

History of the Three Internationals

The World Socialist and Communist
Movements from 1848 to the Present

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TO ESTHER

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WILLIAM Z. FOSTER

1. General Economic and Political Background

The founding in London in 1864 of the International Workingmen's Association – the First International – took place in a situation of a rapidly rising tide of capitalist development. The great discovery voyages of the 15th and 16th centuries had given a big stimulus to capitalism by widely extending commerce and the cultivation of many local guild handicrafts. This general impulse was further greatly intensified, particularly in England, by the Industrial Revolution. This began in the middle of the 18th century and, according to Frederick Engels, concluded about 1830. The rapid expansion of capitalism, however, went right on. The whole development marked the beginning of the transformation of society from the agricultural-mercantile basis of feudalism to the industrial basis of capitalism.

THE INDUSTRIAL REVOLUTION

The Industrial Revolution, which had its center in England, was marked by a very rapid growth and expansion of the coal, iron, and textile industries, as well as of the railroads. These developments were based upon a whole series of revolutionary inventions. Among the more outstanding were those of Henry Cort in iron-making; of John Kay, James Hargreaves, Richard Arkwright, and Samuel Crompton in devising textile machinery; and of Thomas Newcomen, Richard Watt, and George Stephenson in the invention and application of the steam engine to industry and transportation. A key invention in this great series was the cotton gin, by an American, Eli Whitney, in 1793, which provided cheap and abundant cotton for the hungry new English textile industry.

Among the more elementary economic effects of the Industrial Revolution were that it shifted production from a hand to a machine basis, substituted huge factories for small workshops, transferred motive power from a wind and water basis to one of steam, revolutionized the transportation system by covering the land with a network of railroads, canals, and roads, and the seas with great fleets of ships – at first wind-driven but eventually operated

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by steam – and it developed commerce from primarily a local scale to a world basis.

Principally because of its huge supplies of cheap coal and its strategic commercial location, England became the main center of the new industrialization. Between 1720 and 1839, its production of pig-iron increased from 25,000 tons to 1,347,000 tons, and whereas in 1764 England imported 4,000,000 pounds of cotton for manufacture, in 1833 it imported 300,000,000 pounds.¹ By the middle of the 19th century, England, producing the bulk of all manufactured goods, had become “the workshop of the world.”

The Industrial Revolution soon spread from England to the Continent. In its early stages France, with many notable inventions to its credit, nearly kept abreast of England; but by the middle of the 19th century, due largely to lack of available coal, France had fallen far behind. The Low Countries early became important industrial centers, and by 1850 Germany also was well on the way to industrialization. The latter country was handicapped, however, by its unfavorable commercial location, by many feudal hangovers, and also by being periodically overrun by wars. The United States, due eventually to far outstrip England, quickly felt the impulse of the Industrial Revolution. In 1790 the textile industry got under way in New England; by 1805 it had about 4,500, and by 1860 some 5,235,000 spindles in operation.² In the meantime, a considerable body of industry – iron, shoe, lumber, shipbuilding, etc. – was growing up in the North Atlantic states; but it was not until about 1850 that large-scale industrialization in the United States got going full blast. As for Eastern Europe, it had very little industry at the time the First International was founded, and Asia, Africa, Australia, and Latin America had hardly any at all.

THE POLITICAL CONSOLIDATION OF CAPITALISM

With its rapid development of industry and trade, the Industrial Revolution produced a class of rich capitalists, the bourgeoisie, who gradually differentiated themselves from the petty bourgeoisie. This new and powerful class intensified the bitter struggle that nascent capitalism had already been developing against the predominant feudal system. Philosophically, economically, politically, and militarily, the capitalists warred against the great feudal landowners – kings, popes, bishops, and nobles. This struggle climaxed in many bourgeois revolutions, fought through by ex-

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tremely violent civil wars.

The long series of bourgeois revolutions eventually extended to all parts of the world, and it has continued on down to our own days. But at the time of the establishment of the First International, the most important of such revolutions that had taken place were those in England (1649), United States (1776), France (1789), Haiti (1790), the Spanish colonies in America (1810), Brazil (1822), France (1830), and France, Germany, Austria, Italy, and Hungary (1848), Italy (1859), mid United States (1861). The general effect of these revolutions, which were eventually to make capitalism world dominant, had been at this time to put the capitalists more or less in control of England, Western Europe, and North America.

Parallel and interlocked with these bourgeois revolutions, there also went ahead a capitalist-directed process of establishing the modern bourgeois states – in Great Britain, the United States, France, Germany, Italy, Belgium, and other countries. In order to hold the working class in subjugation and exploitation, to secure for themselves domination over the respective national markets, and to mobilize the military strength of the nations for war, the capitalists had imperative need for much more definite and well-organized national states, either as republics or constitutional monarchies, than the loose and shifting and (in Germany and Italy) atomized political regimes characteristic of feudalism. The establishment of the new bourgeois states led to the violent suppression of many smaller peoples (as the Scotch, Welsh, and Irish in Great Britain), and also to the waging of many intense national wars. These wars included, among others, the French and English wars of the 18th century, the American-English wars of 1776 and 1812, the Napoleonic wars of 1799-1815, the several Latin American wars after 1826, the United States-Mexican war of 1846, the Crimean war of 1853, the Franco-Austrian war of 1859, the American Civil War of 1861, and, in the immediate years of the setting up of 1 hr First International, the Prussian wars – against Denmark in 1864, Austria in 1866, and France in 1870. The capitalist system grew everywhere in the blood and mire of war and revolution.

THE INDUSTRIAL REVOLUTION AND THE WORKERS

The rapid growth of capitalism quickly produced profound effects upon the toiling masses, first of all in England. Great num-

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bers of peasants, erstwhile independent producers, who had been driven from their lands to make room for sheep-growing, were herded into the new factories, where they became wage workers, and large numbers of handicraftsmen, who had worked either for themselves or in small workshops, were gradually assembled into larger and larger manufacturing plants. The modern working class was being born. This creation of the proletariat through the evolution of industry was taking place in all the countries where capitalism was developing.

The capitalists, with the boundless greed characteristic of their social system, worked men, women, and children to the point of destruction. Their working and living conditions were but little better than those of chattel slaves. Working hours ranged from 12 to 16 per day, wages were at starvation levels, children from six years on worked in the mills, and the employers ruled dictatorially over the unorganized wage workers in the factories. A Parliamentary report in 1833 said that "the destitution of the English workers almost eclipses the horrors of slavery in America, of English landlordism in Ireland, and of British rule in India."³ In his great work, *Condition of the Working Class in England* in 1844, Engels imperishably portrayed the horrifying position of the workers during this general period. On the Continent, wherever capitalism had secured a grip, conditions were, if possible, even worse than in England. The new factories in France and western Germany were wretched slave pens, and Marx called Belgium "the paradise of the capitalists." In the United States, "the land of the free," similar bad conditions prevailed for industrial workers, and it was a moot question as to who were physically the worse off, slaves or wage-earners. Foner, Commons, and other labor historians have vividly described the wretched wages, the interminably long hours, the boss tyranny in the shops, and the murderous exploitation of men, women, and children characteristic of the young American industries, especially textiles, during the decades following the turn of the century. During the recurring economic crises in the respective countries, the poverty and destitution of the jobless masses beggared description.

In various ways, the workers in the capitalist countries fought back against the economic and political slavery in which they were enmeshed. They did the fighting in the various bourgeois revolutions in Europe and America, hoping to wring from these

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struggles some of the glittering promises of the bourgeois platforms – of which the Bill of Rights of the United States Constitution was a shining example. But experience quickly demonstrated that such paper rights could be made real for the workers only when they themselves fought resolutely to enforce them.

To combat the intolerable working and living conditions to which they were barbarously subjected, the workers were compelled to rely upon their own class strength, which they expressed in various ways. In England, the Luddites smashed machines and wrecked factories, and in various countries the workers carried through insurrections – as in Manchester, in 1819; in Lyons, France, in 1831-34; and in Silesia and Bohemia in 1844. In the wake of the liberal sections of the bourgeoisie, as in the English electoral struggle of 1832, they also strove for political reforms. They built mutual benefit and cooperative societies; but most of all, the workers turned to trade unionism. Wherever capitalism established itself, the workers quickly learned that they possessed a weapon of profound importance, the strike, to bring industry to a halt, thereby temporarily cutting off the profits of their exploiters.

EARLY TRADE UNIONISM

In England, the mother country of capitalism, trade unions began to take form as early as 1752.⁴ These pioneer unions were chiefly groupings of skilled workers, and they had to struggle, mostly in an illegal status, against ferocious anti-combination laws. The partial repeal of such laws in England in 1824 brought out into the open many trade unions, hitherto disguised as “friendly societies.” The movement shot ahead, and in 1830 it crystallized nationally in the National Association for the Protection of Labor. This body was the forerunner of the Grand National Consolidated Trade Union of 1833-34. The latter had an estimated membership of some 500,000.

In 1837, the great Chartist movement was launched upon the initiative of the London Workingmen’s Association, which had been formed a year earlier. Chartism was a broad working class political movement, with wide, but not all-inclusive, trade union support and also drawing in large sections of the petty bourgeoisie. Its most outstanding leaders were James Bronterre O’Brien, Feargus O’Connor, C. J. Harney, Ernest Jones, and William Lovett, and its main journal was *The Northern Star*. The

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movement finally crystallized in 1841 as the National Charter Association.

The Chartist program, the famous "Six Points" or "People's Charter," was introduced into Parliament early in 1837. It aimed chiefly to secure the franchise for the workers – at that time, of the 6,000,000 men in England, only 850,000 had the right to vote. The "Six Points" demanded universal suffrage for men, equal electoral districts, annual Parliaments, payment of Parliamentary members, secret ballot, and no property qualifications for Members of Parliament.

In support of this elementary program, the Chartists carried on an immense agitation all over the country. Some of their meetings attracted as many as 350,000 people. They also sent several mass petitions to Parliament, one bearing some 5,000,000 signatures, gathered among a general population of 19,000,000. And when the reactionary Parliament cynically rejected the Chartists' mass petitions, the movement undertook to use methods of general strike and insurrection to enforce its demands.

The first major collision came in 1842, after Parliament had spurned a great petition for the "Six Points," bearing 3,317,700 names. The workers began to strike in many places and to go into insurrection. The movement was put down, however, and some 1,500 leaders and active workers were arrested. In 1848, under the influence of the revolutionary situation in western Europe, the Chartist movement revived, but it had spent its force. When Parliament again rejected its mass petition, an attempt was made at insurrection; but this failed, largely because of the hesitations of petty bourgeois elements in the movement, and because the Duke of Wellington had mobilized 250,000 soldiers and police to crush it. The movement died out by 1850. Within a generation, however, the workers succeeded in writing into law virtually all of the famous "Six Points." The Chartist movement, the first attempt to build a broad national labor party of the working class, in which the workers got a taste of their great political power, was one of the most significant and glorious movements in the history of world labor.

During this stirring period, early in 1844, an important labor event, but little noticed at the time, was the formation of a consumers' cooperative by a handful of weavers in Toad Lane, Rochdale, England. This tiny organization, based on the principle of

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“dividends on purchases,” is generally considered to be the beginning of the huge modern cooperative movement.

In France, Belgium, Switzerland, Spain, Germany, and other European countries, where harsh anti-union laws prevailed, there were but a few local trade unions in existence at the time the First International was born. In countries ruled by reactionary regimes there were numerous underground revolutionary political circles, and about the only types of labor organization more or less tolerated were mutual benefit (“friendly”) societies and cooperatives.

In the United States, where the Negro people languished in barbaric chattel slavery, there were more democratic freedoms, for white workers, and also a considerable growth of labor unionism, following the familiar pattern of craft unions of skilled workers. Already in 1786 the printers of Philadelphia carried through an organized strike. Toward the end of the 1820’s, in the mass democratic struggles of the Jacksonian period, the trade unions grew and many strikes took place. In 1827, 15 unions in Philadelphia formed the Mechanics’ Union of Trade Associations; in 1831, the New England Association of Farmers, Mechanics, and Other Workingmen was organized, and within the next several years local central bodies were set up in many eastern cities.⁵ This whole movement was accompanied by the establishment of labor parties in various localities, the first such organizations in the world. The workers fought especially for higher wages, the 10-hour workday, against debtor prisons, for free public education, for free land, and for a more democratic suffrage. The general movement subsided for a while, but the growth of individual unions continued. From 1834 to 1837, the National Trades Union served as the center of the young labor movement, and from 1845 to 1856, this need was met by the Industrial Congress, which had branches in all important industrial centers. The growth of the labor movement proceeded apace with the evolution of industry into the factory system. At the beginning of the Civil War several national craft unions were in existence.

ANTI-CAPITALIST TENDENCIES

The British workers not only strove to ease specific evils of the terrible exploitation they suffered, they also began to attack the capitalist system itself. With real genius, long before Karl Marx wrote, the celebrated Chartist leader, James Bronterre O’Brien

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developed a pretty clear understanding of the class struggle and of the nature of the capitalist state. In 1832, he said: "The Government is made up by the profit-men to protect them in their exorbitant profits, rents, and impositions on the people who labor. Is it the Government who makes the laws, or is it not, on the contrary, the great profit-men who make them to enrich themselves and then have the Government to execute them? It is the profit-men who are the oppressors everywhere. The Government is their watchman and the people who labor are the oppressed." O'Brien fought the machine-breakers, and proposed instead that the machinery be owned by the people and used for their benefit.⁶

Rothstein points out that there was much confusion and utopianism in O'Brien's writings, but he marvels that the latter "came remarkably close to modern Marxism." Referring to O'Brien, Rothstein says that, "fifteen years before the drawing up of the Communist Manifesto, the theory of class antagonisms and class struggle in capitalist society had been presented in all its bearings, not in a fragmentary form, but in such a systematic and complete manner as to arouse even today our wonder and admiration."⁷

German immigrant workers in London formed the Exiles' League (1834-1836) and the Federation of the Just (1836-1839). A leader of the latter organization, Wilhelm Weitling, a journeyman tailor, fundamentally attacked capitalism and elaborated in two books (1838 and 1842) a system of communism. Of the latter of these, Marx said in 1844: "When could the German bourgeoisie, including its philosophers and divines, point to a work championing bourgeois political emancipation which could in any way compare with Weitling's *Garantien der Harmonie und Freiheit* (Guarantees of Harmony and Freedom)?"⁸

In the United States, too, the workers began to assail the capitalist system and to try to escape its toils. In 1829, the brilliant machinist, Thomas Skidmore of New York, called upon the workers to challenge "the nature of the tenure by which all men hold title to their property." He proposed the equal division of all existing property – lands, houses, factories, vessels, etc.⁹ Skidmore, like George Henry Evans and many other workers' leaders of the times, and in the spirit of Jeffersonianism, prescribed the characteristic American petty-bourgeois panacea of the times: that the workers could escape capitalist exploitation by getting themselves

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farms out of the vast body of land held by the Government. This was a sort of de-nationalization of the land, a process which, however, the English Chartist collectivists Schepper and Harney mistakenly opposed as reactionary.¹⁰

Brutal capitalist exploitation, especially intensified by the Industrial Revolution, also called forth objections from the ranks of the capitalist and middle classes themselves. These protests were manifested in various types of utopian socialism; that is, efforts to replace barbarous capitalism with more humane and intelligent regimes. The most important of the utopian socialists were Robert Owen (1771-1858) in Great Britain, and Claude H. Saint-Simon (1760-1825), Charles F. M. Fourier (1772-1837), and Etienne Cabet (1788-1856) in France. The general characteristic of the Utopians was that, instead of basing themselves upon the actual laws of social development, they worked out idealistic plans of society of their own imagining. The utopians hoped that the people, including the capitalists, would adopt their plans as obviously superior to the existing regimes. Frederick Engels deals fundamentally with this whole movement in his great book, *Socialism: Utopian and Scientific*.

Owen, a successful Scottish textile mill owner, set up a model workshop in New Lanark, Scotland, in 1800, with greatly improved conditions for the workers, and it was also highly profitable. Later he developed a system of worker ownership of industry. This general plan he hoped to have not only workers, but capitalists accept. But the capitalists would have nothing to do with Owen's scheme, except to denounce it. Owen, however, won a broad following among the working class. He became president of the Grand National Consolidated Trade Union, referred to above. Saint-Simon, Fourier, and Cabet also evolved systems of ideal societies. Disappointed and alarmed at the failure of the masses to realize the glittering democratic promises of the great French Revolution, these keen and generous spirits, at the turn of the new century, sharply criticized capitalism and undertook to build new systems of society based on justice and reason. They sought "to discover a new and more perfect system of social order and to impose this upon society from without by propaganda, and, wherever it was possible, by the example of model experiments."¹¹ While the writings of the great Utopians attracted much attention in France, they produced but few concrete results there.

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The European Utopians paid much attention to the United States, where land for experiments was cheap, where greater democratic liberties prevailed, and where the masses were largely in a progressive mood. Owen himself came to the United States in 1824 and organized cooperative colonies in New Harmony, Indiana, and several other places. The followers of Fourier, including such outstanding personalities as Horace Greeley, Nathaniel Hawthorne, James Russell Lowell, and many other notables, set up during the 1840's cooperative "phalanxes" or colonies in some 40 places, the best known of which was Brook Farm in Massachusetts. During the same decade, the Cabet, or Icarian, movement also organized a number of colonies in Texas, Iowa, and Missouri.¹² But these tiny idealistic ventures were only drops in the ocean of capitalism and they were all soon absorbed by it. When the First International came upon the scene of history, the utopian movements were already things of the past.

