed their internationalism from the very beginning and declared that without the aid of proletarian revolutions in the more advanced countries of Europe and America, the revolution in Russia would fail. This was true, and by it the Bolsheviks meant two things: First, that the Russian proletariat in the power could not establish a socialist society within the confines of one country alone, that is, on the basis of one workers' state surrounded by a world of capitalist states; and secondly, that without the state aid of the western proletariat, the Russian proletariat could not even remain in power in the transitional regime which its revolution had inaugurated. Given the betrayal of socialism by the Second International, the Communist International was then established as the organizing center, the general staff of the world revolution.

The Problems of the Revolution

4. Along with the task of advancing a revolutionary class line on the international field, the Soviet state was confronted at home with the task of establishing peace and consolidating the foundations of a socialist society. The miserable heritage of Czarism and the ravages of six years of imperialist world war and the civil wars left the workers' state with an almost universally ruined economy and an exhausted people in an overwhelmingly agricultural and backward country. The first big post-war revolutionary movement was suppressed by the bourgeoisie of the West, actively assisted by the social democracy, and was followed by a relative stabilization of capitalism throughout the world. The Russian revolution remained isolated in a hostile encirclement. The Bolsheviks were compelled to retreat to the NEP, that is, to allowing the development of a capitalist sector of the economy under the control of the workers' state in order to acquire a breathing spell and a stronger economic basis upon which to proceed at a later stage to the socialist offensive.

Meanwhile, the counter-revolutionary activities of the bourgeoisie and the social democracy had led to the suppression of all parties except the Bolshevik, and in 1921 even to the temporary prohibition of factions within the Bolshevik Party. The period of "war communism" had, furthermore, fostered the development of a semi-military regime in the country and to a considerable extent inside the ruling party. In addition, the Bolsheviks found themselves compelled, in the work of reconstruction, to draw into the economic and political machinery of the country non-revolutionary and even anti-revolutionary elements. All these circumstances contributed to the growth of a powerful bureaucratic stratum in Soviet society and to the bureaucratic distortion of the regime. Control by the representative democratic organs of the working class was gradually weakened. The Soviet state was a bureaucratically-deformed workers' state, whose proletarian character was affirmed essentially through the existence of the revolutionary Bolshevik Par-

ty of Lenin and Trotsky and its control of the state machine.

5. The sharpest struggles of the best representatives of the revolutionary workers' state, headed by Lenin and Trotsky, were directed against the weakening of the revolutionary internationalist policy of the party (building and cleansing of the Communist International); against the economic and political forces at work to restore capitalism; against the bureaucracy and bureaucratism which threatened to undermine the revolutionary state and its conquests. A whole series of factors contributed to the failure of these struggles. The death of Lenin deprived the party of the most authoritative voice in Europe, especially after the defeat in Germany in 1923, ushered in a period of economic, political and ideological reaction in the Soviet Union. In the preceding period, the revolution and the civil wars had physically destroyed many of the most solid representatives of the revolutionary generation and had worn down or used up many of those who remained alive. A certain economical revival following "war communism," accompanied by a rise in the living standards of the masses, had the effect of dulling the vigilance of the masses to the social reaction in progress in the country. Under these circumstances, the consistent proletarian revolutionary elements, represented by Lenin and Trotsky, and after the death of the former, by Trotsky and the Opposition, proved too weak to withstand the blows, or prevent the triumph, of the reaction and the counter-revolution in Russia.

6. The reaction and the counter-revolution in Russia took fundamentally different forms, however, from those which had been foreseen by the Marxists. They all agreed that the workers' state could not exist for long in one country alone and that without revolutions in the advanced capitalist countries of the West, the workers' state in Russia would go under. In this, their predictions have been confirmed to the hilt. However, they envisaged the collapse of the workers' state as the culmination of a process in which the capitalist elements would grow and finally triumph by a counter-revolution which would restore the rule of capitalism in Russia. In this, their predictions have not been confirmed. The workers' state was crushed by the Stalinist counter-revolution, but it was not replaced by a capitalist state.

The Character of the Inner Struggles

7. The degeneration and destruction of the workers' state in the Soviet Union has its roots in the degeneration and destruction of the revolutionary Bolshevik Party - caused, in turn, by the isolation of the Russian revolution and the backwardness of Russia. The monopoly of political power by the Bolshevik Party made it impossible for class forces, tendencies and aspirations to articulate themselves otherwise than through the party itself, now weakly, now strongly, now disguisedly, now openly and bluntly, now distortedly, now clearly. In the post-Lenin period, three groups took clear shape in the Bolshevik

Party -- groups which, with the final destruction of that party, became three separate parties -- each of them representing to one degree or another different class interests. The Bolshevik monopoly of political power transferred the class struggle, so to speak, or rather translated the class struggle in the country into an inner-party struggle, at least while the party existed.

The Left Opposition, inspired and led by Trotsky, represented the class interests of the proletariat, and therefore also the interests of the lowest strata of the agricultural population. Hence, the struggle of the Opposition was directed from the beginning toward preserving the revolutionary internationalist line of the party and the Communist International, defending the political and economic positions of the working class in the Soviet Union from the assaults of the ruling cliques, resisting the forces and tendencies of capitalist restoration.

The ruling regime was based upon a combination of the Right Wing and the so-called Center, that is, the Stalinist bureaucracy proper. The Right Wing represented, objectively, the social aspirations and interests of the capitalist elements in the country, the kulaks and the Nepmen, and to a certain extent the labor aristocracy and bureaucrats. Hence its policy of reconciliation with the capitalist world in general, and in particular with the "soldest" representatives of bourgeois democracy, social reformism; its policy of favoring the kulaks' economic development ("Enrich yourselves!") and concealing his menacing growth by labelling him the "diligent peasant." Hence its contemptuous and antagonistic attitude toward the "selfish demands" of the workers and the poor peasantry. Hence its opposition to "super-industrialization" and collectivization of agriculture, its theory of the kulak growing into socialism, etc. The Stalinist wing represented, as it still does, essentially the party bureaucracy and all the other bureaucratic strata of Soviet society associated with or dependent upon it, and revealed distinct Bonapartist characteristics, that is, it based itself at all times on more or less open force, seeking to use classes against each other in its own interests, seeking to rise above the classes for the sake of preserving its own rule.

The Evolution of the Bureaucracy

The bloc between the Right Wing and the Stalinist bureaucracy, whose policies seemed for a time to be indistinguishable or interchangeable, obscured for a long period those characteristics of the Stalinist bureaucracy which distinguish it from similar (but not the same) bureaucracies in other, i.e., in capitalist countries and under other conditions; and obscured the social process by which it gradually developed into an independent ruling class. The Right-Stalinist bloc had in common not only a reactionary foreign policy, accompanied by the systematic liquidation of the Communist International and the Red International of Labor Unions, but above all the aim

of destroying the proletarian wing of the party (the struggle against "Trotskyism") and with it the proletarian organizations and institutions in the country. The wiping out of the Left Opposition, the strangling of the Bolshevik Party itself, the disemboweling of the Soviets, the reduction of the trade union and factory committees to a fiction, in a word, the destruction of all semblance of working class representation or control in the Soviet Union was the common work of the Right Wing and the Stalinist bureaucracy. Therein the Stalinist bureaucracy in Russia revealed one of its outstanding, distinguishing characteristics: while it is unable and unwilling to unite with the revolutionary proletariat against capitalism and its representatives, it is able and willing to unite with capitalism or its representatives against the proletariat and its revolutionary wing. This characteristic made possible its bloc with the Right Wing against the Left in the Soviet Union, and on an international scale, its bloc with capitalist imperialism against the revolutionary working class and the colonial peoples (Spain, Ethiopia, etc.). In their social and historical position, the Stalinist bureaucracy and its state are closer to capitalism than to socialism.

But in its break with the Right Wing, beginning with the "Third Period" (ultra-Left line in world politics, super-industrialization and liquidation of the kulaks as a class in domestic politics), the Stalinist bureaucracy revealed its fundamental social divergence from its former collaborator. The destruction of the Left Opposition and the gradual liquidation of working class power was, objectively, only the pre-condition to the gradual restoration of capitalism, so far as the Right Wing was concerned. The destruction of the Opposition and of proletarian control was, so far as the bureaucracy was concerned, not the prelude to abdicating to capitalist restoration, but rather to the complete assumption of all power by the bureaucracy itself. The Right Wing and the bureaucracy could travel together only up to a fork in the road of the evolution of Soviet society. At that point they split asunder, with a violent crash. After having readily leaned on the capitalist and semi-capitalist elements in the country for support in smashing the proletariat, the bureaucracy, with the increased power and authority it had accumulated, proceeded to smash, just as ruthlessly, all the capitalist elements in the country. But, significantly enough, in the period of its so-called "Left zig-zag" (which was neither Left, nor, except in appearance, zig-zag, but substantially a continuation of its own drive for totalitarian power), it continued and even intensified the work of destroying the remnants of proletarian power in the state, lowered the economic and political position of the working class and emerged as the victorious representative of the bureaucratic counter-revolution.