During the pre-First International decades, several other social trends of major importance also developed, including pure and simple trade unionism, Blanquism, Proudhonism, Lassalleism, and Bakuninism. These played important roles in the life of the International, therefore, we shall discuss them as we go on. Incomparably the greatest revolutionary advance and achievement of the working class, however, in these formative decades, was the development of scientific socialism by Karl Marx and Frederick Engels.

2. Scientific Socialism

Karl Marx was born in Treves, Rhenish Prussia, May 5, 1818. His father Heinrich was born a Jew but embraced Christianity. The son, Karl, was educated at the Bonn, Berlin, and Jena universities. His father wanted him to become a lawyer like himself, but he turned his main attention to philosophy, history, and science. In 1841 he got his Ph.D. In his student days he studied deeply the works of the great German philosopher, Hegel, and he was also much influenced by the materialist writer, Ludwig Feuerbach. Upon his graduation, Marx plunged into the current turbulent political life, in the period of the gathering German bourgeois revolution of 1848. In 1842, while only 24 years old, he became editor of the *Rheinische Zeitung*, a radical democratic journal. In the meantime, he married Jenny von Westphalen, daughter of a Prussian nobleman. It was at this time that Marx met Frederick Engels, who was to become his life-long friend and collaborator.

Engels was born in Barmen, Prussia, September 28, 1820. He was the son of a wealthy cotton mill owner, who planned a business career for him. But like Marx, Engels became immersed in the developing revolutionary movement. He went to England in 1843, where his father owned a mill near Manchester. There he contacted the Chartist and Owenite movements and became a revolutionary. On a visit to Paris, in 1844, he resumed his acquaintance with Marx. The latter, an exile from Prussia after his paper had been closed down by the government, was then editing the *Deutsch-Französische Jahrbücher* (German-French Yearbooks).

The two revolutionary youths had by this time definitely become Communists. Marx, for the first time, began to write as a socialist and materialist, and subjected Hegel's views on the state and on law to criticism from the socialist standpoint.¹ Engels was in general agreement with Marx. Thus began the fruitful partnership of these two magnificent fighters for and with the working class.

THE COMMUNIST LEAGUE AND THE COMMUNIST MANIFESTO

Marx was expelled from France in January 1845 and went to Brussels, where he was very active politically in revolutionary organizations, the Democratic League and the General Workers Society. In February 1846, jointly with Engels in England, the two

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began to form Communist Committees of Correspondence, a name reminiscent of American revolutionary experience. These committees carried on Communist propaganda in the adjoining countries. Meanwhile, relations were established with the remnants of the Federation of the Just, which had been shattered as a result of the abortive 1839 rising of the Blanquists in Paris. After some negotiations, the various groups came together in London during the summer of 1847, with Engels in attendance. There they formed the Communist League. This was the first international Communist organization and it was a forerunner of the International Workingmen's Association of a decade and a half later.

The Communist League was made up chiefly of exiled workers and intellectuals – French, German, Swiss, Italian, Russian, etc. – in London, Paris, and Brussels. The League held a second congress in 1847, from November 29 to December 8, in London, with both Marx and Engels present. At this congress the League definitely organized itself, adopting a constitution and providing for a program. The task of preparing the program was delegated to Marx, who was already widely known as a well-developed and steadfast Communist. Throughout December 1847 and January 1848, Marx and Engels worked on the draft, and by the end of the latter month it was completed and forwarded to London, where it was published in February. The Manifesto of the Communist Party, popularly referred to as The Communist Manifesto, the most important single document in the history of mankind, had come into being.

The Communist Manifesto was the first revolutionary program of the world's workers. It laid down the solid foundations of proletarian thought and action for the workers thenceforth on their road to socialism. It showed them how to protect themselves under capitalism, how to abolish the capitalist system, and how to build the structure of the new socialist society. Marx, Engels, V. I. Lenin, Joseph Stalin, and others were to write many books on Marxism during the ensuing decades, and their writings served to elaborate and to buttress the basic propositions of the Manifesto. Today, 107 years after the great document was written, The Communist Manifesto stands as firm as a rock, a clear guide for the international working class, justified by generations of revolutionary experience, and altogether impervious in the attacks of capitalist enemies.

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THE MAJOR PRINCIPLES OF MARXIST SOCIALISM

Prior to 1848, the movement for socialism was a welter of confusion regarding the analysis of capitalism, organizational forms, methods of struggle, and the conception of the ultimate goal. It was a mixture of primitivism, utopianism, adventurism, and opportunism. But Marx, actively aided by Engels, with one masterly stroke, in *The Communist Manifesto*, swept aside all this idealism, ignorance, and eclecticism, and put the socialist movement, for the first time, upon a scientific basis. As Engels said 35 years later in his famous address at the grave of Marx, "Just as Darwin discovered the law of evolution in organic nature, so Marx discovered the law of evolution in human history."² Marxism, during its century of life, has irresistibly triumphed over the host of confusions and illusions, bred of capitalism, that have plagued the working class on its advance to emancipation. "Every other theory and world outlook lies in ruins," says Dutt, "shattered and impotent before the march of events."³ Marxism, first formulated basically in *The Communist Manifesto*, becomes ever more expanded and powerful with the passage of the decades.

Stalin thus defines Marxism: "Marxism is the science of the laws governing the development of nature and society, the science of the revolution of the oppressed and exploited masses, the science of the victory of socialism in all countries, the science of building a communist society."⁴ And Lenin thus describes the basic composition of Marxism: "Marx was the genius who continued and completed the three chief ideological currents of the 19th century, represented respectively by the three most advanced countries of humanity: classical German philosophy, classical English political economy, and French socialism combined with French revolutionary doctrines."⁵ Major among the basic elements of Marxism are the following:

1. Philosophical materialism: Marx based himself upon the reality of the world, as against the metaphysical imaginings of the idealistic philosophers George Berkeley, David Hume, Immanuel Kant, Georg W. F. Hegel, and the many others whose systems, by one route or another, all led to the acceptance of religion and to the conception of an artificial external creation and operation of the world. Marx counterposes a world ruled by natural law, against the bourgeois metaphysical conception of a world under the arbitrary

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guidance of some remote divinity. To him materiality is fundamental, and all thought and understanding flow from it.

Engels says: "The great basic question of all philosophy, especially of modern philosophy, is that concerning the relation of thinking and being... spirit to nature... which is primary, spirit or nature.... The answers which the philosophers gave to this question split them into two great camps. Those who asserted the primacy of spirit to nature, and therefore, in the last analysis, assumed world creation in some form or another... comprised the camp of idealism. The others, who regarded nature as primary, belong to the various schools of materialism."⁶

Marx was the supreme philosopher in the second camp, carrying the materialist conception into all branches of thought and action. The practical effect of philosophical materialism is to free Marxists, and eventually the working class, from the crippling influence of the innumerable hoary and reactionary conceptions relating to philosophy, science, government, religion, economics, morality, art, etc., which constitute the fundamental ideological buttresses of the capitalist system. Philosophical materialism is the sharpest intellectual weapon of the proletariat in its fight against capitalism and for socialism.

2. Dialectics: Marx and Engels adopted the dialectics of Hegel (1770-1831), which, as Lenin puts it, is "the theory of evolution which is most comprehensive, rich in content, and profound." Dialectics, Marx says, "is the science of the general laws of motion – both of the external world and of human thought."⁷ But in accepting Hegel's dialectic system, Marx and Engels stripped it of its idealism and developed it on a materialist basis. For dialectical philosophy, says Engels, "nothing is final, absolute, sacred. It reveals the transitory character of everything and in everything; nothing can endure before it except the uninterrupted process of becoming and of passing away, of endless ascendancy from the lower to the higher."⁸

Dialectical evolution, says Lenin, is "a development that repeats, as it were, the stages already passed, but repeats them in a different way, on a higher plane ('negation of negation'); a development, so to speak, in spirals, not in a straight line; a spasmodic, catastrophic, revolutionary development; 'breaks of gradualness,' transformation of quantity into quality; inner impulses for development, imparted by the contradiction, the conflict of different

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forces and tendencies reacting on a given body, or inside a given phenomenon or within a given society; interdependence, and the closest, indissoluble connection between all sides of every phenomenon....”⁹

3. The Materialist Conception of History: Marx and Engels were the first to put the writing of history upon a scientific basis, stripping it of the mass of metaphysics, subjectivism, hero-worship, class bias, and superficialities characterizing bourgeois-written “history.” The heart of the Marxist materialist conception of history lies in the economic factor, the way people make their living. Marx outlines it as follows: “In the social production which men carry on they enter into definite relations that are indispensable and independent of their will; these relations of production correspond to a definite stage of development of their material powers of production. The sum total of these relations of production constitutes the economic structure of society – the real foundation, on which rise legal and political superstructures and to which correspond definite forms of social consciousness. The mode of production in material life determines the general character of the social, political, and spiritual processes of life. It is not the consciousness of men that determines their existence, but, on the contrary, their social existence determines their consciousness.”¹⁰

Marxists have frequently been accused of laying sole stress upon the economic factor and of ignoring all others, such as national traditions, history, culture, etc. But this is nonsense. In this respect, Engels combats vulgar economic determinism: “According to the materialist conception of history, the determining element in history is ultimately the production and reproduction in real life. More than this neither Marx nor I have ever asserted. If therefore somebody twists this into the statement that the economic element is the only determining one, he transforms it into a meaningless, abstract and absurd phrase.”¹¹

The bourgeoisie, with its idealistic, eclectic system of history writing, which denies causation and reason and puts the stress upon all sorts of secondary and superficial elements, has no clear picture of past history nor of what is happening at the present time. Historical materialism, the method of Marx, with its stress on the economic factor, gives to Marxists a decisive advantage in drawing the elementary lessons from past history, and for understanding the fundamental meaning of the complex economic and

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political processes of today. It is this that enables Marxists to foresee the inevitability of social revolution and socialism, an eventuality which the bourgeois economists and historians neither can nor dare envisage.

4. The Class Struggle: The Communist Manifesto thus states the fundamental Marxist position on the class struggle: "The history of all hitherto existing society* is the history of class struggles. Freeman and slave, patrician and plebeian, lord and serf, guild-master and journeyman, in a word, oppressor and oppressed, stood in constant opposition to one another, carried on an uninterrupted, now hidden, now open fight, a fight that each time ended, either in a revolutionary reconstitution of society at large, or in the common ruin of the contending classes. In the earlier epochs of history, we find almost everywhere a complicated arrangement of society into various orders, a manifold gradation of social rank. In ancient Rome we have patricians, knights, plebeians, slaves; in the Middle Ages, feudal lords, vassals, guild-masters, journeymen, apprentices, serfs; in almost all these classes, again, subordinate gradations. The modern bourgeois society that has sprouted from the ruins of feudal society has not done away with class antagonisms. It has but established new classes... new forms of struggle in place of the old ones."¹²

Modern capitalist society is a maze of sharply contending internal groups. "Marxism," says Lenin, "provides a clue which enables us to discover the reign of law in this seeming labyrinth and chaos: the theory of the class struggle."¹³ The bourgeoisie, particularly in these later years, is anxious to obscure the class character of the internal struggles that are taking place, and thus to confuse the masses as to their true class interests. But the class analysis of Marxism lays bare the whole process, and it is the first consideration, not only in understanding past history, but in the working out of proletarian policy in any given situation.

Before Marx's time many bourgeois historians and political economists (including James Madison in the United States) had gained some inkling of the class struggle, but it was Marx and Engels who made the whole vital matter crystal clear. In a letter to Joseph Weydemeyer (March 5, 1852), Marx said on this question:

* Engels adds here, "except in the pre-history of society."

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“And now as to myself, no credit is due to me for discovering the existence of classes in modern society nor yet the struggle between them. Long before me bourgeois historians had described the historical development of this class struggle and bourgeois economists the economic anatomy of the classes. What I did that was new was to prove: (1) that the existence of classes is only bound up with particular, historic phases in the development of production; (2) that the class struggle necessarily leads to the dictatorship of the proletariat; (3) that this dictatorship itself only constitutes the transition to the abolition of all classes and to a classless society”¹⁴ – which is a very modest summary indeed of Marx’s contributions on this central question.

5. The Revolutionary Role of the Working Class: In his analysis of the class struggle, Marx, as one of his greatest achievements, developed the revolutionary role of the proletariat. In *The Communist Manifesto*, he said: “Of all the classes that stand face to face with the bourgeoisie today, the proletariat alone is a really revolutionary class. The other classes decay and finally disappear in the face of modern industry; the proletariat is its special and essential product. The lower middle class, the small manufacturer, the shopkeeper, the artisan, the peasant, all these fight against the bourgeoisie, to save themselves from extinction as fractions of the middle class. They are, therefore, not revolutionary, but conservative. Nay, more, they are reactionary.”¹⁵ Marx was here dealing with the period of competitive capitalism. In the period of imperialism, however, the era of the general crisis of capitalism, the proletariat is able to mobilize the poorer peasantry and other petty bourgeois elements behind its leadership. To theorize the worker-peasant alliance was one of the greatest achievements of Lenin.

Lenin says, “The main thing in the teaching of Marx is the elucidation of the world-wide historical role of the proletariat as the builder of a socialist society.”¹⁶ This firm Marxian insistence upon the leadership of the proletariat is fundamental in revolutionary working class policy. Marx’s clarity on this has successfully countered persistent attempts of various schools of opportunists to see in the bourgeoisie, the peasantry, or the city petty bourgeoisie the constructive class that the masses of workers should follow. The leading role of the working class was the key to the winning of the future great revolutions in Russia, China, and

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Eastern Europe.

Already in *The Communist Manifesto* Marx also began to outline the special type of thinking-fighting-disciplined party necessary for the working class to win finally over the capitalist class. "The Communists... are on the one hand, practically, the most advanced and resolute section of the working class parties in every country, that section which pushes forward all others; on the other hand, theoretically, they have over the great mass of the proletariat the advantage of clearly understanding the line of march, the conditions, and the ultimate general results of the proletarian movement."¹⁷

6. Surplus Value: In the early, progressive stage of capitalism, the bourgeois economists – Adam Smith, David Ricardo, John Stuart Mill, and many others – made much sound analysis of that system. But they could not face up to the revolutionary realities of where capitalism was heading, and in later generations bourgeois economics degenerated eventually into little better than superficial apologetics for capitalism. It remained for Marx, the giant of all economists, to drive home the economic analysis to its revolutionary conclusions.

Especially in his great three-volume work, *Capital*, Marx made a profound analysis of the capitalist system. Among his innumerable basic contributions, he explained the hitherto unsolved questions of the primitive accumulation of capital, the causes of cyclical crises, the concentration of capital, and many aspects of capitalism hitherto unprobed or obscured by bourgeois economists. But his supreme contribution in the economic sphere was to describe the production of surplus value by the workers and its appropriation by the capitalists. This laid bare the whole process of capitalist exploitation and exposed the economic causes leading to proletarian revolution. Since then countless bourgeois economists have tried in vain to refute his historic discovery. Mehring thus sums up this central phase of Marxist theory!

"The real source of capitalist wealth was revealed for the first time in the first volume of *Capital*.... Marx showed for the first time how profit originated and how it flowed into the pockets of the capitalists. He did so on the basis of two decisive economic facts: first, that the mass of the workers consists of proletarians who are compelled to sell their labor-power as a commodity in order to exist, and secondly that this commodity, labor-power,

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possesses such a high degree of productivity in our own day that it is able to produce in a certain time a much greater product than is necessary for its own maintenance in that time. These two purely economic facts, representing the result of objective historical development, cause the fruit of the labor-power of the proletariat to fall automatically into the lap of the capitalist and to accumulate, with the continuance of the wage system, into ever-growing masses of capital.”¹⁸

7. The Role of the State: One of the most basic elements of Marxism is Marx’s analysis of the state as the instrument of force by which the bourgeoisie enforces the submission of the workers to its domination. The Communist Manifesto says, “The Executive of the modern state is but a committee for managing the common affairs of the whole bourgeoisie.”¹⁹ Marx slashed into those muddle-heads and opportunists who held that the capitalist state was an institution standing apart from and above all economic classes, concerning itself with the welfare of all the people. Marx and Engels traced the history of the state, showing that, with the rise of economic classes, the state ever served the interest of the ruling classes. Engels, especially in his *The Origin of the Family, Private Property, and the State*, and in his *Anti-Dühring*, demonstrated that the victorious proletariat will ultimately do away with the state and relegate it “into the museum of antiquities.”

8. Class Struggle Strategy and Tactics of the Working Class: Marx and Engels not only worked out the general principles, but also the fighting methods of the proletariat. In their various books, and especially in their voluminous correspondence, are to be found the basic answers to most of the scores of complex questions of strategy and tactics which, for the past century, have been serious problems for the developing labor movement. Most of labor’s later weaknesses on these questions have been due to failure or refusal to learn the lessons of Marx’s writings. Inasmuch as we shall see in passing how the three successive international organizations of the working class have dealt with various of these questions, here we can do hardly more than to list a few of them.