The bureaucracy, contrary to prediction, did not proceed to denationalize the land or the industries and banks, and transportation system; it did not wipe out the monopoly of foreign trade; it did not facilitate the "gradual" development of small

capitalist production and exchange into a full-fledged capitalist system. On the contrary, it directed an assault against the capitalist elements in the country that was no less ruthless than any before known in the Soviet Republic; it enormously increased the importance and specific gravity of the state-property and state-production sector of Soviet economy and multiplied the number of proletarians manifold; and, with all the contradictions that still remain and are even accentuated, in one form or another, it brutally drove together the myriad of small landholdings into a system of collective farms. In almost direct proportion to these advances, however, the power of the working class in the state diminished. More accurately, it disappeared, and the workers' state gave way to the bureaucratic-collectivist state.

What Is the Class Character of the USSR?

8. The class character of a state is determined fundamentally by the property relations prevailing in it, that is, those relations which are at the bottom of the existing production and social relations. In any social order based upon private property, the prevailing form of property, be it in slaves, in feudal landholdings, or in capital, determines the property relations, is inseparably interlinked with them, may be used interchangeably with them. The social domination of the ruling class in states based upon one or another form of private property - although not necessarily or at every stage the political domination of such a class - is represented primarily by its ownership of property. The state, i.e., the machinery of coercion, is then the instrument for preserving the existing property relations, for preserving the domination of the economically most powerful class from assaults by classes it oppresses and exploits.

When, however, the epoch of private ownership of social property comes to an end and the epoch of collectivist property is inaugurated, as was done by the Bolshevik revolution of 1917; when private property is abolished and the means of production and exchange become the property of the state - it is impossible to apply the same criterion as is legitimately applied to states based on any form of private property. It is then no longer possible to determine the class character of the state by establishing which class owns the property, for the simple reason that no class owns property under such a social system. The state is the repository, the owner of all social property. The state, however, is not a class but a political instrument of classes. Property relations in a collectivist system are therefore expressed, so to speak, in state relations. The social rule of the proletariat - which, unlike all preceding classes, is and must remain a propertyless class - lies in its political rule, which it employs to destroy all private property and private-property classes as a precondition for safeguarding its own rule, and, eventually, for its own dissolution into a classless socialist society.

When the Russian proletariat, through its various organizations and institutions, controlled the Soviet state, in the period of Lenin-Trotsky and for some time thereafter, the Soviet republics were a workers' state, with bureaucratic and even capitalistic deformities. The Stalinist counter-revolution consists precisely in the destruction of all semblance of working class control over, or influence in the state, and the usurpation of all political, and therefore economic, power by the bureaucracy. The final triumph of the Stalinist counter-revolution coincided with - is represented by - the complete destruction of the last representative proletarian organization in the country, the Bolshevik Party, and its replacement by the party of the bureaucracy bearing the same name. Like the proletariat, the social rule of the Stalinist bureaucracy, which is also a private-propertyless class, lies in its political rule and can lie only in its political rule which it employs to destroy all private-property classes in order to preserve its own class domination - to preserve it also from the proletariat it exploits and oppresses.

Inequality and the Bureaucracy

9. Irrespective of his refusal to accord the rulers of the Soviet Union the status of a class, it is Leon Trotsky in whose works on the subject are to be found the clearest analysis yet made of the origins and the rise of the Stalinist bureaucracy to its position of domination. The bureaucracy rose to power as the universal Soviet gendarme in the midst of "generalized want" - traceable in turn to the isolation of the original workers' state. "The basis of bureaucratic rule is the poverty of society in objects of consumption, with the resulting struggle of each against all." Yet, the growth of the productive forces under Stalinism did not result in a relaxation of the totalitarianism of the "gendarme" (the bureaucracy) but rather in its accentuation. "The present state of production is still far from guaranteeing all necessities to everybody. But it is already adequate to give significant privileges to a minority, and convert inequality into a whip for the spurring on of the majority. That is the first reason why the growth of production has so far strengthened not the socialist, but the bourgeois features of the state." But not the only reason. The bureaucracy is "the planter and protector of inequality." In distributing the wealth of Soviet society, its guide is its own interests and no other. "Thus out of a social necessity there has developed an organ which has far outgrown its socially necessary function, and become an independent factor and therewith the source of great danger for the whole social organism." (Trotsky).

However, it is precisely in this process of becoming "an independent factor" that its development into a class may be established. "With the differences in distribution," says Engels, "class differences emerge." Society divides into classes; the privileged and the dispossessed, the exploiters and the exploited, the rulers and the ruled ... Distribution, how-

ever, is not a merely passive result of production and exchange; it has an equally important reaction on both of these. The development of each new mode of production or form of exchange is at first retarded not only by the old forms and the political institutions which correspond to these, but also by the old mode of distribution; it can only secure the distribution which is essential to it in the course of a long struggle. But the more mobile a given mode of production and exchange, the more capable it is of expansion and development, the more rapidly does distribution also reach the stage in which it gets beyond its mother's control and comes into conflict with the prevailing mode of production and exchange." The "old mode of distribution" prevalent in the workers' state was based, essentially on the equality of poverty. A truly socialist mode of production could be based only on equality in the midst of abundance. Abundance was possible only with a tremendous socialist development of the productive forces and of labor productivity.

But it is precisely such a development that was impossible on the basis of one country alone, and a backward country like Russia at that. "...A real upward swing of socialist economy in Russia will only be possible after the victory of the proletariat in the most important countries of Europe" (Trotsky, 1923). It is therefore inadmissible, from the Marxian standpoint, to apply decisively the principal criterion of social progress, i.e., the development of the productive forces, to a workers' state (concretely, to the workers' state of Lenin and Trotsky) in one country alone. The national limitedness of the workers' state prevented the "real upward swing of socialist economy"; so also did the "old mode of distribution," i.e., the equality of poverty. The demands of Soviet economy for development could not be satisfied by a capitalist restoration - quite the contrary. They were satisfied by an unforeseen social development.

The System of Bureaucratic Collectivism

The bureaucracy arose and it organized and developed the productive forces, including the principal productive force of society, the proletariat, to an enormous degree. It accomplished "a real upward swing" of Russian economy, but not of socialist economy. With barbarous, anti-socialist, bureaucratic methods, by introducing and constantly accentuating inequality, it lifted backward Russia to the position of one of the economically most advanced countries of the world, expanding the productive forces at a rate unknown in any contemporary capitalist or semi-capitalist country, right in the midst of a raging world capitalist crisis, in a period of a violently contracting world market and without the benefits of the world market enjoyed in the past by every capitalist country. But it is precisely at that point that one of the fundamental differences between bourgeois Bonapartism and Stalinist "Bonapartism" must be established. Whereas the Bonapartist, or Bismarckian regimes of the Stalinist bureaucracy undermined and finally destroyed the social rule of the proletariat in Russia and es-

established in its place a reactionary system of social relations, the class rule of bureaucratic collectivism. Traditional Bonapartism was a political regime established to preserve the rule of the bourgeoisie. The Stalinist regime rose as a new social system which destroyed the rule of the proletariat. For a socialist development of the productive forces, i.e., for a development based upon the planned collaboration of a number of workers' states in which are included technologically advanced countries, a democratic political regime and a steady growth of equalitarianism are sufficient. For the bureaucratic-collectivist development of the productive forces in the Soviet Union, a new ruling class was necessary, that is, a particularly brutal gendarme converting "inequality into a whip for the spurring on of the majority," and steadily accentuating the inequality in favor of the ruling class.

Under the social system of bureaucratic collectivism, this inequality can manifest itself economically only, or at least primarily, in distribution, since in the field of property-ownership, all classes are equal - none of them owns social property. With the new mode of distribution, the bureaucracy developed a new mode of production, production for the swelling needs of the bureaucracy, based upon state property and the enslavement of the working class. It was this new mode of production which was, in Engels' words, "at first retarded not only by the old forms and the political institutions which corresponded to these, but also by the old mode of distribution." Classes are the product of struggle. It was in the course of the struggle against "the old forms and the political institutions which corresponded to these (and also) the old mode of distribution" - that is, against production for the needs of the masses, against the democratic working class political institutions (the Soviets, the revolutionary party), and the more or less equalitarian system of distribution - it was in the course of the struggle against these that the bureaucracy developed as a class and consolidated itself as the ruling class.

Limitations of the New Order

10. The perspectives of the new social order in Russia and the new ruling class are narrowly limited by the specific and unique historical circumstances which gave birth to it. It is not, of course, possible to set down dogmatic and categorical laws of historical development for this new phenomenon; unlike capitalism, for example, it has no long history behind it which permits of a conclusive historical analysis. Political economy, observed Engels, "as the science of the conditions and forms under which the various human societies have produced and exchanged and on this basis have distributed their products - political economy in this wider sense has still to be brought into being. Such economic science as we have up to the present is almost exclusively limited to the genesis and development of the capitalist mode of production." So far as it has been possible to observe and analyze the phenomenon of Stalinist bureaucratic collectivism, however, its essential characteristics may be established even now.