Marx and Engels realized very clearly that the working class, fighting against ruling classes that would use every form of violence to retain their class power, would have to be prepared themselves to meet force with force. Marx said, “Force is the midwife of every society pregnant with a new one.” Only in Great Britain and

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the United States, did he, under the circumstances of that time (which, as Lenin later showed, was before the rise of imperialism), consider bourgeois democracy advanced enough to raise the possibility of a peaceful transition by the workers to socialism.²⁰

Marx and Engels, while realizing the necessity of the working class in make temporary alliances with other classes with whom its interests coincided at the time (even with the bourgeoisie in the struggle against feudalism), laid the greatest stress upon the fundamental necessity of the workers having their own distinct class organizations and policies – a basic lesson which the labor movements in many countries, notably the United States, have by no means fully learned even yet.

Another problem that has plagued the labor movement for a century is how to establish the correct relationship between the struggle for the workers' immediate demands and the struggle for the establishment of socialism. But Marx, in *The Communist Manifesto*, gave a clear line for this in his basic statement that, "The Communists fight for the attainment of the immediate aims, for the enforcement of the momentary interests of the working class; but in the movement of the present, they also represent and take care of the future of that movement."²¹

Marx understood very well (although in his writings he did not develop it at great length) the vital question of the role of the peasantry as potential allies of the revolutionary working class. Illustrating his understanding in this matter, Marx, referring to the revolution of 1848, said, "The whole thing in Germany will depend on the possibility of covering the rear of the proletarian revolution by some second edition of the Peasant War."²² One of the basic causes for the eventual failure of the Second International was precisely its inability to grasp this elementary proposition, the basis of which was worked out by Marx.

Marx and Engels also worked out many other basic questions of strategy and tactics. They evaluated the roles in the class struggle of the trade unions and of the cooperative movement. They established a proletarian policy towards war and established the role of the general strike in the fight against militarism. They worked out the elements of proletarian policy in the national question, as it then presented itself to the European labor movement. They demonstrated the international character of the workers' struggle for emancipation, the greatest of all labor

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watchwords being that of “Workingmen of all Countries, Unite!” the closing words of *The Communist Manifesto*.

The two great Communist pioneers, Marx and Engels, also swept aside all the existing uncertainty and utopian speculation about socialism and placed the question upon a scientific basis. They uncovered the economic workings of the capitalist system that was exploiting the toiling masses, that was organizing the working class, and that was making the advent of socialism inevitable. They demonstrated that the workers were the historical “grave-diggers of capitalism,” that only the proletariat could lead the respective peoples to socialism. Without attempting, as the Utopians did, to trace out every detail of the future society, Marx and Engels showed that it would be the dictatorship of the proletariat and that socialism, with its motto of “From each according to his ability, to each according to his work,” would be the introductory phase of a still higher social structure, communism, with the principle, “From each according to his ability, to each according to his needs.” This basic Marxist analysis has been completely sustained by the one-third of the human race now definitely on the march to socialism and communism.

Together Marx and Engels laid the theoretical and practical foundations of the modern movement for socialism. Marx was the more towering genius of the two, but Engels was also a theoretician of extraordinary stature. Their collaboration was so close that it is impossible to distinguish the precise authorship of respective features of Marxism. Engels was very generous in conceding credit to Marx. Among many such expressions, he said that “the basic ideas of the Manifesto... belong entirely and solely to Marx.”²³ And again, he said: “These two great discoveries, the materialist conception of history, and the revelation of the secret of capitalist production through surplus value, we owe to Marx. With these discoveries socialism became a science.”²⁴

Engels, besides his collaboration with Marx, personally produced several very valuable books, classics of socialism. He also performed the gigantic task, after Marx’s death, of working up Marx’s mountain of notes into the second and third volumes of *Capital*. Lenin thus evaluates Engels: “After his friend Karl Marx (who died in 1883), Engels was the most remarkable scientist and teacher of the modern proletariat in the whole civilized world.”²⁵

3. The Revolution of 1848

The revolution of 1848 was one of the series of upheavals by which the capitalist class progressively established its rule in Western Europe and eventually throughout the world. The movement, which Marx called “the Continental revolution,” started in France and quickly enveloped Germany, Austria, Italy, Hungary, Belgium, Portugal, and other European countries. England and Ireland also distinctly felt it, and its influence was sharp as far east as Poland and Russia. Repercussions of it took place even in the United States and in Latin America. It was one of the biggest blows ever delivered by rising capitalism against the decadent feudal system.

The basic cause of the broad bourgeois revolution was the pressure of rapidly growing capitalist industrialization, with the equally swiftly expanding working class, against the cramping economic and political fetters of obsolete feudalism. The immediate reason for the revolution was the deep and general economic crisis of 1847, which produced a widespread industrial shutdown, great unemployment, and wholesale mass destitution. Among its other effects, the revolution constituted a major challenge to the newly-organized Communist League, with its famous program, *The Communist Manifesto*, which had forecast the upheaval. The 1848 revolution was a decisive force in shaping the general European situation, into which, a few years later, the First International was born.

THE REVOLUTION IN FRANCE

The revolution began in France on February 24, 1848. It started in this classical land of revolutions because there industry was more developed than anywhere else on the Continent, the French bourgeoisie was the strongest and most revolutionary, the working class was the most mature politically and accustomed to insurrectional methods, and the French feudal system, because of successive revolutionary blows since 1789, was the weakest in Europe. In his work, *The Class Struggles in France (1848-50)*, Marx has provided the scientific history of the French phase of the revolution.

The Paris workers, rising and fighting under the red flag, overthrew King Louis Philippe, a product of the defeated 1830

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revolution. The workers had as “allies” the petty bourgeoisie and lesser big bourgeoisie in the struggle against the bankers and big financiers who were allied with the monarchists. The new provisional government which was created hesitated about proclaiming the Republic; whereupon Raspail, a worker leader, warned that they must do this within two hours or by then he would have an army of 200,000 workers battering at the doors of the Hotel de Ville. Before the deadline, therefore, the frightened government hastily plastered the city walls with placards reading, “Republique Française; Liberté, Egalité, Fraternité!” The workers also compelled the reluctant government to establish universal male suffrage, to admit workers into the National Guard (hitherto the privilege only of the middle class), to set up vast national workshops (employing 100,000 workers) – shops which were supposed to wipe out poverty – and to organize a commission to study the general question of social reform.

Alarmed at the revolutionary spirit of the workers, the bourgeoisie systematically organized their forces to crush their erstwhile worker allies. The new National Assembly, elected largely with peasant votes, was conservative. The reactionaries mobilized 24,000 men -mostly thieves and other lumpen (slum) proletarian elements – into the Mobile Guards; they attacked the national workshops, imposing systems of piece-work and otherwise disrupting them. On May 15, a small insurrection, led by Raspail, Blanqui, and Barbes, tried in vain to overthrow the now reactionary government. Finally on June 21, the big workshops were closed altogether. The Government’s provocations were all a deliberate scheme to push the workers into a futile general insurrection.

Under these attacks, the workers of Paris rose on June 22 in a fierce insurrection, which Marx describes as “the first great battle... between the two classes that split modern society.” On the walls ran these slogans, “Overthrow of the Bourgeoisie,” “Dictatorship of the Working Class.” “The workers, with unexampled bravery and talent, without chiefs, without a common plan, without means and, for the most part, lacking weapons, held in check for five days the army, the Mobile Guard, the Parisian National Guard, and the National Guard that streamed in from the provinces.”¹ But it was a lost cause; the workers were finally beaten and 3,000 of them massacred by the butcher Cavaignac. Thousands more were thrown into prison.

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The defeat of the French workers in June 1848 had a profoundly reactionary effect upon the revolutionary situation all over Europe. Generally, the erstwhile revolutionary bourgeoisie fled into the arms of reaction, the feudalists and monarchists, and made common cause with them against the radical working class. The main political effect of all this was to slow down, but not to stop altogether, the march of the bourgeoisie to political power in the several continental countries.

The conservative French National Assembly, on December 10, 1848, elected Louis Bonaparte as President. He seized dictatorial power on December 2, 1851, and a year later had himself proclaimed Emperor, as Napoleon III.² This political adventurer was the man who was eventually to lead the French people into the great debacle of the Franco-German war of 1870-71.

THE GERMAN REVOLUTION

The revolution of February 24, 1848, begun in Paris, spread swiftly to Germany, Austria, Italy, Hungary, and other lands. These countries, like France and for the same general reasons, were ripe for bourgeois democratic revolution. On March 4, only a week after the revolution began in Paris, the workers and their allies rose in Cologne, Germany, and took charge of the city. On March 13 the people of Vienna chased out Prince Metternich and his government and mastered that important city. And "on March 18 the people of Berlin rose in arms, and after an obstinate struggle of 18 hours, had the satisfaction of seeing the King surrender himself into their hands."³ Similar uprisings took place in many other cities. A National Assembly was elected and a "liberal" government established. The bourgeoisie was in a position, by resolute action, to make itself master of all Germany and Austria.

Marx and Engels, like all great Communist leaders, were men of action as well as of theory. They not only analyzed the world, but they fought actively to change it. With both France and Germany in revolution, they chose the latter country, where they had the most roots, as their field of operation. Consequently, they hastened from Belgium to Prussia, locating themselves in revolutionary Cologne, in the Rhine area. Among their most active co-workers were Stephan Born, Josef Moll, Karl Schapper, Johann Becker, and Wilhelm Wolff. Marx explained later that they went to Cologne rather than to Berlin because, as it was more industri-

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alized and had a more democratic regime, they would have greater freedom of action.⁴ The Communist League possessed only a handful of members in Germany, so Marx and Engels had to work through the broad democratic organizations at hand. During the struggle the Communist Party of Germany was organized. Marx became editor of *Neue Rheinische Zeitung*, which was at first an organ of the liberal bourgeoisie, but which he turned into a journal supporting the workers.

On the eve of the revolution, the democratic parties had met in Offenburg and worked out the program of the liberal bourgeoisie. This included freedom of thought and association, universal and equal male suffrage, a militia to replace the standing army, a progressive income tax, trial by jury, popular education, labor reforms, and parliamentary government – all within a united German republic.

The heart of this program for the bourgeoisie was to unite fragmentized Germany into one state. In 1834, with the customs union (Zollverein), a long step had been taken in this direction, but the capitalists had further urgent need to get the whole chaos of the many states under one central government. When Germany finally became united in 1871 (without Austria), the new unity was built out of a total of 25 states, four kingdoms, five grand duchies, 13 duchies and principalities, and three free cities, all previously independent states.⁵

There being a common interest between the proletariat and the bourgeoisie to overthrow the feudal monarchy and to establish a united democratic Germany, Marx and Engels and their followers actively supported this general program. But they did so with the understanding that the bourgeois revolution would be but the introductory stage of a more far-reaching proletarian revolution. Engels, later on, thus explained their policy: “For us February and March [the first phase of the revolution] could have the significance of a real revolution only if these months had not been the termination but, on the contrary, the starting point of a prolonged revolutionary movement which... the people would have developed further by their own struggle... and in which the proletariat would gradually have won one position after another in a series of battles.”⁶ Accordingly, Marx and Engels militantly fought for a democratic republic, for a united Germany (including the German section of Austria), for the specific class demands of the

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workers, and for all-out support of the revolution in France, Hungary and elsewhere.

This general line of policy was that of “permanent revolution,” a policy which, under Trotsky distortions, was to play such an important role, two generations later, in the great Stalin-Trotsky controversy in the Russian revolution. It was in harmony with the conception in *The Communist Manifesto*, which declared that “the bourgeois revolution in Germany will be but the prelude to an immediately following proletarian revolution.” Engels later admitted that he and Marx had miscalculated in their too early expectancy of the socialist revolution.⁷ But they were basically correct nevertheless in developing a socialist perspective in the German revolution of 1848. In view of the revolutionary spirit of the German working class and especially of the workers’ February rising in Paris and their head-on armed collision with the bourgeoisie in the June counter-revolution, the question of socialism had been placed on the agenda of history in Europe. In fact, it was to be but a relatively short time until the French working class, in the heroic Paris Commune of 1871, would demonstrate this great fact beyond all question.

BETRAYAL BY THE CAPITALIST CLASS

The German bourgeoisie in 1848, instead of following up its initial revolutionary advantage by crushing the feudal states, wavered and temporized. “The pretended new central authority of Germany,” says Engels, “left everything as they found it.”⁸ They were more fearful of the revolutionary workers than they were of feudal reaction. They were afraid that their bourgeois revolution would indeed “grow over” into a socialist revolution. Therefore, essentially as the French bourgeoisie did after the February uprising, the German bourgeoisie allied itself with reaction against the working class. The National Assembly, installed by the liberal bourgeoisie, was afraid to break with the monarchy and kept on the road of compromise until it was dissolved by aggressive reaction.

The bourgeoisie practically abandoned even its basic demand for a united Germany, not to mention a republic. Marx denounced the capitalist class as “without initiative... without a universal historical calling, a doomed senile creature.”⁹ Without breaking with those middle class elements still willing to fight, Marx and Engels threw their stress upon action by the workers. But as the sequel

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showed, the proletariat was much too weak and immature politically to take the lead and to carry through successfully the bourgeois-democratic revolution which the bourgeoisie itself was so flagrantly betraying, and a socialist revolution was not potential in the situation.

The crushing defeat suffered by the workers in Paris in June 1848 revived reaction all through Germany and Eastern Europe. In November of that year the militant counter-revolution reconquered Vienna and in the same month dissolved the National Assembly of Prussia in Berlin. The people of Dresden took up arms (with Bakunin participating), and so did those of other localities. The masses awaited a general call to action from the National Assembly at Frankfurt, but this call never came. The bourgeoisie, which had a majority in that Assembly, was busy selling out the nation to the counter-revolution in its own narrow class interests. By July 1849 the German revolution, begun so auspiciously 16 months earlier, was entirely subdued and the counter-revolution was again in the saddle.

The bourgeoisie did not win the decisive victory in the revolution, as they could have done, but they managed nevertheless to open the doors sufficiently for the future rapid industrialization of Germany. This was what they wanted basically, and having secured it, they promptly betrayed their worker, peasant, and middle-class allies. This treachery was in the nature of the capitalist beast. It was a basic lesson that was to be learned afresh by the working class and the Negro people in the second American revolution (1861-65), and by the workers and other democratic forces in the many other bourgeois revolutions of the future. Another basic lesson stressed by the 1848 revolution was the imperative need for the workers to have an independent party of their own.

With counter-revolution victorious in Germany, great numbers of revolutionists had to leave the country. Masses of them emigrated to the United States, there to play a very important role in the fight against chattel slavery and in building the young labor movement. Marx, Engels, and various other fighters returned to London.

YEARS OF POLITICAL REACTION

The decade between the defeat of the 1848 revolution and the establishment of the First International was generally a period of

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political reaction, of rapid industrialization, of extensive growth of the working class, and of lessened revolutionary struggle. In France, Germany, and elsewhere revolutionaries were persecuted, an outstanding example of this being the celebrated Cologne trial of 1852, where nine Communist leaders were accused of high treason. The trial, based on stool-pigeon and provocateur testimony, resulted in the conviction and jailing of seven of these leaders for long prison terms.

The rapid expansion of European industry was especially marked in Great Britain, the leading capitalist country. In these years there was some improvement in the conditions of the English workers. Beer says that "in the period from 1846 to 1866 money wages as well as real wages rose, as a result of the expansion of trade and the repeal of the corn-laws."¹⁰ This damped down considerably the workers' revolutionary spirit. Webb remarks that in this period, "under the influences of the rapid improvement and comparative prosperity... the Chartist agitation dwindled away."¹¹ Nevertheless a substantial growth of British trade unionism took place, with trade union councils being established in many cities during the latter 1850's. In Germany, under much more severe political conditions, the trade unions barely began to sprout.

Upon their return to London from Germany after the revolution, Marx and Engels re-organized the Communist League. But the organization became the victim of factionalism. Marx and Engels made a stand against the adventurist policies of the Willich-Schapper faction, which wanted to organize a hopeless putsch in Germany. Marx warned of the danger of "playing at insurrection." He also collided with the utopian vagaries of Wilhelm Weitling. In 1852 the League split in two and broke up.

During this general period leading up to the formation of the International Workingmen's Association, Marx lived in deep poverty in a small house in Soho, London. Engels was located in Manchester under more favorable conditions. He frequently aided Marx financially, to enable him to carry on his studies and writing. The two were the closest friends and collaborators, not only politically but personally.