Bureaucratic collectivism is a nationally-limited phenomenon, appearing in history in the course of a singular conjunction of circumstances, namely, the isolation and decay of a proletarian revolution in a backward country and a world-capitalist encirclement. Its ideology is not merely nationalist in general, but Russian-nationalist; its theory and banner is not so much "socialism in one country alone" as "socialism" in this particular country, Russia. Its expansion beyond the frontiers established by the revolution has been, thus far, episodic, conjunctural. But a far more fundamental consideration is this: Russian capitalism was ripe in 1917 for a socialist revolution but not for socialism; world capitalism was ripe in 1917, and is over-ripe today, not only for the socialist revolution but for the complete socialist reorganization of society. On a world scale, there is already a class, fully matured socially, capable of putting an end to the anarchy of capitalist production and capable of developing the productive forces socialistically, that is, capable, once it is in power, to do on a world scale what the proletariat in Russia proved incapable of doing by itself, in one country alone.

The bureaucracy in Russia became the ruling class because capitalism in the rest of the world remained in power; in turn, the Stalinist bureaucracy has prolonged the term of power of capitalism. The bureaucracy in Russia is a by-product of the delay of the world proletarian revolution; it will not continue in power with the advent of that revolution. As a new ruling class, in a new, exploitive society, it has come on the historical scene belatedly, as an anti-capitalist anachronism, its belatedness and transitoriness are underscored by the existence on a world scale of a matured, socially-qualified proletariat. From the day of its birth, it is torn by mounting contradictions, which make impossible the firm and durable consolidation of bureaucratic collectivism "in one country." Genuine planned economy on the basis of state property is impossible in one country, in a hostile capitalist world environment. Planned economy conflicts at every turn with bureaucratic management and appropriation of surplus products. The rate of development of the productive forces, made possible by the existence of state property, is decelerated after a period of time precisely by the increase of inequality which was the initial spur to this development, that is, by the increasing appropriation of wealth by a swollen bureaucratic stratum. The totalitarian Great-Russian oppression of the peoples of national republics engenders disintegrative centrifugal tendencies at the periphery of the bureaucratic empire. The anti-revolutionary nationalism of the bureaucracy conflicts with the "internationalist needs" of the economy, that is, its need of fructification by a rational world economy; this in turn facilitates the destruction of the whole economy by world capitalism, its reduction by the latter to the status of a colony or colonies.

The Second World War will therefore be the supreme test of Stalinist collectivism. Should world capitalism gain a new lease on life and be spared defeat at the hand of world revolution, Russia cannot, in all likelihood, escape integration into

the capitalist system as a colony or a series of colonies of imperialism. Should world capitalism collapse under the blows of proletarian revolution, the weight of the latter would crush Stalinism to the ground and precipitate the third, final proletarian revolution in Russia.

The Future of This Order

11. However, just what stages of development will be passed before bureaucratic collectivism in Russia is destroyed either by the proletarian revolution or capitalist counter-revolution, cannot be established categorically in advance. Bureaucratic collectivism is still in power and it is necessary to have as clearly as possible in mind the revolutionary proletarian attitude toward it and the political problems it raises.

Classes and social orders are historically conditioned; so also are the bureaucracy and bureaucratic collectivism in Russia. Product of reaction, both the ruling class and the social order it dominates are reactionary. The proletariat and its revolutionary vanguard therefore are uncompromisingly opposed to the politics of the regime and strive to overthrow it with all means consistent with the struggle for socialism. But the Marxist proletariat recognizes that while this new social order represents a reaction from the workers' state established by the Bolshevik Revolution, the forces producing this reaction were not strong enough or not of such a nature as to hurl Russia still further back to capitalism.

Russia remains a collectivist society, differing fundamentally from the workers' state of Lenin-Trotsky in that it is a reactionary collectivist society. But it has not been integrated into the system of world capitalism. Bureaucratic collectivism is closer to capitalism, so far as its social relations are concerned, than it is to a state of the socialist type. Yet, just as capitalism is part of the long historical epoch of private property, bureaucratic collectivism is part - an unforeseen, mongrelized, reactionary part, but a part nevertheless - of the collectivist epoch of human history. The social order of bureaucratic collectivism is distinguished from the social order of capitalism primarily, in that the former is based upon a new and more advanced form of property, namely, state property. That this new form of property - a conquest of the Bolshevik revolution - is progressive, i.e., historically superior, to private property is demonstrated theoretically by Marxism and by the test of practice.

The proletarian revolution in a capitalist country would abolish the reactionary social relations by abolishing private property; the proletarian revolution in Russia would abolish the reactionary social relations of bureaucratic collectivism primarily by destroying the political (and therefore the social) power of the bureaucracy but not the property form on which the bureaucracy and the social relations it established are based, namely, state property. This fundamental difference is not calculated to distinguish the two social orders from the

standpoint of where it is "easier" to carry through the proletarian revolution. It is calculated, however, to indicate the essential difference between the two social orders - bureaucratic collectivism and capitalism - and the historical superiority of the one over the other. In both cases, the prevailing social relations are based on the prevailing property forms. In the one case, the property form would have to be abolished by the proletariat in order to advance toward socialism; in the other, the property form would have to be preserved. In the case of capitalism, the establishment of state property would be an historical step forward, it would be progressive, in comparison with private property. In the case of bureaucratic collectivism the restoration of private property would be an historical step backward, it would be reactionary, in comparison with state property. "An enormous mistake is made in counterposing state capitalism only to socialism, when, contrariwise, it is absolutely necessary in the given economic-political situation to make a comparison between state capitalism and petty-bourgeois production." (Lenin, 1921) In the same Marxian sense, it may be said that it is a mistake to compare bureaucratic collectivism only with a workers' state or socialism; it must be compared also with what is the main enemy of the world (not merely the Russian) proletariat, namely, world capitalism. From the standpoint of socialism, the bureaucratic collectivist state is a reactionary social order; in relation to the capitalist world, it is on a historically more progressive plane.

The progressivism of bureaucratic collectivism is, however, relative and not absolute, even in relation to the capitalist world. Thus, for example, in conflicts between the Stalinist regime, on the one side, and a colonial or semi-colonial country, which is part of the capitalist world, on the other, the revolutionary proletariat takes its position by the side of the colonial or semi-colonial country; the revolutionary struggle for colonial independence is a decisive part of the struggle against the main enemy of the proletariat, world imperialism. Thus, for example, in a struggle between Stalinist Russia and capitalist imperialism, on the one side, and another section of capitalist imperialism on the other, the revolutionary proletariat takes its position against both camps, refusing to subordinate or mitigate in any way its struggle against the main enemy, imperialism, and imperialist war, to the defense of the Stalinist sector of capitalist imperialist camp, any more than it would in a similar case with regard to a small nation: or a colonial country, big or small, that became an integral part of an imperialist camp. The relative progressivism of bureaucratic collectivism is not of greater significance to the world proletariat than, with all its social differences, is the struggle for colonial independence. Under all circumstances, it is subordinated to the interests and strategy of the world proletarian revolution.

Under What Conditions Is Defense Possible?

12. The revolutionary proletariat can consider a revolutionary, (that is, a critical, entirely independent, class) defensist

position with regard to the Stalinist regime only under conditions where the decisive issue in the war is the attempt by a hostile force to restore capitalism in Russia, where this issue is not subordinated to other, more dominant, issues. Thus, in case of a civil war in which one section of the bureaucracy seeks to restore capitalist private property, it is possible for the revolutionary vanguard to fight with the army of the Stalinist regime against the army of capitalist restoration. Thus, in case of a war by which world imperialism seeks to subdue the Soviet Union and acquire a new lease on life by reducing Russia to an imperialist colony, it is possible for the proletariat to take a revolutionary defensist position in Russia. Thus, in case of a civil war organized against the existing regime by an army basing itself on "popular discontent" but actually on the capitalist and semi-capitalist elements still existing in the country, and aspiring to the restoration of capitalism, it is again possible that the proletariat would fight in the army of Stalin against the army of capitalist reaction. In all these or similar cases, the critical support of the proletariat is possible only if the proletariat is not yet prepared itself to overthrow the Stalinist regime.