The following letter written by Marx a few weeks before the Cologne trial, illustrates the dire conditions under which this great scientist and revolutionist worked and lived: "My wife is

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sick, Jenny [Marx's oldest daughter] is sick. Lena [housekeeper for the Marx family] is also ill with some kind of nervous fever. I cannot call a doctor as I have no money for medicine. During eight to ten days my family has existed only on bread and potatoes and it is not at all certain that I can get even these tomorrow. It would be very good – and perhaps I ought to wish it – that the landlady would throw me out of the apartment. I would then be freed at least from a debt of 22 pounds. Then there are the bills of the baker, the milkman, for meat, etc., which are also pressing me.”¹²

This was an extremely productive period for Marx, despite his great handicaps. In 1852, he published in *Die Revolution*, Joseph Weydemeyer's paper in the United States, *The Eighteenth Brumaire of Louis Bonaparte*, a masterly analysis of the revolution and counter-revolution in France in 1848-52. From 1852 to 1862, Marx, who had become a regular correspondent for Horace Greeley's paper, the *New York Tribune*, wrote brilliant articles for that paper on Europe and Asia, and also fundamental analyses of the American anti-slavery fight and the early stages of the American Civil War. In 1859, he published his *Critique of Political Economy*, one of his basic writings on economics. But his major activity was in writing his monumental work, *Capital*, the first volume of which appeared in 1867.

4. The Founding of the First International (1864)

Like the capitalist system, the labor movement is fundamentally international. As industries and transportation and communication systems surmount all national borders, so does proletarian class consciousness. The spread of capitalism to the various countries and the development of the world market inevitably generates sentiments of internationalism among the workers. This is especially the case as they begin to break with bourgeois conceptions and turn their attention to socialist policies and perspectives. The political maturity of a given labor movement can be measured pretty much by the degree of internationalism animating it.

In the early 19th century the young proletariat already sensed a strong need for solidarity on an international scale. The workers had need to know and support each other in their growing economic and political struggles against the voracious capitalists, who, although sharply antagonistic to each other along national lines, nevertheless displayed a strong international unity against the specific demands of the working class. More concretely, the workers had to fight against international strike-breaking, and they also sensed a growing need to struggle against war. The more socialist they became, the more internationalist they grew.

The innate internationalism of the workers was also stimulated by strong international trends among the radical sections of the bourgeoisie and petty bourgeoisie. In the revolutionary establishment of capitalist domination these classes definitely cooperated across national lines, particularly in the various revolutions of this general period. This was exemplified by the international bourgeois support given the American Revolution in 1776, the French Revolution of 1789, the French Revolution in 1848, and the German, Italian, Hungarian, Polish, and other bourgeois revolutions. Largely intellectuals, these radical bourgeois elements also penetrated most of the workers' international movements of the times and tried to use them in their own class interests.

PRECURSORS OF THE FIRST INTERNATIONAL

England, the heartland of early capitalism, which had the largest and best developed working class and which gave birth to

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trade unionism, naturally became the scene of most of the preliminary efforts of the proletariat at international solidarity and organization. Ever since the strong rise of the labor movement in the 1830's, there were many expressions of the growing worker spirit of internationalism. The Chartist movement displayed powerful internationalist trends. Lorwin calls William Lovett, one of its founders, "the first workingman of modern times with an international outlook."¹ The Exiles' League (1834-36), the Federation of the Just (1836-39) and the Communist League (1847-52), which we have dealt with in Chapter 2, were definitely internationalist and predominantly proletarian in outlook and membership. Their chief activities and centers were in England.

A very important international organization of this period was the Fraternal Democrats, organized in London in September 1844, by groups of English fighters and European exiles. It declared that "the earth with all its natural productions is the common property of all."² Stekloff says of it that, "as far as its animating ideas were concerned, it was the first international organization of the working class, and in this sense may be regarded as a harbinger of the International."³ Harney, Jones, O'Brien, and other outstanding Chartist leaders, were active figures in this significant organization. Marx and Engels cooperated with the movement. The Fraternal Democrats was internationalist and concerned itself actively with the fights of the workers and other revolutionary developments on the Continent. It definitely prepared the way for the First International. An important feature of this organization was that it initiated an organizational form which was later adopted by the First International, i.e., the establishment of secretaries for the respective countries. Thus, there were secretaries for England, France, Germany, Italy, Poland, and Spain. The organization perished in the reaction following the 1848 revolution in Europe.

The next significant international movement, also radiating out from England, was the Welcome and Protest Committee, later known as the International Committee (and the International Association), organized in London late in 1855. This body, too, set up secretaries for the several countries in which it had contacts. Again Ernest Jones and other Chartists were prominent figures in the movement. The Committee held several big mass meetings in celebration of the various European revolutions of the past, and it pro-

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tested against the outrages of the current reaction in Europe. But by the end of 1859 the International Committee had disappeared.

In France, too, powerful internationalist tendencies manifested themselves among the workers. They had strong international traditions, running back to Babeuf, the noted Communist in the great French Revolution, as well as to fighters in the 1830 and 1848 revolutions, and also in the many other French people's upheavals. In 1843 Flora Tristan, in Paris, wrote a booklet calling for the establishment of a broad international organization. "The Workers Union," she said, "should establish in the principal cities of England, Germany, Italy, in a word, in all the capitals of Europe, committees of correspondence."⁴ In April 1856 a deputation of French workers went to London, and proposed that there be set up a "Universal League of Workers" to conduct the struggle internationally.

Among the most important activities of all these international groupings was their active support of the movement to abolish Negro chattel slavery in the British Empire, the United States, and throughout the world. There was for decades a strong abolitionist movement in which Chartist trade unionists and Owenites played a very important part. The British and American abolition movements worked in close cooperation. Between 1833 and 1860, William Lloyd Garrison, Frederick Douglass, and many other prominent American Abolitionists visited England, where they were given a tremendous mass welcome. George Thompson, English labor-Abolitionist, also came over to the United States and was active in the local struggle. Prior to and during the Civil War, English trade unionists repeatedly held big demonstrations against slavery. In France, too, the working class displayed similar anti-slavery internationalist solidarity against the determined attempts of Napoleon III to bring Great Britain and France into the war on the side of the Confederacy.

These pro-abolition, pro-peace activities, especially of the British workers, led to a letter of thanks from President Lincoln to the Manchester textile workers, who were at the point of starvation because of the cotton blockade. He said that the support constituted "an instance of sublime Christian heroism which has not been surpassed in any age in any country."⁵ On March 2, 1863, the United States Senate expressed gratitude to the British workers for their support. And Marx, earlier in the New York Tribune,

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stated that, "It ought never to be forgotten in the United States that at least the working classes of England, from the commencement to the termination of the difficulty, have not forsaken them."⁶

The foundation of the First International itself took place in a rising wave of proletarian and bourgeois national revolutionary struggle, after the long period of reaction that had followed the European revolution of 1848. Capitalism was growing rapidly all over Western Europe, and so was the working class, both in organization and in fighting spirit. The labor movement, particularly in England, was strengthening itself, the London Trades Council was formed in 1860, and similar bodies were taking shape in other centers. In Germany, the first trade unions were just coming into existence; Ferdinand Lassalle organized the General Union of German Workers, a political organization, in 1862, and August Bebel and Wilhelm Liebknecht were carrying on an active communist agitation, which was to bring about the organization in 1869 of the Social-Democratic Workers Party of Germany. In the United States, also, in the period from 1863 on, the trade unions were growing swiftly. The great economic crisis of 1857, the first of a world-wide character, affected the workers deeply and gave birth to a strong strike movement in 1860-62, both in England and in other countries, including the United States.

Among the many developments in the powerful upsurge of bourgeois democratic national movements in the pre-First International period, there were several which especially aroused the workers of all countries and strengthened their urge for international solidarity. An important one was the sharp rise in the Irish liberation struggle, directed against the English oppressors. Another was a regrowth of strong mass sentiment for the unification and democratization of Germany. Still another was the Italian national revolutionary war of 1859 against Austria. Led by Garibaldi, this war culminated in the liberation and unification of Italy and the introduction of a number of democratic reforms. It caused enthusiasm far and wide among the workers in the capitalist world. Then there was the heroic insurrection in Poland in 1863. This revolt, drowned in blood by the Russian tyrant, evoked widespread expressions of proletarian sympathy and support. Finally, there was the revolutionary Civil War in the United States, which was going on when the First International was formed. The organized work-

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ers in England, Germany, France, and elsewhere, from the outset of this great war, understood clearly that their class interests were decidedly with the North against the slaveholding South, and, as we have already remarked, on many occasions they gave voice powerfully to their strong abolitionist sentiments.

ESTABLISHMENT OF THE INTERNATIONAL WORKINGMEN'S ASSOCIATION*

The First International was launched on September 28, 1864, in St. Martin's Hall, London. Prior to this meeting, over 300 workers from France and 12 from Germany had visited the International Exhibition in London in 1862,⁷ and while there discussed with English trade unionists the project of a workers' international. Also, on July 22, 1863, English and French workers in collaboration had organized a mass meeting in London to protest the suppression of the Cracow insurrection and to demand Polish independence. This led to further talks about an international, and some four months later, George Odger, prominent English union leader, wrote an "Address" to the French workers on the need of international labor action. The French did not reply for a year, but when they did, they sent their answer to London by the same workers who had attended the joint meeting there in 1863. It was to receive their report that the famous meeting of September 28 was called in St. Martin's Hall.

The meeting was a large one, heavily attended by workingmen and foreign-born exiles. Professor E. S. Beesly was in the chair, Marx was in attendance. Odger read the address, sent a year previously to the French workers. The address proposed: "Let there be a gathering together of representatives from France, Italy, Germany, Poland, England, and all countries, where there exists a will to cooperate for the good of mankind. Let us have our congresses; let us discuss the great questions on which the peace of nations depends..."⁸ M. Tolain, one of the French delegates, who was greeted with great applause, read the French answer. After reviewing the hardships faced by the workers, it called upon the

* After the formation of the Second International in 1889, the I.W.A. became known as "The First International." Prior to that, it was generally called simply "The International."

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workers of all countries to unite.⁹ The French then proposed that the new International have its headquarters in London, that the Bee-hive, an English labor paper, should be its official organ, that temporarily a voluntary dues system be established, and that the new body should be provisionally headed by a Central Committee, with sub-commissions in all the capitals of Europe. The proposal was passed by acclamation, and a general committee of 21 was elected to carry out the purposes of the resolution. This committee was authorized to co-opt additional members, as it saw fit.

Early in October, the General Committee held several meetings, at which the title of "International Workingmen's Association" was adopted and general officers were elected. George Odger was chosen President and William R. Cremer, Honorary General Secretary. There were corresponding secretaries chosen for Germany (Marx), America (P. Fox)*, Italy, Poland, Switzerland, and France. The members of the nationalities of the Central Provisional Council, as further constituted, were: ENGLISH – Longmaid, Worley, Leno, Whitlock, Fox, Blackmore, Hartwell, Pidgeon, Lucraft, Weston, Dell, Shearman, Nieass, Shaw, Lake, Buckley, Odger, Howell, Osborne, Carter, Gray, Wheeler, Stainsby, Morgan, Grossmith, Cremer, Dick; FRENCH – Denoual, Le Lubez, Jourdain, Marrisot, Leroux, Bordage, Bocquet, Talandier, Dupont; ITALIAN – Wolf, Fontana, Setacci, Aldrovandi, Lama, Solustri; SWISS – Nuperly, Jung; GERMAN – Eccarius, Wolf, Otto, Lessner, Pfander, Lochner, Marx, Kant, Bolleter; POLISH – Holtorp, Rybczinski. The first Congress of the I.W.A. was scheduled for 1865 in Brussels.

The General Council at once set about formulating a political program and rules for the I.W.A. L. Wolf, an emissary of Mazzini in Italy, read his program, which would have made the organization into a secret body; but it was rejected, with the opposition of Marx. Weston, a veteran Owenite, also suggested a program, full of confusion, and it, too, was voted down. Finally, a document by Le Lubez, heavily tintured with Mazzinism, was adopted. Marx was on the subcommittee to edit this confused document, and as

* Peter A. Fox, Correspondent for America, 1866-67, was an English journalist, who joined the International at the St. Martin's Hall meeting.

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he says, he “altered the whole preamble, threw out the declaration of principles, and finally replaced the forty rules by ten.”¹⁰ The document, when finally adopted unanimously, was almost completely the work of Marx, except for some petty-bourgeois phraseology about “truth,” “justice” and “morality” that the General Council insisted upon inserting, as Marx complained later. That Marx was finally called upon to write the momentous document testifies to the broad influence of its celebrated predecessor, *The Communist Manifesto*. “From the first day of its existence, Karl Marx was the intellectual head, the brilliant theoretician and practical leader of the first workers’ international.”¹¹

THE I.W.A. PROGRAM AND CONSTITUTION

The Inaugural Address¹² of the I.W.A., its first statement of program, is one of the greatest documents in the history of the world’s working class. It is a splendid example of the application of the principles of communism to the everyday struggles and general perspectives of the working class. The Address declared, “It is a great fact that the misery of the working masses has not diminished from 1848 to 1864, and yet this period is unrivalled for the development of its industry and the growth of its commerce.” Those who, years before had prophesied that with the expansion of British industry poverty would be automatically wiped out, had been completely refuted by reality. Government reports showed that for the worker, life was “in nine cases out of ten but a struggle of existence.” Actually, official figures showed “that the worst of the convicted criminals, the penal serfs of England and Scotland, toiled much less and fared far better than the agricultural laborers of England and Scotland.” And many groups of industrial workers were living below subsistence levels. Meanwhile, the wealth of the landowners and capitalists increased by leaps and bounds.

The Address analyzed the period of reaction that had set in all over Europe after the defeat of the revolution of 1848. It hailed the great victory in 1847 of the Ten Hours’ Bill, which the workers had won after 30 years of struggle. “The Ten Hours’ Bill,” it declared, “was not only a great practical success; it was the victory of a principle; it was the first time that in broad daylight the political economy of the middle class succumbed to the political economy of the working class.” All over Western Europe the governments

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were being compelled to adopt similar legislation.

The Address heartily endorsed the cooperative movement that was then making progress, but this alone, it said, "will never be able to arrest the growth in geometrical progression of monopoly, to free the masses, nor even to perceptibly lighten the burden of their miseries." The Address laid central stress upon political action. "To conquer political power," it declared, "has therefore become the great duty of the working class." The workers have one element of success – numbers, "but numbers weigh only in the balance, if united by combination and led by knowledge." The workers of Europe had paid dearly for their lack of organization.

The Address also stressed the need of the workers having a foreign policy. "If the emancipation of the working classes requires their fraternal concurrence, how are they to fulfill that great mission with a foreign policy in pursuit of criminal designs, playing upon national prejudices, and squandering in piratical wars the people's blood and treasure?" It congratulated the working class of England for saving Western Europe from becoming involved in the American Civil War. The Address sharply declared for a democratic and peaceful foreign policy. "The fight for such a foreign policy," it stated, "forms part of the general struggle for the emancipation of the working classes." The document ended with the great historic slogan of The Communist Manifesto, "Proletarians of All Countries, Unite!"

The Provisional Rules, or constitution of the Association, provided for the organizational measures described above. It begins with a preamble calling for organization, as follows:

"That the emancipation of the working classes must be conquered by the working classes themselves; that the struggle for the emancipation of the working classes means not a struggle for class privileges and monopolies, but for equal rights and duties, and the abolition of all class rule;

"That the economical subjection of the man of labor to the monopolizer of the means of labor, that is, the source of life, lies at the bottom of servitude in all its forms, of all social misery, mental degradation, and political dependence;

"That the economical emancipation of the working classes is therefore the great end to which every political movement ought to be subordinate as a means;

"That all efforts aiming at that great end have hitherto failed

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from the want of solidarity between the manifold divisions of labor in each country, and from the absence of a fraternal bond of union between the working classes of different countries;

“That the emancipation of labor is neither a local nor a national, but a social problem, embracing all countries in which modern society exists, and depending for its solution on the concurrence, practical and theoretical, of the most advanced countries;

“That the present revival of the working classes in the most industrious countries of Europe, while it raises a new hope, gives solemn warning against a relapse into the old errors and calls for the immediate combination of the still disconnected movements.”

5. Trade Unionism, Proudhon, Lassalle, and Bakunin

The struggle of the working class, involving the protection of the workers' interests under capitalism, the abolition of the capitalist system, and the establishment of socialism, is a highly complex matter. The revolutionary science of this struggle is Marxism, or, in our days, Marxism-Leninism; which represents the sum total of the lessons learned by the proletariat and its allies in their world-wide, century-long battle against the exploiting classes. The historical progress of a given labor movement is to be measured directly by the extent to which it has mastered and absorbed the principles of Marxism.

During the course of the class struggle the working class, on its way finally to acquiring a Marxist consciousness, either spontaneously generates or absorbs from hostile classes, many erroneous conceptions about its position in society and the way for it to emancipate itself. Thus originate many movements in labor's ranks, referred to by Marx as "sects," but now generally known in Marxist terminology as "right" and "left" "deviations." Originally some of these sects, for example, the utopian Socialists, played a constructive role, but as the labor movement matured and expanded they became reactionary. Usually these "sects" or "deviations" have had a grain of truth in them. That is, they are based upon necessary working class ideas, organizational forms, or tactics, which by distortion, exaggeration, and misapplication, are twisted entirely out of their real significance. Frequently, the sects also build their own specific conceptions of how to do away with capitalism and to construct socialism. These sects, always helpful to the capitalists and injurious to the solidarity and struggle of the labor movement, in times of revolution can become counter-revolutionary, as the workers were to learn by bitter experience in the decades after Marx's death.

At this point it is well for us to interrupt our chronological history of the First International and to analyze some of the major ideological currents within that organization. It contained several sects and they played decisive roles in the movement.