On the other hand, it must be borne in mind that at their inception the inevitable, progressive mass movements of the workers and peasants against the reactionary regime, particularly those movements which arise in the oppressed national republics, will be politically immature and confused, and influenced by nationalist, federalist, democratic and even reactionary prejudices. The Fourth Internationalists count heavily, however, on the decisive revolutionary influence that can and will be exerted upon such movements by the hundreds of thousands of revolutionary militants who are imbued with the still living traditions of October and who would be the guarantee that the popular mass movements would take a proletarian direction. This is particularly true of such movements in republics like the Ukraine, White Russia, Georgia, Armenia, Aserbaidjan, etc., where the people's hatred of Stalinism has been cunningly and systematically exploited by reactionary imperialist forces from abroad. However, in the event of a civil war, especially in a totalitarian country like Russia, when the contending movements take the clearly-defined form of armies, with clearly discernible social and political aspirations, the Fourth International must be free to choose, depending on the concrete conditions, between support of one armed camp or the other, or, if neither is possible for the revolutionary proletariat, to work for the completely independent victory of the Third Camp.

What We Reject

13. The Workers Party rejects the theory that the Soviet Union is a degenerated workers' state which must be unconditionally defended against any capitalist country regardless of conditions and circumstances. This theory covers up the class nature of the Stalinist bureaucracy and the reactionary character of the regime. By the same token, it tends to underestimate

the full, reactionary significance of the bureaucracy. It disseminates the notion, discreditable to socialism, that a regime which is a prison for the working class and in which the latter does not have one iota of control, nevertheless has something "proletarian" - indeed, decisively proletarian - about it, simply because of the existence of state property. It conflicts with the revolutionary Marxian criteria for establishing a collectivist state as a workers' state. By the policy of "unconditional defense," it has already, in the Second World War, been compelled to give objective support first to one imperialist camp (the Axis, in the invasions of the Baltic, the Balkans and Finland) and, in the second stage of the war, to another imperialist camp (the Allies, in Iran, in the Pacific and in the Arctic). The theory denies, further, the existence of Stalinist imperialism, as the policy of bureaucratic aggression and expansion, and thus objectively covered the invasions of 1939-1940-1941 while declaring contradictorally at the same time its opposition to "the seizure of new territories by the Kremlin." The Party therefore rejects also the policy of unconditional defensism with regard to the reactionary Stalinist state.

14. The Workers Party rejects the theory that the Soviet Union is a fascist capitalist state and the political line flowing from it. The bourgeois elements in Russia are an unsubstantial social grouping. The principal basic characteristics of capitalism are absent in the Soviet Union - private property, wage labor and commodity production. The ruling class in Russia is not composed of capitalists, that is, of owners of capital; the income of the members of the ruling class in Russia is not derived from profit accruing from the ownership of capital. Free labor in the Marxian sense of the term long ago ceased to exist in the Soviet Union. Neither is there the prevalence of commodity production, that is, production for the market. The Party also rejects the policy, flowing from this theory, of support of democratic capitalism against the "fascist capitalism" of Russia as a disguised form of support for capitalist restoration; and on the same grounds, rejects the petty-bourgeois utopia of a struggle for a "Constituent Assembly." The Party finally also rejects the policy, flowing from this theory, of no united fronts under any conditions in this country with the "fascist" Communist Party, as only a new version of the old Stalinist theory of "social fascism"; the Party reaffirms the admissibility of united fronts, under certain conditions, with the Communist Party as a party.

15. The Workers Party rejects the theory that capitalism and bureaucratic collectivism are "equally reactionary" and the political line flowing from it. This theory implies the superiority of "democratic capitalism" to totalitarian collectivism; which can only open the road in practice to supporting reactionary movements of capitalist restoration. The Russian proletariat could take power in 1917 only when backed by the revolutionary-democratic peasant masses. Capitalist democracy can struggle for power again in Russia only if backed by reac-

tionary world imperialism, that is, Russia can be reintegrated into the capitalist world only in one of two forms - either under a savage, fascist or semi-fascist dictatorship, or as a group of colonies of imperialism, with the latter as the more likely form. The theory of a "bourgeois-democratic" or a "democratic" revolution against the Stalinist dictatorship which "will not restore capitalism" but "only" establish "democracy" under the rule of a "Constituent Assembly" is a reactionary dream propagated for years by Kautsky. The reactionary liquidation of Stalinism can be accomplished only by means of the most brutal military dictatorship of the bourgeoisie; the revolutionary liquidation of Stalinism can be accomplished only under the leadership of the proletariat fighting under the banner of international socialism. Any intermediate choice is an illusion, a trap, a dream, a petty-bourgeois Utopia. The theory of the "equally reactionary" character of the two mutually hostile and irreconcilable classes and regime can only have the objective effect of disarming the Russian proletariat in face of capitalist restorationism, by preaching the lie that it is a matter of indifference to the workers if the present regime is liquidated by capitalist reaction and the bourgeoisie restored to power.

Our Banner: Internationalism

16. In the Soviet Union, the revolutionary proletariat stands on the fundamental program of the Fourth International. It declares an uncompromising struggle against Stalinism, and against all its reactionary theories and policies. Under no circumstances does it give an iota of political support to the regime. It calls for the revolutionary overthrow of the ruling class. The program of the Fourth International calls for the restoration, not of democracy in general, that is, of bourgeois democracy, but of proletarian, Soviet democracy. It works for the re-assembling of the forces necessary to establish a genuine Bolshevik Party. It works for the transformation of the trade unions into fighting organs of the working class, defending their interests against the class interests, the exploitations and oppression of the ruling bureaucracy. It calls for the re-establishment of the democratic Soviets and the Soviet regime, and works to drive the bureaucracy and all other alien class elements out of the reconstituted Soviets. It proclaims its sympathy with the national aspirations of the oppressed peoples and minorities, fights for their independence, and pledges itself to recognize the right of self-determination of these peoples, warning them at the same time of the dangers of falling into the trap of bourgeois nationalism or becoming tools of enemy exploiting classes of foreign imperialism. It pledges itself to work for the support of the workers and toiling people throughout the world, to every progressive struggle of the Soviet peoples against the tyrannical regime that oppresses them. It calls upon them to rekindle the fires of the October Revolution, to destroy root and branch the incubus of bureaucratism that has fastened itself upon them, to unite with the proletariat of the whole world in renewed struggle for the socialist emancipation of the toilers.

RESOLUTION ON THE RUSSIAN QUESTION

For many years the fact that in Russia the means of production were state property, was sufficient for the Fourth International to characterize the working class as ruling class and the Russian state as a workers State.

Today, however, 1941, side by side with a tremendous but declining rate of industrial expansion in Russia, the working class has been reduced to a state of pauperization, slavery and degradation unequalled in modern Europe. The real wages of the workers are approximately one-half of what they were in 1913. A bureaucrat holds all economic and political power. To continue to call the Russian workers the ruling class is to make a statement without meaning.

Yet Trotsky never wavered from this position. It led him, the direct successor of Marx, Engels and Lenin, into calling upon the workers of Russia to be the best soldiers in an army that was, according to his own statement, acting as the tool of an imperialist power. The Workers Party, in refusing to accept this position, and in calling upon the Russian workers in this war to turn the guns in the opposite direction made a profound break not with all that we have thought on the Russian question, but with something far more important, with how we have thought about it. So profound a difference must convince the party that what we face is not a re-hash or manipulation of our previous ideas but a fundamental reevaluation of the method and equipment with which we previously approached the question. Unless this is absolutely and thoroughly done, the party will live in a state of continual uncertainty, confusion and recurrent conflict about our fundamental aims. This explains the scope and method of this resolution.

2. The Marxian Theory of Society.

Marx rests his theory of society upon the technical level of the instruments of production under given historical circumstances. "Assume a particular state of development in the productive forces of man and you will get a particular form of commerce and consumption. Assume particular stages of development in production, commerce and consumption and you will have a corresponding social order, a corresponding organization of the family and of the ranks and classes, in a word, a corresponding civil society." These are Marx's own words. The purely historical, i.e., the chronological analysis of society places property first. The logical method of Marx examines the actual historical relations always as an expression of the logical analysis, which begins with the technical level of the instruments of production. This determines the relation of the people to each other and the division into classes, which then determine the relation of the classes to the instruments of production and the results of labor. These last usually expressed in laws, are the relations of property, which from his earliest writings, Marx

always defined as an expression of the mode of production. This is the strict Marxian terminology and the strict Marxian sequence as can be seen from a casual reading of the Preface to the Critique of Political Economy and The Communist Manifesto.

Applying this method to Russia we find that in 1917 the technical level of production, unsupported by one or more powerful socialist states, compels a social relation of exploited wage-laborers and appropriating capitalists. In order to achieve the bourgeois-democratic revolution in 1917 the proletariat was compelled to seize power. But this seizure of political power was due chiefly to the incapacity of the ruling class and the conjunctural historical circumstances. The working class lacked the maturity in production of a proletariat which was a majority of the population and had been trained and disciplined by large-scale capitalism. All political power rests in the last analysis on and is determined by production relations. This was the reason for the insistence of Lenin and Trotsky that without the proletarian revolution on a world wide scale, the Russian proletariat was doomed to sink back to the position of wage-slaves, i.e., the restoration of Russia to capitalism. This is exactly what has happened. The whole society has turned itself slowly over and once more the working class has been pushed back into that submissive role in production which is determined by the low technical level of the productive forces judged on a national scale. The bureaucracy is completely master in the productive process and that is the bases of its political power.