To eliminate such harmful sects and to inculcate true principles of working class revolutionary science has always been the

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basic concern of Marxists, as it also was that of Marx and Engels in the days of the First International. In a letter in November 1871 to Friedrich Bolte, a prominent American member of the I.W.A., Marx said: "The International was founded in order to replace the socialist or semi-socialist sects by a real organization of the working class for struggle. The original Statutes and the Inaugural Address show this at a glance.... The development of socialist sectarianism and that of the real labor movement always stand in inverse ratio to each other.... The history of the International was a continual struggle of the General Council against the sects and against amateur experiments, which sought to assert themselves within the International against the real movement of the working class."¹

At the time of the foundation of the First International there was relatively only a small handful of Marxists, of those who fully grasped the significance of the revolutionary writings of Marx and Engels. The sectarians of various kinds dominated the young and weak movements in the respective countries, and they were also in large majority at the congresses. The reason the Geneva and other early congresses were able nevertheless to turn out so much good policy was because the great bulk of it was written by Marx himself. At that time the earliest sectarians of all, the utopian socialists, had just about faded out, as the labor movement, despite many errors, was at last beginning to grapple with real economic and political policies. There were, however, several brands of sects in existence, and future labor history was due to produce many more types.

PURE AND SIMPLE TRADE UNIONISM

Throughout the life of the First International its strongest mass organizations were the affiliated English trade unions. The extent of this support was indicated by the fact, among other things, that George Odger and W. R. Cremer, members of the famous trade union "Junta," the unofficial leading committee of the labor movement, were chosen President and Honorary General Secretary of the I.W.A., while many other prominent trade union leaders were also members of the General Council. At one time or another, the bulk of the unions in England were affiliated in some measure with the I.W.A. For a decade the International played an

TRADE UNIONISM

important role in English labor affairs.*

During the period of the I.W.A. the British labor movement was in quite a different mood than it had been during the fiery years of Chartism in the 1840's. It was a time of rapid capitalist development and of the initial stages of British imperialism. Some improvement took place in the position of the working class, particularly of the skilled workers, and the labor movement lost most of its former revolutionary spirit. Lenin later gathered many quotations from Marx and Engels to the effect that the British labor movement at that time "lacked the mettle of the Chartists," that the British worker leaders were developing into something between a radical bourgeois and a worker, and that the capitalists were attempting "to bourgeoisify the workers."²

By 1866 the British unions were well into the time of what Engels called "the forty years winter sleep" of the proletariat. This was the general period of the rise of British imperialism. Rothstein remarks of this era: "There were new leaders, new methods, new interests, new aims, and the traces of the old [Chartism] vanished so quickly that its very memory was all but obliterated in the next generation, and the few survivors, like O'Brien, Harney, and Ernest Jones seemed living anachronisms, almost curiosities."³

It was the period of the most pronounced "pure and simple trade unionism," when the unions, mostly of the narrow craft variety and showing little solidarity with each other, did not look beyond the framework of capitalist society and confined their aims to limited economic objectives. They went easy on strikes and built up extensive systems of mutual benefits in the unions. The unions as such took but little interest generally in policies, and when they did (for the voting franchise, against certain repressive laws, etc.), it was under the leadership of the Liberal Party and usually for the limited purpose of freeing the unions from legal restrictions.

Odger, Cremer, and other trade union leaders in the I.W.A., expressed these opportunistic moods. Their line represented bourgeois influence in the labor movement. They did not see in

* Curiously, however, in their book, *History of Trade Unionism*, the Webbs devote only a single footnote, p. 235, to the International.

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the International an instrument for the emancipation of the workers so much as a means to help the British trade unions, especially against the importation of strike-breakers from the Continent. Unlike the Proudhonists and the Bakuninists, however, they never made a militant fight to dominate the I.W.A. But their opportunist ideology was a constant drag on the development of the International, and finally, as we shall see, it resulted in a definite rupture with the organization. Marx and Engels kept up a running battle against this pure and simple trade unionism, or economism, within the International, a deviation which was also later to play (and still does) a very important role in the American labor movement.

BLANQUISM

Louis Auguste Blanqui (1805-1881) was an important leader among the French workers, especially from the middle 1830's to the Commune of 1871. He had studied law and medicine, but early became interested in politics. After the revolution of 1830, in which he helped put Louis Philippe on the throne, Blanqui cast in his fate with the working class movement. Vaguely he was a communist and an advocate of the dictatorship of the proletariat. He based his policies upon armed insurrection and conspiratorial groups, and he took an important part in the many French revolutions of his period. In 1839, he led an abortive attempt in Paris to overthrow the reactionary government. He was very active, too, in the revolution of 1848. As we shall see, he was also a central figure in the Paris Commune. Jailed several times, and once sentenced to death, he finally died from natural causes.

Blanqui spoke in the name of Babeuf, the early French Communist. He eschewed all economic and political reforms. Blanquism, with its sole stress upon armed insurrection, was a characteristic product of the early French labor movement, which lived under harsh repressive conditions, had a background of militant revolutionary traditions, and worked largely under the influence of the revolutionary petty bourgeoisie. Blanqui knew nothing of building up strong political parties, mass trade unions, and broad cooperatives, and of participating actively in the everyday struggles of the working class for immediate demands. Confined mostly to France, Blanquism hardly threatened to control the International. It was definitely a "leftist" influence, however, in that

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organization, although many of its best fighters eventually became Marxists. Marx had a high opinion of Blanqui's revolutionary spirit, but he was no admirer of his conspiratorial policies.⁴ As an active political force Blanquism died with the Paris Commune, but remnants of it lingered on, and finally the Blanquist Party, in 1904-05, amalgamated with the French Unified Socialist Party.

PROUDHONISM

Pierre Joseph Proudhon (1809-1865) was a printer, self-educated, and highly intelligent. He was the father of modern anarchism. His influence during the 1860's was very extensive among the French workers, particularly the skilled handicraftsmen in the Paris luxury trades. He also had a big following in Belgium. During the first years of the International his group was very influential in that body. His most important book, *The Philosophy of Poverty*, was published in 1846, and, says Marx, "it produced a great sensation." The Proudhonists tried persistently to capture the International, for their own purposes.

Proudhon's program proposed the setting up of a vast system of producers' and consumers' cooperatives – "mutualist societies," he called them – which, by constant expansion, would come eventually to supplant the capitalist system. A prominent feature was to be free credit for the cooperatives through people's banks. In 1846, in a letter to Marx, Engels thus sums up the economic side of this plan: "These people have got nothing more or less in mind than to buy up, for the time being, the whole of France, and later on perhaps the rest of the world as well, with the savings of the proletariat and by renouncing profit and the interest on their capital."⁵ With his famous dictum, that "Property is robbery," Proudhon referred to the property of the bourgeoisie, not that of the petty bourgeoisie. Proudhon argued that not only would the economic base of capitalism be liquidated by his cooperatives, but the state as well. The future society would be operated by his "free mutualist associations." This system he named "anarchy."

This was a petty-bourgeois conception, as Marx and Engels made clear. Moreover, it represented conservative sections of the petty bourgeoisie, which, being crushed by the rising capitalists, wanted thus to evade the struggle, whereas the radical sections of the bourgeoisie mounted the barricades time and again against its big capitalist and feudal enemies. Proudhon's general idea was

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that the workers and peasants could not emancipate themselves by struggle against the capitalists and the feudal remnants, but by gradually, through his cooperatives, becoming the owners of the land and the tools with which they worked. As for woman, her place was not in the shops or in politics, but in the home. Proudhon imbibed much of his general conception from Fourier and other great French Utopians who preceded him. The repressive political conditions then existing in France caused many workers and peasants to turn to Proudhon's seemingly easy escape to freedom from the barbarous situation under which they lived.

Proudhon rejected the class struggle in both theory and practice. He was opposed to labor unions, to strikes, to wage increases, and to labor legislation. Only in the last years of his life did he somewhat modify this drastic anti-labor stand. He was also opposed to a political party, declaring that, "The Party is born of tyranny." He maintained that the era of revolutions had passed – unfortunately saying this only two weeks before the revolution of 1848, which Marx and Engels had been predicting. Proudhon held that the state, which was oppressing the toilers and aiding the capitalists, could neither be democratized nor destroyed by a head-on attack; it had to be gradually supplanted by his "mutualist" system.

Marx and Engels kept up a running battle against Proudhonism for 20 years, and, in tune with the developing labor movement, finally smashed it. When Proudhon issued his famous book in 1846, *The Philosophy of Poverty*, Marx replied the following year, with his celebrated work, *The Poverty of Philosophy*, in which he tore Proudhon's petty-bourgeois utopia to shreds. This sharp attack ended forever the personal friendship which had hitherto existed between the two men. In *The Communist Manifesto* Proudhonism was characterized as "bourgeois socialism" which wants "a bourgeoisie without a proletariat."

Tolain, Fribourg, and for a time, Varlin, were the principal leaders of the strong Proudhonist groups in France and in the earlier congresses of the International. Marx and Engels found themselves in constant collision with this group's recurring propositions, which were generally designed to cut down all class struggle theory and practice in the International and to turn the world's organized workers away from a perspective of the socialist revolution to an acceptance of the petty-bourgeois capitalism of Proudhon.

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LASSALLEISM

Several of the traditional deviations which have afflicted the labor movement in its march forward have related to the role of the cooperative movement. The cooperatives, as Marx pointed out in the Inaugural Address of the I.W.A., are a useful form of proletarian struggle and organization, but they, by themselves, cannot bring about the emancipation of the working class. The idea that they can free the workers springs up spontaneously, however, and this notion has long afflicted the cooperative movement. We have just seen how this illusion manifested itself among the Proudhonists of France. The English cooperatives generated similar pseudo-revolutionary ideas, but not to such a marked degree. Lassalleism, which was a special form of the cooperative movement, was also afflicted with this type of illusion.

Ferdinand Lassalle (1825-1864) was born of Jewish parentage in Breslau and he was educated in Berlin University. Becoming a Hegelian and a friend of Marx, he early interested himself in the fight for German national independence and democracy. He became a Socialist and turned his attention to the emancipation of the working class. The way he envisaged this being accomplished was through the building up of a network of government-subsidized cooperatives, which would gradually replace the capitalist system. To insure the government subsidies being realized, Lassalle called for the general franchise for the workers, erroneously assuming that universal men's suffrage would give the workers 90 percent of the seats in parliament. Lassalle outlined his ideas mainly in *The Workingman's Programme* (1862), and *The Open Letter* (1863), and to further his program, he founded the General Union of German Workers in 1863, a political organization. Lassalle thus became a pioneer political organizer of the German working class, although, unlike Liebknecht and Bebel, he never really became a Marxist.* Marx praised Lassalle for his activities and said he had re-awakened the workers' movement in Germany after its fifteen years of slumber.⁶

Lassalle's opportunist line conflicted directly with the building of a broad trade union and political movement of the workers

* Lassalle's career was suddenly cut short in 1864, when he was killed in a duel.

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freely using all the weapons available to it, and Marx combated it vigorously as a petty-bourgeois tendency. He declared that Lassalle's movement was nothing but a sectarian organization, and as such hostile to the organization of the genuine workers' movement striven for by the International. Lassalle had been one of Marx's earliest disciples, and he together with Marx and Engels, had fought for a united, democratic German Republic. In maneuvering for his pet project of state subsidies for cooperatives, Lassalle entered into dubious relations with the wily Prussian chancellor, Bismarck, who was always eager to try to demoralize the labor movement. For these dealings, which were later fully confirmed, Marx condemned Lassalle as having betrayed the workers' cause.⁷

Like Proudhon, Lassalle was opposed to trade unions and strikes as being futile and a waste of the workers' energies and resources. In his time German labor unions had hardly been born. Lassalle undertook to justify his anti-union position on the basis of his so-called "iron law of wages," according to which the workers were unbreakably bound to the barest subsistence levels and any wage raises won by trade unions were supposed to be automatically cancelled out by increases in living costs. Marx made a head-on collision with this petty-bourgeois theory of Lassalle's. His analysis on this general question is contained in his famous booklet, *Value, Price and Profit*, which is the text of his report to the General Council of the I.W.A. in September 1865.

The substance of Marx's position was to the effect that the workers, by organized economic and political struggle, could improve their living standards – a proposition which in our days, with scores of millions of workers in trade unions, has become obvious, but which in those days was a very important pioneer analysis. Marx showed that "trade union action was capable of raising labor above subsistence level, just as concerted or monopolistic action on the employers' part could depress wages below that level."⁸ Marx thus laid the theoretical basis of the trade union movement. On the specific question of the effects of wage increases, Marx said in his report: "A general rise in the rate of wages would result in a fall of the general rate of profit, but, broadly speaking, would not affect the prices of commodities."⁹ Marx warned, however, that "the general tendency of capitalist production is not to raise but to sink the average standard of wages."

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Wage increases are not the way to emancipation. As for the trade unions, Marx criticized them for dealing simply with effects and not with causes. "Instead of the conservative motto, 'A fair day's wages for a fair day's work!' they ought to inscribe on their banner the revolutionary watchword, 'Abolition of the wages system!'"¹⁰

The Lassalleans, of whom, following their leader's death, J. B. Schweitzer was the most prominent, played no great part in the congresses of the International, from which they generally held aloof to shield themselves from police persecution. They were, however, a decisive force in the German labor movement, as we shall see in passing. The followers of Lassalle were important also among the workers of Bohemia and Austria, and they exercised a great deal of influence among the large numbers of German worker immigrants in the United States.

BAKUNINISM

Michael Bakunin (1814-1876) was born in Tver, Russia, of a rich, noble family. He served in Poland as an imperial officer, but quit in protest against the tsar's tyranny there. An exile, Bakunin became a revolutionary, taking a leading part in the defense of Dresden in 1849. For this he was sentenced to death, but was later handed over to the tsar's government, which sent him to Siberia in 1855. He escaped and returned to Europe in 1861, becoming highly active in Anarchist circles. He died in Berne, Switzerland, in 1876.

Bakunin was a disciple of Proudhon, whom he knew personally. He accepted Proudhon's general conception of the state and of a future society based upon free associations of producers. But he substituted several new concepts in place of Proudhon's. He abandoned the idea of gradually liquidating the state by the growth of mutualist cooperatives, and proposed instead that the state be destroyed by insurrectional attack. He also took a more tolerant attitude towards trade unionism. He came to insist that, short of insurrection, trade union struggles were the only practical fights. The unions, however, should look towards eventual insurrection, and in the future regime they would serve as the basic producing organizations. Bakunin thus became, in fact, one of the fathers of the future strong Anarcho-syndicalist tendency.

Bakunin called his program, "the anarchist system of Proudhon, extended by us, developed and freed by us of all metaphysi-

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cal, idealistic and doctrinaire frills.”¹¹ Bakunin’s principal ideas appear in his book, *God and the State*, which was published in 1882. In this book he ties the state and religion together as the basic sources of authoritarian suppression, both of which must be violently destroyed. The main principles in his general program were: (a) the propagation of atheism; (b) the destruction of the state; (c) the rejection of all political action, as the state can be destroyed only by insurrection. He made a major point of the abolition of the right of property inheritance.

Bakunin represented fundamentally the declassed petty bourgeoisie and peasantry and the workers of the more industrially backward countries of Europe. Anarchism, the Bakunin variety and others, also existed mainly in the semi-feudal Catholic countries, where the Protestant (bourgeois revolutionary) Reformation was not completed and where the ultra-authoritarian Catholic Church saturated every phase of economic, political, and social life. This especially explains the aggressive anticlericalism of anarchism. Bakunin did not stress social classes as such, nor did he understand the class struggle. He wrote of the “poor people,” and the “poverty-stricken sections of the population,” and he contrasted the “revolutionary spirit” of the lumpen proletariat with the “reactionary spirit” of the labor aristocracy, among whom he included the bulk of the working class.¹² He erroneously considered the pauperized as always being in a mood for insurrection.

Of great vigor and militancy, Bakunin built for himself a large following – in Italy, Spain, Southern France, French Switzerland, Russia, and eventually among the foreign-born workers in the United States. He joined the First International in 1868, and thenceforth led an increasingly bitter struggle for control of the organization. Inevitably he came into direct collision with Marx and the Communists. Thenceforth, the severe struggle between these irreconcilable groups colored the whole life of the International, and finally caused its disruption.

The Marxists agreed in broad principle with the Anarchists that the capitalist state had to be abolished, but they differed radically as to the methods by which capitalism as a system was to be done away with and also as to what kind of a social regime would take its place. Marx collided with Bakunin on three major questions: (a) the political struggle of the working class; (b) the proletarian dictatorship; (c) the proletarian party. Marx especially

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combated Bakunin's conspiratorial and terrorist line. As Bernstein says, for Bakunin "Will, and not economic conditions, was decisive in changing things permanently. This type of thinking led straight to putschism."¹³ All these proved to be life and death questions in the International and, later on, also in the general labor movement.