No more convincing exposition of Marx's theory of a society resting on the technical level of production can be wished for.

3. The Theory of Capitalist Society

Contrary to expectation the role of managers of production has not been seized by members of the old ruling class. The definition of the class which is today master of Russia must rest on an analysis of the mode of production which now prevails. The historical conditions of capitalist production are as follows: (1) the existence of the world market, (2) the existence of a class of "nominally free" wage-laborers, (3) the ownership or monopoly of the means of production by a class which rules production and disposes of the property, (4) production by private persons for a free and uncertain market. Such a society produces a certain type of product, the capitalist commodity which has its own special commodity characteristics. The labor contained in it has the double aspect of both use-value and exchange-value. To use Marx's own words "all understanding of the facts depends upon this.." and any analysis of Russia which describes it as a society

"unforeseen" by Marxists but yet omits a consideration of this and other aspects of the law of value is so inadequate as to be not only misleading but valueless. The law of value can be rejected. It cannot be ignored or allowed to go by default in a Marxist party.

The Marxian law of value, however, is merely an expression of a certain type of society. This society contrary to all other societies we have known and expect to know, makes the extraction of surplus labor (called in this instance surplus-value) the main aim of production. For Marx "the capitalist mode of production (is) (essentially the production of surplus value, the absorption of surplus labor". This is crucial. "It must never be forgotten, that the production of this surplus-value - the reconversion of a portion of it into capital, or accumulation, forms an indispensable part of this production of surplus value - is the immediate purpose and the compelling motive of capitalist production. It will not do to represent capitalist production as something which it is not, that is to say, as a production having for its immediate purpose the consumption of goods, or the production of means of enjoyment for capitalists. This would be overlooking the specific character of capitalist production, which reveals itself in its innermost essence." This is the main aim of production in Stalinist society, a capitalist society. All other societies produced for consumption and enjoyment.

All previous societies produced surplus-labor, but except in isolated instances, wants or use-values were the main purpose of production. It is only in a society where labor is free of all contact with the means of production, within the environment of the world market, that the contradiction between production for use and for surplus value dominates the whole society. Marx speaks of the difference between the use-value and the exchange-value of the commodity as the antithesis of the commodity. The contradictions and antagonisms of capitalistic society are merely embodiments of this antithesis, which is to be resolved in the synthesis of socialism, i.e. by the reuniting of the man of labor and the means of labor, and the abolition of the capitalist world market. International socialist society will produce surplus labor but it once more has as its sole aim the production of use-values.

Today this antithesis between production for use and production for surplus-labor can be seen nowhere so clearly as in Stalinist Russia. And that stamps this society as being of the same inner essence as capitalism. Up to 1928, the use-value of the commodity predominated to the limited extent that this was possible in a backward society in the environment of the world market. The industrial proletariat in that year lived, at the very least, up to the standard of 1913. The First Year Plan predicated doubling of the subsis-
five

tence of the working class by 1932. But from 1929 a decisive change began. The lowering of agricultural prices in the world market threw the Russian plan into chaos. The competition on the world market, in its modern form of imperialist war, compelled the bureaucracy to reorganize the plan to meet the threat of Japan, at heavy cost; and with the coming to power of Hitler and his announcement that the main enemy was Russia, the change in Stalinist production and in Stalinist society became more uncontrollable. The bureaucracy was compelled to continue the process of industrialization at feverish speed. Under such circumstances, in a backward country, with an immature working class, the main aim of production inevitably must become the production of surplus-labor, for the sake of more production, for the sake of still more production. And all this at the cost of the working class. This is the specific characteristic of a capitalist production. This economic necessity compelled an enormous increase in the repressive apparatus, the consolidation of the ruling bureaucracy by concrete privileges, honors and authority and the destruction of persons and ideology connected with the October Revolution. The necessity of autarchy, attempting to produce all that Russia needed within its own borders, resulted in further disruption of production, and the mounting indices of production as a consequence represented large uneconomic investment, thus increasing the strain upon the workers. Stakhanovism was a perfect expression of the qualitative change in Russian society. The climax came in 1936-1937 with the partial breakdown of the economy as exemplified by the charges of Trotskyite sabotage in every branch of production. In the historical circumstances of Russia, the antithesis between the production of surplus value and use-value has reached a stage unknown in other capitalist economies. The state of world economy today precludes any thought of a cessation of this mode of production. The economic power of the bureaucracy precludes that this can be done otherwise than at the continued and growing expense of the working class. The system has developed in every essential of production into a capitalist system and the parasitic bureaucracy has been transformed into an exploiting capitalist class. Henceforward its law of motion must be the same as that of other capitalist societies. An approximate date for the completion of the process is 1936, the year of the Stalinist constitution.

4. The Necessary Movement of Capital and its Forms of Manifestation

That the laws inherent in capitalist production in Russia manifest themselves in unusual forms is obvious. But their unusualness in Russia is not unique. It is exceeded by the capitalism which Marx himself invented. To deduce the laws of capitalist production, Marx constructed a capitalism such as never existed and never could exist. In it

labor, like every other commodity, was always sold at its value, the capitalist found on the market whatever he wished, consumption was always equated to production, fluctuations of prices there were none, no single capitalist enterprise advanced in front of the other in organic composition, unemployment and crisis were absent, all was in complete equilibrium; no capitalist could construct for himself a more ideal haven of peaceful accumulation. Yet this is the capitalism from which Marx drew his laws of motion, and even this capitalism Marx proved, was bound to collapse. From this abstraction, which was the frame in which he worked in Volumes I and II, Marx then turned and in Volume III showed the devastating manifestation of the law of motion in capitalist society as it actually was. Thus the very method on which Capital was constructed is a warning to all hasty and ill-based attempts to baptize societies as never before seen, from a consideration of their external forms of manifestation, and not from an analysis of their laws of motion.

Marx dealt extensively with the crisis of over-production but in 1886 Engels, in a preface to Capital, calmly stated that the decennial cycle of prosperity, overproduction and crises, seemed to have come to an end, leaving a permanent depression. A few years later he wrote that perhaps this prolonged stagnation was only the prelude to a general world wide crisis, but he was not certain. That the continued absence of the cycle of prosperity, overproduction and crisis invalidated the law of motion of capitalist society was obviously far from his thought. For Marx crisis was an expression of the contradictions inherent in the movement of capitalist society. The crisis would express itself in different forms but the contradictions of the capital relations would continue.

The "free and uncertain" market of "pure" capitalism has been abolished before now in a national society. Lenin in 1917, before the revolution, stated that the immense majority of the capitalists in Russia were not producing for the market at all but for the State which advanced them money. It was not commodity production, which, he explained, was production for a free and uncertain market: It was not "pure" capitalism (the quotes are his own) but "A special type of national economy." In Germany today that process Lenin described is immensely more advanced than it was in Russia. It would be a perversion to assert that production in Germany is for a free and open market. It would be equally disastrous to see in the abolition of the traditionally free capitalist market, a basic change in the society. The law of motion is not thereby altered. To the contrary, it is the nature of the law of motion to abolish the free market. In Russia the commodity is no longer the product of private individuals. But it is, however, the law of capitalist pro-

duction to abolish the private character of capital. That Marx expected the revolution to occur before this was completed alters not one thing in his analysis of the movement of the society. The joint-stock company is "the abolition of capital as private property within the boundaries of capitalist production." The concentration of all available capital in the hands of the Bank of England "does away with the private character of capital and implies in itself, to that extent, the abolition of capital." The climax of this process is the ownership of all capital in the hands of the State. The bourgeoisie continues to draw dividends, but the drawing of dividends does not make a system capitalist. The dividends can be drawn from a Workers' State. It is the fact that the state acts as the entrepreneur and exploits the workers that is decisive. "Interest-bearing capital represents capital as ownership compared to capital as a "function." And, still more clear, "The investing capitalist derives his claim to profits of enterprise and consequently the profit of enterprise itself, not from his ownership of capital, but from its production function as distinguished from its form, in which it is only inert property." Marx in scores of other places pointed out the distinction between production and property. It is one of his great contributions to economic theory.

But all this type of argument shows not only a complete incapacity to understand Russia, but a narrowness of view which will prevent any clear understanding of further developments in traditional capitalist society. Marx's definitions are both precise and sweeping. In all previous societies land was the main factor in production. In capitalist society the main factor is accumulated labor, within the environment of the world market. If the laborer controls the accumulated labor we have socialism. Wherever it controls him we have capitalism. "It is only the dominion of past, accumulated materialized labor over immediate living labor that stamps the accumulated labor with the character of Capital." Marx repeatedly wrote these definitions. The most famous of them, just as this last, applies literally to Stalinist society. "Capital is a definite interrelation in social production belonging to a definite historical formation of society. This interrelation expresses itself through a certain thing and gives to this thing a specific social character. Capital is not the sum of the material and produced means of production converted into capital and means of production by themselves are no more capital than gold or silver are money in themselves. Capital signifies the means of production monopolized by a certain part of society, the products and material requirements of labor made independent of labor power in living human beings and antagonistic to them, and personified in capital by this antagonism." Such a society, whatever differences it may and must develop from classic capitalism, will move in a certain direction and in a certain way. That is the heart of the problem.