Bakunin looked with scorn upon all fights for political reforms. He particularly condemned political action aimed at the democratization of the bourgeois state, and he endorsed strikes only in the sense that they were small insurrections with partial objectives, pending the coming of the general insurrection that would end capitalism altogether. On the other hand, Marx had a practical appreciation of the value of both economic and political reforms (wage increases, shortening of hours, regulation of child labor, factory legislation, extension of the franchise, etc.) This was shown by the vast attention paid, with Marx's approval, by the General Council and the I.W.A. congresses to strikes, the building of unions, and the development of various political struggles for partial demands, along with their consideration of major political problems. Yet no one understood better than Marx that working class emancipation could never be achieved by such partial demands. To free the workers is the task of the proletarian revolution, but this must be accomplished, not by a few conspirators, as Bakunin supposed, but by the main body of the workers in action. As Marx repeatedly expressed it, the most basic advantage to the workers of their daily struggles is the class consciousness and organization that they gain from them. The Marxists, as exemplified in *The Communist Manifesto* itself, had both a minimum and a maximum program; the Bakuninists had only a maximum program. This was the difference between a broad revolutionary mass movement and a narrow pseudo-revolutionary sect.

Bakunin took the position that when the masses dealt the killing blow to the capitalist system, this would be the end of the state automatically, and that it would be immediately replaced by his "free federation of persons, communes, districts, nations." Marx and the Communists also looked forward ultimately to a social regime in which there would be no repressive state government, but they ridiculed Bakunin's conception that this would come virtually overnight with the downfall of capitalism. Already in 1848, in *The Communist Manifesto*, Marx had made it clear

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that there would be an intermediate period, the dictatorship of the proletariat. This would be the class rule of the workers; for only on this basis could the counterrevolution be repressed, the capitalist state destroyed, and the classless socialist society, without a state, eventually be established. The immediate aim is the dictatorship of the proletariat; the ultimate aim is a stateless society. The Bakuninists vigorously opposed the whole concept of the dictatorship of the proletariat. They fought simply for the destruction of the state; the Marxists fought for the seizure of power by the working class. It boiled down to the immediate and final program of the Marxists versus the simple maximum program of the Bakuninists.

Bakunin also carried his extreme anti-authoritarian ideas into the realm of political organization. His general conception was that of a highly decentralized movement, playing upon spontaneity, with the national sections completely autonomous and the International hardly more than a correspondence center. Marx, on the other hand, conceived the International to be the beginning of a solidly organized world political organization of the workers, and the General Council as the germ of an effective world leadership. Endless bitter quarrels developed between Marxists and Bakuninists over this practical organizational question, as well as over matters of political tactics and ultimate objectives.

Bakuninism made the basic errors of foreshortening and oversimplifying the revolution, of failing to understand the need for the dictatorship of the proletariat, of not understanding the revolutionary role of the working class, of grossly underestimating the importance of the workers' imperative drive for immediate reforms, of trying to make atheism a condition of working class unity in the struggle, and of ignoring the fundamental necessity for a strong political party. Therefore, it had to go down to defeat before Marxism, which was incomparably more realistic in all these respects.

6. Consolidation: The Geneva Congress (1866)

The I.W.A. meeting in Geneva was the first world labor congress ever held. Therefore, it confronted a host of problems which were unique and difficult to an extent hardly understandable in our era of multiple labor congresses. Originally it was planned to hold the congress in Brussels in 1865; but the date was too soon and because of the reactionary nature of the Belgian government, the city was also unavailable. Instead, in 1865 a preparatory conference was held in London, which finally decided that the Congress should take place September 3, 1866, in Geneva; that is, two years after the St. Martin's Hall meeting.

The basic ideological difficulty confronted by the new International Workingmen's Association, was the multiplicity of "sects" composing it, and the greatest organizational difficulty was the lack of working class movements in the respective countries. In most places, the labor movement was barely coming into being. The Rules of the organization provided for the affiliation of "workingmen's societies," a characterization which was interpreted to embrace labor organizations of all sorts. The first congress was, therefore, made up of representatives of trade unions, political organizations (which were mostly small secret groups on the Continent), mutual benefit societies, consumers' cooperatives, educational groups, etc. Save the Lassalle organization in Germany, there were no national labor or socialist parties yet in the various countries. The I.W.A. continued throughout its existence upon this broad, all-inclusive basis.

The congress call was greeted enthusiastically by the advanced workers, and wherever the organizers (voluntary) of the congress went they got a good reception. The most substantial response was among the union workers in England. The Sheffield trade union congress of 1866 endorsed the I.W.A. and recommended that local unions affiliate with it. The London Trades Council took a similar cooperative position, but it refrained from affiliating itself. When the Geneva Congress assembled there were 15 English trade unions represented, with a stated membership of 25,173.¹

The Proudhonist mutualist groups of France and Belgium also rallied strongly to the congress. And active workers eagerly set to

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work to enlist the scattered labor groupings of all sorts, such as then existed in Germany, Austria, Italy, Spain, and Switzerland. "Each of the sections of this movement which came into the ranks of the International brought with it whole mountains of petty-bourgeois rubbish, childish illusions, doctrinaire fancies, sectarian impotence and national prejudices"² – all of which Marx, Engels, and the handful of developed Communists had to combat. There was also a response in the United States, Stekloff reporting a workers' congress in Chicago, on August 20, 1866, as endorsing the new International.³ The National Labor Union held its founding convention, representing some 60,000 workers, in Baltimore just two weeks before the opening of the Geneva Congress of the I.W.A. Marxists were very active in the formation of the N.L.U.* There was strong sentiment of support for the I.W.A., but the congress declared that the time was too short to permit it to send delegates to Geneva. Marx was struck by the close similarity of the labor demands raised by the N.L.U. congress with those proposed by himself for the Geneva congress.⁴ The American Marxists had much to do with this likeness between the two congresses.

In its opening congress, the I.W.A. also strongly attracted revolutionary petty-bourgeois republican elements, who were playing a key role in the recurring bourgeois revolutions. Stekloff reports these elements, mostly intellectuals, joining the organization in considerable numbers in various countries. He says that in France, "Doctors, journalists, manufacturers, and army officers, gave their support.... Not a few persons of note in the political world formally appended their names to the rules and constitution of the International."⁵ These elements obviously did not take into account the proletarian character of the new organization and its revolutionary purposes. Neither did the bourgeois press and governments of the time, which paid no great attention to the Geneva congress.

POLITICAL ACTIVITIES OF THE I.W.A.

As the coming years were to demonstrate, the I.W.A., supported all working-class struggles and cultivated all kinds of pro-

* Joseph Weydemeyer, leading American Marxist, died of cholera the day the N.L.U. congress opened.

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letarian organization – economic, political, and educational. Its fundamentally political character was already made quite clear in the two years between the establishment of the I.W.A. in September 1864 and the holding of its first congress in September 1866. For the first time, under I.W.A. leadership, the proletariat began to have an important say in the conduct of international affairs, hitherto the sacred preserve of the ruling classes. This marked a new milestone in social progress.

During this interim period, the General Council of the International paid considerable attention to the national liberation struggle going on in Poland at the time. Mass meetings and conferences were held in various cities to develop working-class and general support for the hard-pressed Polish fighters for freedom. Another major struggle to which the Council gave direct aid was the fight of the British working class for the ballot. For a generation the workers had been struggling for the right to vote, but it was not until 1867 that they finally succeeded in winning it. What the capitalists had been able to refuse to the Chartist movement in 1842 and 1848, they had to concede to the working class two decades later. A lesser reason for this concession was that the British employers, watching how the emperor Bonaparte was manipulating to his advantage the broad suffrage existing in France, no longer had such a deadly fear of the vote as in the Chartist years.

In the period prior to Geneva the General Council also took a constant interest in the great Civil War then going on in the United States. It participated actively in mobilizing anti-slavery sentiment and in balking the various pro-South maneuvers of the British and French governments. When Lincoln was elected for his second term the Council, on November 29, 1864, sent him a letter, or “Address,” of congratulations and appreciation, written by Marx. Through the Ambassador, Charles Francis Adams in London,⁶ Lincoln replied with a friendly note. The I.W.A. letter praised Lincoln as a “single-minded son of the working class,” and stated that from the onset of the Civil War, “the workmen of Europe felt instinctively that the star-spangled banner carried the destiny of their class.”⁷ On May 13, 1865, the General Council also sent an “Address” to President Johnson, which was likewise written by Marx, expressing profound sorrow and indignation at the assassination of President Lincoln. The letter paid a glowing

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tribute to Lincoln and also called Johnson's attention to the tremendous work of "political reconstruction and social regeneration" confronting his government.⁸

On the composition of the General Council, which conducted these militant activities, Marx said in a letter to Joseph Weydemeyer (1818-1866) in the United States: "Its English members consist mostly of the chiefs of the local trade unions, that is, the actual labor kings of London, the same fellows who prepared the gigantic reception to Garibaldi and prevented Palmerston from declaring war upon the United States, as he was on the point of doing, through the monster meeting in St. James's Hall (under Bright's chairmanship)."⁹

In the determined struggle against the pro-slavery activities of the British Government, begun by the trade unions and Abolitionists, and then carried on by the First International, a fight which was led personally by Marx and Engels, the workers laid the basis for one of the major continuing struggles of the world's workers and one which now has more urgency than ever – the fight against war. And, vitally significant, their fight was a successful one. Undoubtedly, the resistance put up by the British working class was a decisive factor in preventing the British government from entering the Civil War on the side of the South, an eventuality that might well have been fatal to the cause of the North.

The 1864 Inaugural Address of the I.W.A., voicing the same opinion as Marx had in his letter to Weydemeyer, stated that, "It was not the wisdom of the ruling classes but the heroic resistance to their criminal folly by the working classes of England that saved the West of Europe from plunging headlong into an infamous crusade for the perpetuation and propagation of slavery on the other side of the Atlantic." In a congressional debate in 1879 Senator Hoar of Massachusetts attested to the correctness of this historic statement by arguing that "it was the angry growl of the workingmen of Lancashire" that had kept the British government from going to war against the United States during the Civil War.¹⁰

THE WORK OF THE CONGRESS

The congress in Geneva, September 3-8, 1866, was made up of 60 delegates, representing 22 sections of the I.W.A. From Switzerland there were 20 delegates representing 13 sections, plus 14

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others from trade unions and various bodies; from France, 17 delegates representing 4 sections, and from Germany 3 delegates (who were living in London) representing 4 sections. Odger, Carter, Jung, Eccarius, Cremer, and Dupont of the General Council were present, but not Marx. The delegates were of various political tendencies, which we have discussed in the previous chapter. This diversity ideologically made the work of the congress difficult, a fact which was accentuated because the delegates were striking out into virtually new territory in handling the business before them. They were laying the first foundations of working class international mass organization and tactics.

Despite these handicaps, however, the congress was highly constructive. Practically everything it did has since stood the test of later labor experience throughout the world. All the resolutions passed by this congress, which formulated the basic demands of the proletariat, and which were written almost exclusively by Marx, entered into the practical minimum programs of all working class parties.

The main points on the agenda were: “ (1) To consolidate with the help of the Association, the efforts that are being made in the different countries for the struggle between Labor and Capital; (2) the trade unions, their past, present and future; (3) cooperative labor; (4) direct and indirect taxes; (5) shorter working hours; (6) female and child labor; (7) the Moscow invasion of Europe, and the restoration of an independent integral Poland; (8) the permanent armies, their influence on the interests of the working class.”¹¹

Marx and Engels understood the I.W.A. to be the start of an international political party of the working class and it was upon this basis that it was built. The congress laid the foundations of its general political program by formally adopting, with but small changes, the Inaugural Address issued by the General Council two years earlier. This gave the I.W.A. an international outlook, a general revolutionary perspective, and an approach to active participation in all the daily struggles of the working class.

The congress also accepted the Rules, as previously written by Marx. The International was based on local branches, which were united in Federal Councils in the respective countries. Affiliations of trade unions, educational societies, etc., were also accepted. Each organization, large or small, was to send one delegate to the

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congress. The General Council was elected by the congress and was responsible to it. The Council was to carry out the congress decisions and to give political guidance to the whole movement. Dues were set at 30 centimes (three pence) annually – from the outset the financial problem was severe, the International, during the years 1865-66, had received in income only about \$285. At the congress an effort was made by the French delegation to restrict the I.W.A. membership solely to proletarians (which would have excluded Marx and other experienced political leaders), but this was voted down, mainly at the instigation of the British delegates.

One of the major achievements of the congress was to work out a clear line on the question of trade unionism. In the various countries, there was much confusion in this general matter, ranging from those conservative unionists in England, who saw in the unions merely instruments for winning minor economic concessions, to the Proudhonists in France who looked upon trade unions in general as a needless burden and a danger to the working class. The congress recognized the great value of trade unions in the daily struggle, it saw them also as a powerful educational force for the working class, and it considered them of fundamental importance in the fight for proletarian emancipation. Marx had long considered trade unions as “the basic nuclei of the working class.” The trade union resolution, written by him, stated: “If trade unions have become indispensable for the guerrilla fight between Capital and Labor, they are even more important as organized bodies to promote the abolition of the very system of wage labor.”¹² The resolution urged the unions to pay more attention to political action than they were doing, and also to draw the masses of unskilled and agricultural workers into their ranks. The conception of trade unionism worked out at the pioneer Geneva congress still remains, by and large, that of Marxists the capitalist world over.

In connection with the trade union question, much attention was paid to the matter of international strike-breaking. This especially affected the English unions, and also those in the United States. Repeatedly during their walkouts, English strikers had to face scabs brought over from Belgium, Holland, and France. The congress alerted the workers to this danger and sought to develop a strong international solidarity to check it.

Another vital piece of pioneer work done by the congress was

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to clarify working class policy basically regarding cooperatives. This type of organization was relatively new at the time and much confusion existed as to its potentialities, especially among the followers of Proudhon and Lassalle, who considered their brand of cooperation as the sole path to proletarian emancipation. The resolution, following in general the policy laid down previously in the Inaugural Address, while stressing the importance of cooperatives, especially producers' organizations, declared that by themselves they could not bring about the workers' emancipation. The Proudhonists, who advocated their panacea upon all occasions, managed, however, to induce the congress to vote for the establishment by the International of a mutual credit bank, a project of which little or nothing more was heard after the congress adjourned.

An important action of the congress was its endorsement of the legal 8-hour workday as an immediate political objective to be fought for. The workers in the capitalist countries were at the time fighting mainly for the 10-hour day, and the congress action gave them a higher goal also to strive for. In the United States, as early as 1836, demands had been put forth in the labor press for the 8-hour day¹³ and in 1842, the ship carpenters of Boston established it in their work. The founding convention of the National Labor Union in 1866 made this one of its major issues. The slogan also had a history in England. The action of the Geneva congress raised the question of the 8-hour day to the status of a basic international demand from then on, and in oncoming decades it was to assume the greatest importance.

The congress demanded the abolition of night work for women and the regulation of the work of women and children in industry. The French Proudhonists, declaring that woman's place was in the home, condemned outright the employment of women in industry.¹⁴ The congress did not demand the complete abolition of child labor, but its regulation. Youthful workers were divided into three age groups – 9 to 12, 12 to 15, and 15 to 18 – with different working periods for each group.¹⁵ The basic idea was to combine industrial training and general education. In the question of taxation, which was on the agenda, the congress supported the system of direct, rather than indirect, taxes.

Refuting the position of those opposed to legislative action (who were to have generations of sectarian political descendants),

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the congress, regarding labor protective legislation in general, declared that, "by compelling the adoption of such laws, the working class will not consolidate the ruling powers, but, on the contrary, it will be turning that power which is at present used against it, into its own instrument."¹⁶

The matter of the workers' attitude towards religion also came before the congress, at the instance of the French delegation. The matter, however, was brushed aside by the delegates and no definite action on it was taken. Here again, the congress gave a correct lead on elementary labor policy to oncoming generations of worker fighters. The question of religion as such is, of course, of real concern to a Marxist Communist Party and the working class, but it could only have been a divisive issue in a broad mass organization, such as the I.W.A. Therefore, trade unions and other general mass economic and political bodies, while fighting against reactionary policies of the churches, have traditionally wisely refrained, as the Geneva congress did, from involving themselves in the philosophical or doctrinal aspects of religion. The churches would be only too eager to split the working class on the basis of religious belief.

Dealing with the armed forces of the respective nations, the congress went on record for the abolition of standing armies and for the establishment of people's militias – therewith giving another basic lead in policy to the developing world labor movement. The congress also sharply condemned the menace of Russian tsarism in Europe and called for "the reconstitution of Poland upon democratic and social foundations," "through enforcing the right of self-determination."

7. Growth: Lausanne and Brussels (1867-1868)

The period following the Geneva congress of 1866 was one of growth and political progress for the First International. It was a time of rising working-class struggle, particularly on the economic field. The sharp economic crisis of 1866 and its consequences provoked a wave of strikes during the next years in England, France, Belgium, Switzerland, and other countries. In these strikes the adherents of the International were very active, as a glance at the current minutes of the General Council reveals.

I.W.A. TRADE UNIONS AND STRIKES

The best known of the numerous strikes at this time was that of the Parisian bronze workers in February 1867. These workers had formed a union of some 1,500 members, whereupon the employers locked them out. The International came promptly to their aid. Under the lead of the General Council, the English unions sent more than £1000 to help the strikers. "As soon as the bosses saw this," said Marx, "they gave in."¹ This was a real victory for the bronze workers, and their union leaped to 4,000 members. "The effect of this was immense," remarks Postgate. "Trade unions sprang up all over France, and the economic struggle grew acute." The prestige of the International soared everywhere in Western Europe. This was well expressed by Assy, leader of the Creusot strikers in France, who, when brought to trial and asked if he were a member of the International, replied: "No, but I hope to be allowed to be."²

Other important European strikes were those of the London tailors, Geneva building trades workers, French silk workers, and the Charleroi coal miners. All these were occasions for strong rallies of support from the forces of the International. Most of the strikes resulted in victories for the workers. Especially was the solidarity effective in the case of English strikers. Postgate says that, "the supply of blacklegs [scabs] dried up at its source, and those already brought over were induced to desert."³ The strike of the Geneva building trades, resulting in a partial victory for the workers, attracted widespread international attention. And in far off America, the National Labor Union, in the rising trade union

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movement following the Civil War, led numerous important strikes.

THE INTERNATIONAL IN THE POLITICAL STRUGGLE

The I.W.A. not only gave active strike leadership, but also paid close attention to the political movement in the various countries. This struggle, too, was on an ascending scale, particularly in the fight for immediate legislative reforms. In North Germany, where the workers had secured the vote after the Austro-Prussian war of 1866, the forces led by Liebknecht and Bebel participated for the first time, on February 12, 1867, in the national elections to Parliament. The suffrage was in general a new weapon in the hands of European workers and its potentialities were as yet only beginning to be understood. In France, where in 1868, Emperor Napoleon III caused laws to be passed conceding the general male franchise and freedom of the press, the workers were making widespread use of their new liberties. Particularly in the broad political demonstrations of November 1867, the Paris workers displayed their rising militancy. In countries of more democracy, some achievements were to be registered, notably the passage in England of the Reform Act of 1867, which (later extended to Scotland and Ireland), gave urban English men workers the vote – however, leaving the rural proletariat and the women voteless. And in the United States there was a victory in the issuance of an Executive Order by President Grant in 1869 virtually establishing the 8-hour day in government institutions, which was made a law by Congress on May 18, 1872.⁴

The major general political campaign of the I.W.A., however, in the period 1866-69 was its fight against the looming danger of war. In 1866, the six weeks' war between Prussia and Austria broke out, resulting in the complete defeat of the latter. The General Council denounced this as a reactionary war, neither side of which was entitled to worker support. At this time war tension was developing fast between France and Germany. War clouds were also looming between the United States and Great Britain, as an aftermath of the Civil War. The General Council called upon American workers to protest against this threatening war.

From its beginnings, the International had sharply expressed itself against capitalist war. As we have seen, the General Council militantly fought against English participation in the American

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Civil War and condemned the Austro-Prussian war. The Geneva congress also dealt with war under its order of business respecting standing armies, and later both the Lausanne and Brussels congresses adopted anti-war resolutions.

The Brussels resolution was the more specific. After denouncing war as a great menace to the workers, it says: "The Congress of the International Workingmen's Association, assembled at Brussels, records its most emphatic protest against war; it invites all the sections of the Association, in their respective countries, and also all working class societies, and all workers' groups of whatever kind, to take the most vigorous action to prevent a war between the peoples, which today could not be considered anything else than a civil war, seeing that, since it would be waged between the producers, it would only be a struggle between brothers and citizens; the congress urges the workers to cease work should war break out in their respective countries."⁵

This resolution marked the beginning of the eventful long controversy in the international labor movement over the question of whether or not the general strike could be used effectively to halt war. The issue was to be raised again and again in international congresses. Marx, who opposed the concept, characterized as "nonsense" the formulation in the Brussels resolution.⁶

The anti-war discussion raised the question of the relationship of the I.W.A. to the League of Peace and Freedom, a petty-bourgeois pacifist organization. The League scheduled a peace congress for Geneva on September 9, 1867, right after the adjournment of the I.W.A. congress in Lausanne. In a letter to Engels on September 4, 1867, Marx sharply condemned "the windbags" of the League. Nevertheless, the Lausanne Congress (I.W.A.) accepted the League's invitation and sent three delegates – Guillaume, De Paepe, and Tolain – to attend its congress, there to read the Lausanne anti-war resolution. The following year, at Brussels, the I.W.A., again receiving a similar invitation from the League, rejected it and asked its members to join the International. This the League refused to do, however, lingering along to an unsung end.

In these economic and political struggles the International was laying the very foundations of the modern labor movement. At this time, in 1867, a great stride forward ideologically was also taken by the world's workers. This was in the publication, by

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Marx, of the historic Volume One of Capital. In this profound analysis of the capitalist system especially there is fully developed Marx's revolutionary theory of surplus value. A year later, the I.W.A. officially praised and endorsed Marx's great work and urged all members to study it.

THE CONGRESS OF LAUSANNE

The Lausanne congress of September 2-8, 1867, the second of the I.W.A., consisted of 71 delegates – among them 38 Swiss, 18 French, 6 German, 2 British, 2 Italian, 1 Belgian, and 4 members of the General Council (Carter, Dupont, Eccarius, and Lessner). Many sections, lacking funds, did not send delegates. The British “pure and simple” trade unionists mostly stayed away. Each section of the I.W.A. was entitled to one vote. Although keeping in close touch with what was going on, Marx did not attend the congress. For him, these were years of overwork, illness, poverty, and undernourishment.

The French and Swiss “mutualists,” or Proudhonists (see Chapter 5), were very active at the congress. As Mehring remarks, “they came well-prepared” and they made their opportunist and confusionist views felt throughout the gathering. Specifically, they managed to get resolutions passed deprecating strikes and endorsing their petty- bourgeois panaceas of people's banks and free worker credits.

An important and constructive action by the congress was the adoption of a resolution to the effect that all the means of transport and exchange should be owned by the State. This action, says Stekloff, “was the first concrete formulation of the idea of collective ownership of the means of production and exchange, and it foreshadowed the fierce struggle which was subsequently to rage around this question in the International.”⁷ A motion to nationalize the land, lacking support, was referred to the next congress.

Another important resolution, one which also foreshadowed later bitter struggles in the International, related to the fight for political reforms within the framework of the capitalist system. The point on the agenda read: “Is not the deprivation of political freedom a hindrance to the social emancipation of the workers, and one of the main causes of social disorder? How is it possible to hasten the re-establishment of political freedom?” The con-

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gress finally resolved by unanimous vote that, "considering that deprivation of political freedom is a hindrance to the social progress of the people and to the emancipation of the proletariat, [it] declares: 1. that the social emancipation of the workers cannot be effected without their political emancipation; 2. that the establishment of political liberty is absolutely essential as a preliminary step." This section of the resolution, which was somewhat confused in other respects, agreed with the general position that had been developed previously by Marx.

A major question discussed, too, by the congress, as we have seen, related to the current danger of war. After Lausanne, this basic issue was destined to be a permanent point on the agenda of the world's workers in all their congresses.

THE CONGRESS OF BRUSSELS

The third congress of the International was held in Brussels, September 6-15, 1868. The holding of the congress in this city was in itself a political event of real importance, showing the growing strength of the International, for Belgium was one of the most reactionary countries in Western Europe. The congress, the largest ever held by the International, was made up of 99 delegates, including 55 Belgians, 18 French, 7 Swiss, 5 British, 5 Germans, 2 Italians, 1 Spanish, and 6 from the General Council (Eccarius, Jung, Lessner, Lucroft, Shaw, and Stepney). Marx was not in attendance. The British still made up a majority of the General Council, but they displayed little interest in bringing a sizable delegation to the respective congresses.

The political center of the Brussels congress was the anti-war resolution previously referred to. Among other important matters dealt with, the question of strikes was reviewed and, after much discussion, the strike was recognized as a legitimate and inevitable weapon of the workers. Cooperatives were also re-endorsed, but with sharp criticism of the petty-bourgeois business spirit often shown in their operation.

On the question of machinery in industry, the congress, while stating that the workers must have a say regarding its introduction into factories, also registered a concession to the mutualists by declaring that, "only by means of cooperative societies and through the organization of mutual credit will the producer be able to gain possession of machinery." The Proudhonists also

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scored in the matter of mutual credit for workers. Despite strong opposition, they put the International again on record for the establishment of workers' exchange banks, which were "to free labor from the dominance of capital." "On this matter," says Stekloff, "the Proudhonists secured their last victory in the International."⁸

The Proudhonists suffered a major defeat, however, at the congress over the general attitude of the I.W.A. towards property, specifically property in land. Representing primarily the interests of the small shop-keepers and peasants, the mutualists strongly opposed the nationalization of the land, a question which had been referred from the Lausanne congress. However, at Brussels, by a vote of 130 to 4, with 15 abstentions, the congress adopted a resolution calling for not only the nationalization of the railways, but also of arable land, forests, canals, roads, telegraphs, etc. This was a decisive defeat for the mutualists. Despite the various deviations towards Proudhonism made at its three early congresses, the I.W.A., as Stekloff remarks, was always fundamentally a collectivist organization. This was largely because of the clear leadership given by Marx in its Inaugural Address and in many of its resolutions and practical policies. The communist, or collectivist, sentiment had been on the increase since the first congress in Geneva, and in Brussels it registered itself decisively. Thenceforth, the Proudhonists were to play a very minor role in the I.W.A. The first strong international opposition to Marxism in the labor movement had gone bankrupt.

INCREASING CAPITALIST ATTACK

Upon the founding of the International in September 1864 the capitalists of Europe displayed only a mild interest in the organization. The bourgeois press barely noted its establishment. The idea of an international organization of the workers was such a novel proposition that it was easy to underestimate its potentialities. Some of the more sober bourgeois elements, as the Liberals in England, the followers of Mazzini in Italy, as well as the reactionary Bonapartists in France, even believed they could make political use of the I.W.A.

But the bourgeois elements were soon undeceived, once the International got into action. Especially so on the industrial field. The early years of the I.W.A., as remarked, were a time of many

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strikes, and the International undoubtedly gave strong leadership and encouragement to them. This startled the employers, who for the first time confronted a real international solidarity among the workers of various countries. They were particularly disturbed when they saw an end being put to their international use of strike-breakers in Europe – a practice which they were never again able to revive on a significant scale.

The reactionary press was not slow to blame all the strikes and the political struggles of the period upon the International. They built it into a sort of political hobgoblin. Jaekkh says that, “The years from Geneva to Basle made the International a frightful secret power in the eyes of the bourgeoisie and the bearer of an approaching revolution in the eyes of the awakening proletariat.”⁹ Thenceforth, the press widely practiced a campaign of slander and distortion against the I.W.A., misrepresenting its every act.

In France the police of Napoleon III proceeded against the members of the International, who were mostly Proudhonists. The government claimed that the International, by engaging in political activities in France, had laid its members open to prosecution. Consequently, from March 1868, to June 1870, three mass convictions of I.W.A. members took place in Paris. These involved such well-known leaders as Tolain, Varlin, Frankel, Chemalé, Malon, Landrin, and many others. They got varying sentences, up to one year in prison.¹⁰ The International was outlawed in France. This was the beginning of the reactionary attack which, a few years later, finally illegalized the I.W.A. all over Europe.

GROWTH OF THE INTERNATIONAL

As a result of its economic and political activities, the International grew apace in the several countries. Nor could the increasing police persecution halt its progress. In this growth I.W.A. strike leadership was very important. In England the 1869 Trades Union Congress urged all unions to affiliate with the I.W.A., and many trade unions, appreciative of the work of the International, did so. In France, in 1869, there were an estimated 200,000 members of the International.¹¹ Lozovsky says that, “In all corners of France local unions, resistance societies, mutual aid societies, political groups, men and women workers on strike affiliated to the International Workingmen’s Association.”¹² In Belgium, following the coal and iron strikes there, “more than twenty” I.W.A.

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branches were formed in industrial centers "and some of them had several hundred members." And Stekloff states that a big increase in I.W.A. strength followed the successful strikes in Switzerland. "In Geneva alone, the number of members of the International grew by thousands. In addition several fresh trade unions affiliated."¹³ However, no reliable total figures of membership at this time are available.

In the United States, the International also had a strong following in the young trade union movement. The National Labor Union, from its foundation in 1866, was sympathetic to the I.W.A. Sylvis (1828-1869), Trelvellick, Jessup, Cameron, and others of its leaders were especially alarmed at the danger of the importation of strikebreakers from Europe and they wanted I.W.A. assistance. The scab menace had been accentuated by an Act of Congress of 1864, which permitted "employers to import laborers under contract and to check off transportation costs from wages."¹⁴ In 1867 the N.L.U. convention voted to have Richard F. Trelvellick go as a delegate to the Lausanne congress of the I.W.A., but because of the lack of funds he was unable to attend. In 1868 J. G. Eccarius, I.W.A. General Secretary, invited the N.L.U. to send a delegate to the Brussels congress,¹⁵ but the N.L.U. replied that it was financially unable to do so. In 1869, however, the N.L.U. did finally get to send a delegate to the I.W.A. The finances of the International itself also were on a very low level. Usually the General Secretary's meager salary and often the headquarters' rent were unpaid. The workers of the world were yet to learn the important labor discipline of solidly financing their movements through well-kept dues systems.

In this period not only was I.W.A. trade union membership growing, but also its political organization. The workers generally were taking the first tentative steps into independent political activity, breaking the tutelage of the left sections of the bourgeoisie. Sections of the International, made up of individual members, in contrast to the bloc membership of the trade unions, multiplied in many West European countries. A start was also made in the United States. In October 1867, the Communist Club of New York, founded in 1857 by F. A. Sorge and others, became a section of the International, and in 1869, the German General Workingmen's Union (Lassallean tendency) also affiliated to the International.¹⁶

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Meanwhile, distinct tendencies were beginning to develop for the formation of national workers' parties, which in later years were to become the basis of all labor political internationalism. The most important development in this respect was the political movement being cultivated at the time in Germany under the leadership of Wilhelm Liebknecht and August Bebel, which was to culminate in 1869 as the first mass Social-Democratic party. In the United States strong tendencies were also being evidenced towards independent working class political action. At its 1866 and 1867 conventions the National Labor Union went on record for the formation of a national labor party, and in 1868 steps were taken to put the short-lived National Labor Reform Party into the field. In England, however, the workers, although very active in trade union struggles, were showing very little sign as yet towards the formation of a Social-Democratic or Labor party. They still continued their alliance with the Liberal Party, a misconnection based on the current swift upward development of British capitalism.

8. Bakuninism: The Basle Congress (1869)

The fourth congress of the First International took place September 6-12, 1869, in Basle. The movement was definitely on an ascending scale. The wave of strikes was continuing, involving Welsh coal miners, Normandy textile workers, Lyons silk workers, Geneva building trades, and many other groups in England, Belgium, France, Holland, Switzerland, and the United States. In all these struggles adherents of the International stood in leading posts. Consequently, the I.W.A. continued its rapid growth. In 1870, the French police estimated the International's membership as: France 433,785; Switzerland 45,000; Germany 150,000; Austria-Hungary 100,000; Great Britain (250 branches) 80,000; Spain 2,728.¹ Fantastic newspaper estimates ran as high as 7,000,000 members. The real membership was far less than such figures, but no official statistics are at hand. In many localities a workers' press was rapidly developing. On the European continent there were in 1870 some 29 journals supporting the International.²

The Congress was made up of 76 delegates, as follows: France 26, Switzerland 22, Germany 10, Belgium 5, Austria 2, Spain 2, Italy 1, United States 1, and 7 members of the General Council. Again Marx was not present. The American delegate was W. C. Cameron, representing the National Labor Union. With very considerable exaggeration claiming to represent 800,000 members, Cameron told the congress, "Your friends in the new world recognize a common interest between the sons of labor the world over, and they trust the time is drawing nigh when their ranks shall present a united front."³ Cameron was especially interested in I.W.A. action to prevent the importation of scabs into the United States, and he succeeded in having an immigration bureau established by the International, but it played no great role.

All this indicated the strong support in the N.L.U. for affiliation to the International. After listening to Cameron, the N.L.U. convention of 1870 "declared its adhesion to the principles of the International Workingmen's Association and expect at no distant date to affiliate with it."⁴ But nothing came of this. Sylvis, a strong internationalist, had died in July 1869, and this was a heavy blow to N.L.U. affiliation. The General Council of the I.W.A., on August 18, 1869, sent a letter of condolence to the N.L.U., signed among others by Marx, highly praising Sylvis as a fighter for labor and mourning his

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loss.⁵ In December 1869, the newly-formed Colored National Labor Union also voted to send a delegate to the 1870 congress of the I.W.A., but, as we shall see, this congress never took place.⁶

THE EISENACHERS

An important development at the Basle congress of the International was the appearance there of a strong German delegation of ten members, among them Liebknecht, Rittinghausen, Becker, and Hess. They represented the Social-Democratic Workers Party, the first genuine Socialist party to affiliate with the International. This organization, led chiefly by Liebknecht and Bebel, had been formed at Eisenach, Germany, a month earlier, in August 1869, after several years of preparatory work. The new party was generally called the "Eisenachers."