5. The General Law of Capitalist Accumulation

If the contradiction between use-value and exchange value is the pivot of the Marxian political economy, its second distinctive character is, on Marx's own evaluation, his method of analyzing surplus value, i.e. surplus labor in the modern historical conditions. This he treats as an entity, and his deliberate refusal in theoretical analysis to take into consideration its subdivisions into industrial profit, commercial profit, interest, rent, taxes, etc., is a fundamental of his system. It would be presumptuous to attempt to state it in words other than his own. "With the advance of accumulation, therefore, the proportion of constant to variable capital changes. If it was originally say 1:1, it now becomes successively 2:1, 3:1, 4:1, 5:1, 7:1, 8:1, so that, as the capital increases, instead of $\frac{1}{2}$ of its total value, only $\frac{1}{3}$, $\frac{1}{4}$, $\frac{1}{5}$, $\frac{1}{6}$, $\frac{1}{8}$, etc., is transformed into labor-power, and, on the other hand, $\frac{2}{3}$, $\frac{3}{4}$, $\frac{4}{5}$, $\frac{5}{6}$, $\frac{7}{8}$ into means of production...With the growth of the total capital, its variable constituent or the labor incorporated in it, also does increase, but in a constantly diminishing proportion."

The disproportion between constant and variable capital increases and, ultimately, such will be the strain on the worker to produce the necessary surplus that, as Marx says in one place, at a certain stage, if the laborer worked all 24 hours a day, and the capitalist took all the labor instead of merely the surplus over subsistence it still would not be sufficient. Here in the process of production, and not in the process of circulation (the market) lies the fundamental contradiction of capitalist production. This is the basis of Marx's law of the falling rate of profit. "The fact that this analysis is made independently of the subdivisions of profit, which fall to the share of different categories of persons, shows in itself that this law, in its general workings, is independent of those subdivisions and of the mutual relations of the resulting categories of profit. The profit to which we are here referring is but another name for surplus-value itself, which is merely observed in its relation to the total capital, instead of its relation to the variable capital from which it arises. The fall in the rate of profit therefore expresses the falling relation of surplus-value itself to the total capital, and is for this reason independent of any division of this profit among various participants." Here is the key to the understanding of the growing crisis in Russia. Part of the annual product goes for necessary wages. Part of it goes to replace the constant capital used up. If as has been estimated the means of production have to be renewed every ten years then the workers have to produce, yearly, beside their wages one-tenth of a constantly increasing capital. The rest is the surplus labor. As the mass of capital increases the mass of surplus labor becomes proportionately less and less. The worker, with no control over the process of production, receives less and less of the product. At a certain stage, in order to make the de-

creasing mass of surplus value approximately adequate to its task, the capitalist has no alternative but to lower the wages and increase the exploitation of the worker. The worker resists. The capitalist class then is compelled to enslave him. Ultimately, says Engels, the worker will be driven to the level of a Chinese coolie. This is the inevitable enslavement of the worker which Marx prophesies so persistently. If today when we see the enslavement we begin to see it in a worker no longer "free", but attached to the factory as the slave or the serf was attached to the land, then the Party will have definitely left the road of Marxism for the most vicious and vulgar empiricism. It is on this movement in the direct process of production, that is based the theoretical certainty of the collapse of capitalist production. The competition on the World market, the enormous expenses of an exploiting society, with its military apparatus, bureaucracy, clergy, police, etc. the decreasing productivity of the individual laborer, the millions who do work, which can only be called work "under a miserable mode of production", all this compels such a society to make surplus labor and surplus labor alone, the compelling force of production. Thus at a certain stage, as in Germany in 1932, the magnificent productive apparatus stands crippled. Such is the size of the means of production and the organic composition of capital, that the enormous quantity of surplus-labor necessary for the progressive functioning of a capitalist society cannot be produced. The "functioning capital" available to make this productive apparatus work is too little. It appears to be a plethora of capital but Marx says this "so-called plethora of capital" is always a capital whose mass does not atone for the fall in the rate of profit. Capitalist production comes to a standstill first, and foremost because the system demands that surplus labor be produced, and sufficient surplus-labor cannot be produced. The contradiction between use-value and exchange value has reached its apotheosis. The troubles of the market are merely the reverse side, the result of the contradictions in production.

An identical process of production in Russia moves inevitably to a similar result. The laws of capitalist production, always immanent in an isolated Workers State and more so in a backward economy, have been forced into action, in the environment of the world market. The organic composition of capital in Russia mounts with the growth of industrialization. Year by year, however, the mass of surplus labor must grow proportionately less and less. Marx worked out his final theory of accumulation on the basis of the total social capital in the country and denied that this altered the economic and historical characteristics of the society. The expenses of an exploiting class within the environment of the world market, the privileges necessary to differentiate the classes, a vast military apparatus, increasing degradation and slavery of the worker, the lowering of his individual productivity at a stage when it needs to be increased, all these features of Russia are rooted in the capital-wage labor relation and the world-market environment. The advantages that Russia alone enjoyed

in 1928, centralization of the means of production, capacity to plan, have today been swamped by the disadvantages of the quest for surplus labor. To its traditionally capitalist troubles the bureaucracy adds one of its own, an excessive waste due to the bureaucratic administration. But Stalin today, like Hitler, contends essentially with the falling relation of the mass of surplus value to the total social capital. That is the economic basis of the constantly growing persecution of the workers by the bureaucracy. The bureaucracy is no worse than any other ruling class. It behaves as it does because it must. This is the law of motion of Stalinist society. Ultimately the productive apparatus of Russia will stand as impotent as Germany's in 1932, and for the same reason, its incapacity to produce the necessary surplus labor which is the compelling motive of production for any modern class society. The struggle in Russia is not over consumption, as Trotsky thought, but over production, and the Stalinist state is organized nine-tenths, not for stealing, but for production. The Party must make this clear in all its propaganda and agitation and correct this serious error.

This is the reply to all who see some new type of society superseding capitalism, and solving its contradictions. All of these theories are distinguished by their absence of economic analysis, or the flimsiness of their assumptions. If the Party should adopt the same empirical method in its own analysis, it will completely emasculate its own capacity to answer and destroy the arguments of those who herald the managerial society, the "new" Fascist order, the garrison State, etc. This theory is the heritage that Marx left for the proletarian movement. And it is here that we must be clear or be always in confusion.

6. The Theory of Imperialism.

Modern imperialism is a quest for markets in an attempt to check the always declining relation of surplus value to the total social capital. So that Lenin, following Marx, bases his theory of imperialism on production and not on circulation. The circulation process of capital, however, is important for our understanding of a particular manifestation of imperialism. In Volume II Marx repeats in almost every chapter that the capitalist has to set aside some capital year after year until it is large enough for the purpose of reorganizing his enterprise on the necessary scale. Individual capitals may accumulate quickly. What is important is the total accumulation in regard to the social capital as a whole. This mass of surplus labor, embodied in money capital and waiting until it is large enough, forms a substantial part of the capital in the hands of banks, and as capitalist production develops it becomes larger and larger. This money-capital also increases as capital is withdrawn from the production of commodities through its incapacity to produce profits. This is the money-capital of which Lenin writes. But all imperialism was not necessarily of the particular type Lenin analysed. Japan and Russia were not, as he said, "modern, up-to-date finance-capital", but as he explained, their military power, their domination of colonial territories, their plunder

of China, etc., made them imperialist. By 1914 imperialism was therefore a struggle for all or any kind of territory, for the sake of the territory and in order to prevent rivals getting hold of it. This was done to control raw materials, to export capital, to expand the commodity-market, for strategic purposes, in fact for any purpose which would contribute to the increase of surplus value. That is the obvious economic basis of Stalinist imperialism. Like Hitlerism it will seize fixed capital or agrarian territory, tin-mines or strategic ports and transport manpower. Within its own borders the bureaucracy mercilessly exploits the subject nationalities. Should it emerge victorious in the coming war, it will share in all the grabbings of its partners, and for the same reason. Trotsky's idea that the bureaucracy seeks foreign territory merely to expand its power, prestige and revenues lays the emphasis on the consumption of the bureaucracy. That is false. The "greed" of the capitalist class is a result of the process of production, and the greed of the bureaucracy has the same roots. With a productivity of labor as low as it is in Russia, and the overhead expenses of an exploiting society within the environment of the world market as large as they are, equal to that of the most highly developed capitalist states, it is not possible for the bureaucracy to escape the same fundamental problems of production as an advanced capitalist state, and to move towards the same attempts at solution.

7. Fascism

If the relations of production in Russia are capitalist then the state is Fascist. Fascism is a mass petty-bourgeois movement but the Fascist state is not a mass petty-bourgeois state. It is the political reflection of the drive towards complete centralization of production which distinguishes all national economies today.

Finance-capital and inter-locking directorates are a result of the growing concentration of capital and the increasing socialization of production. The contradiction between this socialization and the appropriation of the product for the benefit of a few, drives the few into a position where to survive they must act as one, against the workers and against the external bourgeoisie.

The Fascist state has deeper economic roots than we have hitherto acknowledged. In this respect the development of Russia is a sign-post as to the future of capitalist society. In 1878 Engels (and Marx approved) made a statement of the most profound significance for the modern world: that the growing socialization of production would compel the capitalists to treat the productive forces as social forces, so far as that was possible within the framework of capitalist relations. How far is that possible? Today life and Marx's Capital teach us the probable extent and limits of this process. Marx treated in

Volume I the direct process of production and all the essentials of his doctrine are contained in that volume. In the next volume he treated circulation, as part of the process of production, but as "secondary" and supplementary to production. The "one fundamental condition" of the capitalist mode of production, the sale and purchase of labor-power he tells us himself that he abstracted from circulation and treated in Volume I. Then in Volume III, his abstract analysis complete, he for the first time, and only late in the volume, subdivided surplus-value into profit, interest, rent, etc. Today the capitalist class, impelled to treat the productive forces as social forces, so far has left the property relations intact but the group in control manipulates the surplus value more and more as a whole. Less and less capital is apportioned to production by competition. In Germany today capital is consciously directed to different branches of production. The process will continue. The Capitalists abolish the free market and shape circulation as far as possible to their own purposes, rationing every commodity including labor-power. But the one fundamental condition of capitalist production, the sale and purchase of labor-power, and the process of production, (Volume I) that they cannot alter without destroying themselves. Lenin (in the last two pages of Imperialism as early as 1916, saw that with the increasing socialization of production "private economic relations and private property relations constitute a shell which is no longer suitable for its contents, a shell which must of necessity begin to decay if its destruction is postponed by artificial means." The Communist Manifesto of the Third International was written around the same thesis in the most pronounced form.

If Russia today has differences with a capitalist economy where the private property relations have decayed and production is nationalized, these points are not to be detailed for their own sake as being different. Nobody denies their difference. What is to be proved is that these differences alter the law of motion of the society. And this cannot be done, because the contradictions of the society are rooted in the class relations of production which are identical and determine all other relations. What was formerly private and uncontrolled by the very development of capitalist production becomes more and more state-controlled.

It is from there, where Marx placed his basic contradictions, that all capitalist troubles spring. More and more capitalist society, in Engels' phrase, will capitulate to the necessity for planning of the invading socialist society. We must be prepared for strange transformations. But as long as wage-labor exists, the capitalist class will have what Engels called not more than the "technical elements" of a solution. "Technically", Hitler and Stalin have control of the means of production and are able to do anything. In reality the social relations of production inside the country in the environment of the world market make them merely vain fighters

against the general current of world economy. It is this economic necessity of organizing production as a whole (the invading socialist society) but yet the interests of a few, (the old capitalist society) that finds political expression in Fascism. Whatever the method, capitalist economy forces the formation of the totalitarian state owing to the needs of production.

8. Socialism

The antithesis of Stalinist society and capitalistic society being the same, the solution of their contradictions is the same. It can be stated in a sentence. The workers must take control of the process of production on a national and international scale; this achieved, automatically, according to the technical development and the relation with the world market, use values will begin to predominate. But with reasonable speed the same must take place on an international scale, or the quest for surplus-labor in the world as a whole will drag down the socialist state, unless it commands an exceptionally well-developed and extensive area. "We live" said Lenin "not in a state but in a system of states." The consequences of this transformation will be:

1. The individual development of the laborer. It is on this that Marx depends with unwearying insistence for the higher productivity of labor which will be characteristic of the new society. "Variable Capital" will now, and only now meet "constant Capital" in coordination. In no sphere has our party been so guilty as in its utter neglect of this phase of production during the last ten years. The necessary expansion of production will take place and be maintained in socialist society through the fact that the material and intellectual advantages of society, now the prerogative of a few, will be the prerogative of all, and this for Marx, means the certainty of an enormous development, not in the worker getting more to eat, but primarily as an agent in the process of production. The creative capacity of the workers, the joy in labor and service, hitherto seen only in the process of revolution, will be applied for the first time to production by the emancipated working class. That is the only way to solve the antithesis between use-value and exchange value. To presume that Stalinist society has solved it is a monstrous absurdity. The degradation of the Russian worker is an economic fact. Man is the greatest of all productive forces, and once his potentialities are released, the era of human freedom will begin. "Its fundamental premise is the shortening of the working day." Until then society will be increasingly like Russia and Germany, and plunging to destruction.

2. This release of the workers for creative labor in production will be immensely encouraged by the entry into productive labor of the millions of idlers and unproductive laborers who infest modern society - the bourgeoisie, the lawyers, the publicity men, the distributors, domestic servants, agitators,

storm-troopers, police, etc. All will be trained and placed in productive labor. They are the overwhelming overhead expenses of a class society, in Russia as well as in Germany.

3. Production will be for social needs and not for millions of non-productive consumers in army, navy, air-force, and their useless and criminal expenditure. The international division of labor will become a source not of enormous expenditure and autarchy, but a source of cooperation and continuous advance.

It is necessary to emphasize this today. For if it were understood some of the notions now prevalent in the Party could not exist. The idea that if the bourgeoisie should nationalize production and property, the hope for Socialism is a Utopia, that is a misunderstanding of the contradictions of capitalism which must be driven out of our movement. Such a transformation will solve nothing. The three points outlined above will be as far from realization as ever. A new society begins when the workers take power or when the world market is abolished by the domination of one capitalist state which would be an unspeakable barbarism. Marxism knows no other "new" society far less any progressive new society. Either the emancipation of labor or increasing barbarism.

Only in the most abstract sense can state-property be said to be a higher form, as monopoly capitalism was a higher form than pre-monopoly capitalism. Today we have reached a turning point. The pauperization of the worker, which was formerly relative, is now on a world scale, absolute. Today in the most advanced capitalist societies, he is on his way to slavery. In its present stage, capitalism, whatever its form, except in a few areas and for declining periods, can no longer maintain the worker even in the conditions of his previous slavery. Without the proletarian revolution the state-property form can be the vehicle of barbarism and the destruction of human society. Such terms as higher and lower forms have no meaning in the concrete circumstances. It is not the form of property but the social relations of production which are decisive. Today if the working class is master the form is progressive. If it is not, the form is reactionary. "In bourgeois society living labor is but a means to increase accumulated labor. In Communist society accumulated labor is but a means to widen, to enrich, to promote the existence of the laborer." Any society today, in which the aim is not to promote the existence of the laborer is doomed to crisis and disorder and will go always closer to barbarism until the workers take power. That is all there is to Marx, and as he himself states, on an understanding of this, all comprehension of the facts depends.

9. Political Conclusions

On the basis of the above analysis certain political conclusions follow automatically. They are:

a) No defense of Russia under any circumstances.

The first condition for working out a long term policy about Russia is to define the economic nature of the society and the historic character of the bureaucracy. It is bourgeois, and therefore has no rights over the struggles of the workers for their democratic rights. The struggle for socialism is the struggle for democracy, before, or after, the expropriation of the bureaucracy. The bureaucracy in Russia has to be expropriated, driven away from its stranglehold over the process and the means of production. To do this the proletariat mobilizes all the poor and all the oppressed of Russia. It is prepared without hesitation to restore private property to those peasants who wish it. It rejects a united front with Kerensky and all his scores of followers in Russia who ask the proletariat to fight for them so that they may each get a factory for themselves. With Mensheviks, and with any section of the working class movement, or any other section of society it forms a united front for what it considers to be working class demands, and for nothing else; it forms these on its own conditions and the revolutionary proletariat keeps its hands free and makes or breaks these attempts at united action as it sees fit in the interests of the struggle for power. Nothing in Marxism compels the proletariat to form a united front with any group at any time except it thinks to the advantage of the proletariat to do so in its struggle for power.

b) Denunciation of the CP as the agent of a Fascist power

It appears that in the minds of some this excludes a United Front with the CP on a specific issue. The contention is not only stupid but dangerous. A United Front is formed with a section of American workers mainly on their intentions against the American bourgeoisie, or the world bourgeoisie, not on account of its belief in Stalinism. If it is not to be formed with them because the CP is the agent of a reactionary bureaucracy which is the enemy of the workers and of socialism, that excludes the United Front with the CP for all those who do not believe that the working class is still the ruling class in Russia. In the case of Browder whom the American government attacked for obvious reasons, the Party will offer a United Front. If the CP however, had called for a mass protest against the War in 1939, then with our present policy the Party should have refused. But even that refusal is not definitive. For according to the temper of the American proletariat the strength of the Party, the stage of development or disintegration of the CP, the strength of the bourgeoisie, the Party may even under similar circumstance, decide even to support a specific anti-war action by the CP even though the call was dictated originally by the interests of the Russian bureaucracy. The sophistry which indulges in superficial arguments of the above type must be rigorously rejected. It would be most dangerous for the Party if it allowed itself to be driven into considering the United Front as a collection of fixed laws, instead of a tactical orientation within given circumstance toward a fixed goal.

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perior forms of organizing economy (state ownership and planning) Stalinist Russia has experienced rapid, cyclical fluctuations in the development of economy. In recent years there has been a marked decline in the annual rate of increase of industrial output. Even the brief periods of increasing production do not lead to greater social stability. On the contrary, they accentuate the contradictions of the economy and the insecurity of the regime. Thus bureaucratic collectivism cannot develop the productive forces progressively in any socially significant sense, that is, over a long historical period, such as is the case with progressive societies.

It is the bureaucratic productive relations themselves which hamper the development of the forces of production. The terroristic regime, which is an integral part of these relations, leads to constant disruptions in production, such as those arising from the inevitable purges. The productive relations as a whole bring about continual disproportions in the output of the various sectors of the economy dependent upon one another, and thereby tremendous economic waste; the low efficiency of production arising from the forced character of labor and the poverty of the masses; the poor quality of industrial output, and the appropriation by the ruling class of an increasing share of the national wealth.

Under these conditions, not only the masses, but also the ruling class, the bureaucracy, live in permanent political insecurity, uncertainty and terror. Stalinism has failed to establish either a progressive or a stable economic and social order.

5. The unique character of bureaucratic collectivism arises from its concrete historical origins. It is the product of the bureaucratic counter-revolutionary overthrow of the Russian Workers' State.

The Bolsheviks, the revolutionary party of the proletariat, took power in a culturally backward country. The economic and political insecurity of the regime accentuated by the civil war and imperialist intervention, led to increasing limitations of democracy in the soviets, the trade unions, the factory committees, the cooperatives, and to the monopoly of political power of the Bolsheviks. With the expropriation of the landlords and the capitalists, and the nationalization of the basic means of production and exchange, the state and the economy were administered by a bureaucracy controlled by the Bolsheviks.

The counter-revolution carried through by the Stalinist faction of the Party was strengthened by the defeats of the socialist revolutions in western Europe. The old bureaucracy was gradually transformed by Stalin; the new bureaucracy, with the Stalin faction as its representative, utilized the administrative control of the state and economy and the slogans of the Russian revolution to destroy its opponents within Russia and in the Communist International. It developed the theory and practice of "socialism in one country." On the one hand it wiped out virtually all remnants of the old capitalist elements

in industry, trade and agriculture and strengthened nationalized property. On the other hand, it destroyed the limited workers democracy that had existed (in the soviets, factory committees and trade unions) and liquidated the revolutionary Bolshevik party, murdering its best representatives.

In the bureaucratically-deformed workers' state of Lenin and Trotsky, the political power of the proletariat was expressed through the political power of the revolutionary party, the Bolsheviks. In crushing every manifestation and vestige of the political power of the working class, the Stalinists thereby overthrew the workers' state and converted the state property into the indispensable economic basis of its own bureaucratic totalitarian rule. When the Stalinists announced "the complete and irrevocable victory of socialism", they were in fact celebrating the triumph of bureaucratic collectivism.

6. Thus, the new Stalinist society was born as a reactionary obstacle to the development of Russia and world society toward socialist freedom and security. From a historical viewpoint, Russia has taken a bastard path backward from the regime established by the Bolshevik revolution. It is from the start torn by contradictions and antagonisms which exclude the possibility of its taking the progressive road as did early bourgeois society. It arrives on the scene of history as an expression of world social reaction, at a time when on a world-wide scale the economic conditions already exist for a great leap forward from class exploitation to socialist freedom and plenty, and when the working class is the only social power which can bring about the progressive transformation of society.

7. The class-conscious workers have no interests in common with this new system of exploitation and oppression, bureaucratic collectivism. In wartime as during peace the revolutionary socialist must not give any support to the Stalinist state. Our task is that of awakening the working class to the socialist struggle against bureaucratic collectivism as against democratic imperialism and Fascism - for working class power and socialism.

Revolutionary socialists, therefore, are not defensists with respect to the Stalinist state either in peacetime or in war, any more than they are in the capitalist states. They advocate and support only those measures which lead towards the independent organization and action of the working class against the bureaucracy, for socialist revolution and workers' power. They will seek allies among the peasantry and the oppressed national minorities within the Stalinist state. In the course of the struggle against Stalinism, there will inevitably arise both progressive and reactionary movements, both under the banner of democracy. Revolutionary socialists, while advocating socialist democracy, will support all progressive democratic movements against Stalinism and seek to gain leadership in such movements. They will oppose all reactionary movements, in particular those connected with the bourgeois imperialist power. Such movements have as their aim the restoration of capitalism. Revolutionary socialists are as opposed to capitalist restoration in Russia as they are against the maintenance of bureaucratic collectivism.

occupies the position of a huge national trust which, by monopolizing the home market, intensifies the contradiction existing in these countries between the tendency for the unlimited development of the productive forces and the growing limitations of the markets for capital investments and for the sale of commodities. From the standpoint of Russian industrial and cultural development, the overthrow of world capitalism is an indispensable condition for the liberation of its own nationally confined productive forces, so that it could benefit fully from the advanced Western technique and take its place as an integral part of a progressive world economy. Here also, bureaucratic collectivism (Stalinism) reveals its socially reactionary character in its role as an assistant of out-lived capitalist imperialism in the task of destroying the independent working-class movement for socialism.

3. In contrast to Russian bureaucratic collectivism, capitalism in any of its forms is based upon the private (or corporate) ownership of the basic means of production and exchange by individual capitalists, and the exploitation of the masses with the aim of extracting more and more profits for these individual capitalist property owners.

Under Fascism, and to a growing degree in all modern capitalist imperialist countries (particularly when they assume the form of war economy), the totalitarian state control over economy does not abolish but only supplements the basic productive relations of capitalism. The Fascist state regulation of capital investments, limitations on profits, forced labor and fixed prices and wages, monopoly of foreign trade, etc., have produced new, subsidiary, productive relations which have been super-imposed on the basic capitalist productive relations, and are indispensable in order to maintain the latter in the concrete historical conditions of social crisis and war. In this regime of state-controlled capitalism, then, the bureaucracy is the political agency of the propertied class, defending bourgeois society, capitalist ownership, exploitation and profits, and conducting a war for the extension of the fields of investment for German big business.

4. Unlike early bourgeois society which was progressive, bureaucratic collectivism is reactionary from the day of its birth. While it has succeeded over a period in raising the industrial level of the country, its productive relations are in actuality tremendous obstacles to the real growth of the social productivity of labor (the economic basis of social progress), the raising of the living standards of the masses, and the development of society toward socialist security and freedom.

The Russian bureaucracy has succeeded in increasing the industrial and agricultural output of the country only by the most ruthless exploitation of the workers and peasants; through totalitarian control of the vast internal market and the abundant material and human resources at its disposal (raw materials, gold, man-power, etc.); and the importation of advanced capitalist technique from abroad. Yet despite these, and despite its su-

In no case do we accept the alternatives - Stalinist reaction or capitalist-imperialist reaction, as the determinant of the struggle of the working class, any more than we do in the case of the alternatives Fascism or imperialist democracy. Revolutionary workers must take the third road: the struggle against both types of reaction and against the exploitative and oppressive societies from which they spring, the struggle for the political power of the proletariat and for socialism. No other victory can lead to the emancipation of the working class and the progress of humanity.

8. Hitler's invasion of Russia is an integral part of the Second World War. The immediate aim of the German attack is the conquest of Russian territory primarily for economic and military advantages in the struggle to defeat British and American imperialism; and the seizure of the rich Russian resources as a step toward complete world domination. The Anglo-American alliance with, and aid to, Russia are aimed at the defeat of German imperialism. Stalin's defense of Russia is a defense of the bureaucracy's dictatorial rule over the Russian people and the oppressed nationalities (Ukraine, etc.), and a defense of his imperialist conquests since 1939 in the Baltics, Balkans, etc. As against both imperialist camps - Berlin-Rome-Tokyo and Washington-London-Moscow - the Workers Party remains the Party of the Third Camp of Labor and the Oppressed Peoples. In all the belligerent countries the interests of the working class - the cause of genuine national freedom and socialism - call for unrelenting opposition to the home government with the aim of workers' governments and a World Socialist Federation, the only road to durable peace and freedom.

* * * * *

(Signed) Joseph Carter
Manny Garrett
Paul Temple
Frank Demby