Wilhelm Liebknecht (1826-1900), was born in Giessen, Germany, and was a teacher. He early became a republican and took an active part in the German Revolution of 1848. Jailed and exiled from Germany several times, he worked for 13 years in London with Marx, becoming a developed Communist. Liebknecht returned to Germany in 1861, and at once became active in the young labor movement. He became the outstanding leader of the German working class. A co-worker with Lassalle, Liebknecht, father of Karl Liebknecht, wrote many pamphlets and books, and was long a member of the Reichstag.

August Bebel (1840-1913) was born near Cologne, Germany, the son of a non-commissioned officer in the Prussian army. He became a wood turner, and affiliated himself to the Lassalle organization. In close association with Liebknecht, Bebel became a Marxist. Both of them actively opposed the Austro-Prussian war of 1866. A brilliant orator, Bebel won a wide following. His most noted book is *Women and Socialism*. Together with Liebknecht, he was instrumental in bringing about the amalgamation of workers' organizations at Eisenach, which was the beginning of the German Social-Democracy. For over forty years Bebel stood at the head of the German Social-Democratic Party.

The revolutionary spirit of the young Socialist party was illustrated by a public speech made by Liebknecht in 1869, for which he was sent to jail. He said: "Socialism is no longer a question of theory, but simply a question of power. It cannot be settled in Parliament, but only on the streets, on the battlefield, like every

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other question of power.”⁷

The launching of the Social-Democratic Workers Party at Eisenach did not, however, unite the German working class. Lassalle's organization, the General Union of German Workers, with its panacea of state-subsidized cooperatives, still persisted, under the leadership of Schweitzer, who had become head of the organization upon the death of Lassalle. Between the two groupings were bitter quarrels, with Marx frequently intervening against Schweitzer as a “sectarian.” The Lassalleans, who had a considerable following in Germany, Austria, Bohemia, and the United States, held aloof from participating in the International.⁸

BAKUNIN ENTERS THE I.W.A.

Another most important event at the Basle congress was the coming of Bakunin as a delegate (see Chapter 5 for his general background and program). Bakunin first met Marx in 1864, and promised his support to the International. Instead of giving this backing, however, he set about building a separate organization in Italy. He later went to Switzerland, there joined the bourgeois League for Peace and Freedom, and was elected a member of its central executive committee. In 1868 he split off from the League, but in place of joining the International, he and his friends established the International Social-Democratic Alliance, commonly known as the “Alliance.”⁹

In the Alliance, Bakunin developed his ultra-revolutionary program. It declared an immediate, all-out war against God and the State; demanded the abolition of all religious cults and the establishment of a rule of science; “the political, economic, and social equality of the classes” [not their abolition]; the abolition of the right of inheritance; the rejection of “every kind of political action except such as aims immediately and directly at the triumph of the cause of the workers in their struggle with capital,” and the “voluntary universal association of all the local associations.”¹⁰ To achieve this program, Bakunin put the main stress upon the intelligentsia, the student group, and the lumpen, or degenerated, proletariat. He condemned almost the whole working class as being a conservative labor aristocracy.

Sparing no words, Marx strongly attacked the Bakunin program. He called it “an olla podrida of worn out platitudes, an empty rigmarole, a rosary of pretentious notions to make the flesh

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creep, a banal improvisation aiming at nothing more than a temporary effect.”¹¹ And with even more vigor, “His program was a hash superficially scraped together from the Right and the Left – EQUALITY OF CLASSES (!), abolition of the right of inheritance as the starting point of the social movement (St. Simonist nonsense), atheism as a dogma dictated to the members, etc.”¹²

In general, the Alliance developed strength in the less industrialized countries – Italy, Spain, France, French Switzerland, etc., where its predecessor, the Proudhonist movement, had been strong and it also branched out into Russia and the United States. The times were propitious for such a movement as Bakunin’s. The general political situation in Europe was highly unsettled, the capitalist class gradually pushing aside the political rubbish of feudalism in its march to power, with the rapidly growing working class tentatively fighting its way to a class program and organization. With the workers generally still very undeveloped ideologically and inexperienced in class struggle tactics, it was easy for many of them to believe in Bakunin’s short-cut methods to emancipation.

Bakunin and his co-workers, noting the rapid growth of the International among the masses and sensing that it would be a fruitful field for their agitation, applied in December 1868, for the admission to the International of their Alliance as a whole. To this, however, the General Council refused to agree. Proposing that his Alliance members should come into the I.W.A. as sections, Bakunin also agreed to liquidate the Alliance. In reality, however, it continued to exist and function in various countries. It was a semi-secret body, with an inner controlling organization of especially trusted militants.

MARXISTS AND BAKUNINISTS AT BASLE

Bakunin came to the congress as a member of the French delegation, specifically representing the silk workers of Lyons. A militant and very capable fighter, he lost no time in making his presence felt. Bakunin, however, found himself voting with the Marxists on the question of the right of society to make the land collective property. The remnants of the Proudhonists had again raised this elementary question, so important to them, only to be voted down overwhelmingly. Another important question upon which there was no marked factional division in the congress dealt with

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trade unionism. The congress unanimously adopted a resolution which strongly stressed the need of the trade unions and of international ties between them. The resolution charged the General Council, to work for “an international organization of the trade unions” – a goal which was not to be achieved for a full half century.¹³ In presenting the committee’s report, the French delegate, Pindy, outlined a picture of the trade unions eventually constituting the structure of the new society after capitalism. With this report, another sect, or ideological deviation, that was to become very troublesome – anarcho-syndicalism – was born into the International.

The major clashes between the Marxists and Bakuninists in the congress took place over two points. The first occurred when the Swiss delegates, with the support of Liebknecht and other Germans, proposed that the congress go on record in favor of direct legislation by the people (initiative and referendum). This contravened one of the principles of the Bakuninists – that of no partial political reforms – and they attacked it violently. The matter was eventually laid over for further discussion, but in the press of business it never came up again. The incident created much factional tension in the congress.

The second big clash came over the question of the right of inheritance. This was one of Bakunin’s favorite tenets, and he submitted it in resolution form to the congress, demanding that the delegates go on record for the immediate and complete abolition of the right of inheritance. The liquidation of this right was in fact presented virtually as the revolution itself. In *The Communist Manifesto*, written over 20 years earlier, Marx had placed the question in the sense that the proletariat after gaining power, “will use its political supremacy to wrest, by degrees, all capital from the bourgeoisie, to centralize all instruments of production in the hands of the STATE, i.e., of the proletariat organized as the ruling class...” As means to the accomplishment of this expropriation and social reorganization, the Manifesto then proposed ten transitional measures, of which the third on the list was the “Abolition of all right of inheritance.” The General Council presented its report to the congress along this general line. It pointed out that the right of inheritance, being an outcome and not the cause of the capitalist system, could not be made the starting point for the abolition of capitalism and that any attempt to do so would be both wrong in theory and reactionary in practice. After a long and

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bitter debate, the vote was: General Council resolution: for 19, against 37, abstentions 6, absent 13; Bakunin resolution: for 32, against 23, abstentions 13, absent 7.¹⁴ This victory for Bakunin made his Alliance thenceforth the rallying center for all oppositional elements in the International.

THE IRISH QUESTION

Although the matter did not come officially before the Basle congress at this time, the Irish question was playing an important role in the life of the International. It became the occasion for the development of policy concerning the relations between colonial countries and oppressing powers, which, down to the present day, has the greatest importance for the world labor movement.

For seven hundred years the Irish people had been waging a defensive struggle against the determination of the English ruling classes completely to subjugate Ireland. During the centuries this had led to many uprisings, some of the more important of which in later times were those of 1641, 1798, 1848, and 1867. And Ireland was fated to experience several more, including those of 1916 and 1921, before it was finally able to achieve, in 1923, its present partial and disrupted independence.¹⁵ The Irish question was especially catapulted into political attention during the period we are dealing with in the aftermath of the killing of a policeman in Manchester during an attempt by the Fenian organization to rescue Irish political prisoners. For this, three Fenian leaders – Allen, Larkin and O'Brien – were executed on November 23, 1867.

Since the days of the Chartists, Marx had associated himself with the demand for Irish independence. In 1866 he had the General Council send a delegation to Sir George Grey, Secretary for State, to protest against the outrages being practiced upon the Irish people, but the delegation was not received.¹⁶ And in 1869 he was instrumental in having the General Council actively support the current movement for the amnesty of Irish political prisoners.¹⁷ Odger, Applegarth, and other conservative English trade union leaders very equivocally supported Marx's general line regarding Ireland. Marx said that, following the discussions late in 1869, "the task of the International is everywhere to put the conflict between England and Ireland in the foreground, and everywhere to side openly with Ireland."¹⁸

In his long handling of the Irish question, Marx became con-

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vinced that "Ireland is the bulwark of the English landed aristocracy," and that "Ireland is therefore the great means by which the English aristocracy maintains its domination in England itself." He pointed out the deadly weakness of labor caused by the split between Irish and English workers over the Irish question, stating that the English worker "cherishes religious, social, and national prejudices against the Irish worker," and that "the Irish worker pays him back with interest in his own coin." Marx concluded, and the General Council so decided, that "The special task of the Central Council in London is to awaken the English workers to a realization of the fact that for them the national emancipation of Ireland is no question of abstract justice or humanitarian sentiment but the first condition of their own emancipation."¹⁹

The basic policy that Marx worked out on the Irish question obviously is essentially valid in our own times in the struggle of the colonial peoples, backed by the workers in the capitalist countries, against imperialism. (See Chapter 34.) Half a century later, Lenin praised this policy highly. In an article on the self-determination of nations, Lenin showed that the policy of Marx and Engels on the Irish question furnished a powerful example, which has retained its highly practical significance up to the present day, of the attitude which the proletariat of oppressing nations must adopt towards nationalist movements.²⁰

OUTBREAK OF THE FRANCO-PRUSSIAN WAR

The ten months between the Basle congress and the beginning of the Franco-Prussian war were a period of high hopes and steady growth for the International. In its various documents and congress resolutions the organization had succeeded in developing the basis of a general program; it had entrenched itself in practically every country of Western and Middle Europe; and the labor movements in the various countries were surging ahead, having definitely reached the stage of national organization in at least three lands – Great Britain, Germany, and the United States. The fight between the Bakuninists and Marxists, after the clash at the Basle congress, was flaring up in Switzerland, but this was not yet serious enough to cripple the I.W.A.

It was a period of strong revolutionary hope and expectancy in the ranks of the International. There was a bourgeois revolutionary ferment in Italy, Spain, France, and other European coun-

BAKUNINISM: THE BASLE CONGRESS

tries, and the workers were in a mood of rising militancy. The Bakuninists believed that the social revolution was knocking on the door, and they had the deepest scorn for everything in the nature of reform. At this time, especially in the late 1860's, Marx also anticipated early major proletarian revolutionary developments, but, a keen realist, this did not prevent him from encouraging every struggle of the workers for immediate demands on both the economic and political fields. The substantial growth of the International greatly stimulated the current widespread hopes for a revolution led by the workers.

After Basle the war clouds between France and Prussia began to thicken. Both Bonaparte and Bismarck wanted war, and they each maneuvered to get it. The adventurer Bonaparte, realizing the shaky position of the Second Empire, no doubt calculated that the way to infuse it with a new lease on life would be through a successful war of aggression against his German neighbors to the East; that this would give him control of the west bank of the Rhine. The wily Prussian chancellor, Bismarck, also planned and prepared for the war. In line with his policy of "blood and iron," he schemed to help himself to the territory of France, knowing full well that through a war against that country he could unite the scattered German statelets into one all-inclusive German state. The latter was historically a progressive bourgeois task, which in the Revolution of 1848 the German capitalists could have accomplished but left undone.

Bismarck's strategy was to throw upon Bonaparte the responsibility for initiating the war, which the German chancellor succeeded in doing. By falsifying a conciliatory telegram from Wilhelm I to Bonaparte, Bismarck provoked France into declaring war. On July 19, 1870, the two governments got their wish, and the war began. The struggle was destined to have profound political consequences. By unifying Germany, it transformed that country into the leading power in Europe, destined before long to outstrip England in industrial production; and by bringing about therewith a powerful growth of the German proletariat, the war also eventually put the organized German workers, for half a century, in the leadership of the world labor movement. An immediate effect of the war was to speed up the operation of a chain of events, in connection with the Paris Commune, which were finally to lead to the break-up of the First International.

9. The Paris Commune (1871)

The General Council of the I.W.A. had long been warning the workers against the danger of a Franco-German war and when the gathering conflict suddenly burst forth, the Council four days later, July 29, 1870, put out a manifesto calling for international solidarity of the workers. Written by Marx, the manifesto laid the blame for the war upon the rulers of both France and Germany. While it said that Germany had been placed on the defensive in the war, with reactionary Russia looming on its eastern frontiers, it warned the German workers against the danger of the war becoming one of conquest. Marx also stated that whatever the outcome of the war, it would mark the end of the Second Empire in France, as it did.

In the various countries the workers displayed high qualities of internationalism. In Germany, Liebknecht and Bebel voted in parliament against the war credits, and went to jail for it (the Lassalleans, however, voted for the credits), and big meetings of German workers were "happy to grasp the fraternal hand stretched out to us by the workmen of France."¹ In France a similar international spirit prevailed, the workers pledging their "indissoluble solidarity" with the workers of Germany.² Among the immigrant workers in the United States also, the General Council's anti-war manifesto was circulated far and wide, and joint meetings of French and German workers were held to protest the war.³

Meanwhile, the war had disrupted the organizational procedure of the International. The next congress had been set for Paris, on September 5, 1870; but in view of the prevailing political persecutions in France, the congress place was later shifted to Mainz, Germany. The outbreak of the war, however, forced the cancellation of this arrangement.

The war was brought to a swift climax by the better-prepared German forces. The French armies suffered one catastrophic defeat after another. In six weeks the field phase of the war was over. On September 2, 1870, at Sedan, Bonaparte unconditionally surrendered himself and his army.

THE FRENCH REPUBLIC ESTABLISHED

When news of the Sedan debacle reached Paris the people rose and, on September 4, 1870, they overthrew the Bonaparte

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regime and set up a republic. The new Assembly, elected February 8, 1871, was made up, however, of about two-thirds Royalists and one-third bourgeois Republicans, with a few petty-bourgeois radicals thrown in to make things more palatable to the working class. This whole development spurred the Bakuninists into action, and during the next several weeks they tried vainly to carry through successful uprisings in Paris, Lyons, Marseilles, Brest, and other cities against the new government. The Blanquists also pushed for an insurrection. For a few hours, on October 31, 1870, Blanqui was in control of Paris, but he had to give it up.

On September 9, 1870, the General Council of the I.W.A. issued another manifesto, also written by Marx.* In this document Marx pointed out that the so-called war of defense on the part of Germany had become definitely a war of conquest, the determination of Bismarck to seize the French provinces of Alsace and Lorraine having become clear. Marx warned that if this were done, it would surely lead eventually to another "defensive war" as it, in fact, did with terrific force in 1914. The manifesto urged the German workers to oppose the proposed annexation and to demand an honorable peace with France. It warned the French workers to be on guard against the treacherous French bourgeoisie and to use every opportunity to strengthen their own class forces. In general, Marx and Engels felt that the time was unripe for a revolutionary overthrow of the reactionary republican government, such as both Bakunin and Blanqui were striving for.⁴

The German army was at the walls of Paris, investing the city. Bismarck hesitated to attack Paris, however, because reportedly there were some 200,000 well-armed troops (an exaggeration) within it, and he well knew the revolutionary fighting spirit of the Parisian proletariat. The Paris troops, mostly the National Guard, made up chiefly of workers, had elected a Central Committee of 25 members, on February 15,⁵ and it largely controlled besieged Paris. The National Guard was especially on the alert against a *coup d'état* by the Thiers government, which, fearing the revolutionary proletariat, was eager to turn the city over to the Ger-

* In 1869 Engels quit his business in Manchester, England, where he had been since 1864, and thenceforth he worked closely with Marx, largely financing the latter.

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mans. The government signed an armistice (surrender) on February 26, in which it agreed to give up Paris.

BIRTH OF THE COMMUNE

With the aim of forcing rebellious Paris to surrender, Thiers, at three o'clock in the morning of March 18, had his troops under General Vinoy attempt to seize the 250 cannon of the National Guard. The plan was succeeding until besieged, famine-stricken Paris woke up and went into action. With women taking the lead, the people, by fraternization and direct attacks, halted the seizure. By eleven o'clock Thiers' troops were completely defeated and the city was in the hands of the people. Two government generals were killed in the fighting. The red flag floated on the Hotel de Ville, and the Central Committee of the National Guard was acting as the provisional government.⁶ "The proletarians of Paris," declared the Central Committee, "amidst the failures and treasons of the ruling classes, have understood that the hour has struck for them to save the situation by taking into their own hands the direction of public affairs."⁷

The basic organized forces which led in the insurrection were the Blanquists. They were said to number 4,000 organized armed men, with a large body of sympathizers.⁸ Blanqui himself was arrested by the government the night before the uprising, on March 17, and was held in jail all through the life of the Commune. The Marxist Internationalists, who were still few in numbers in Paris, had not planned for an uprising, but when it began they took a very active part in it.

Based on universal male suffrage, the Commune was a legislative and executive body. All its members were subject to recall. The general model was Paris, and the revolutionary plan was to have such communes throughout all the cities, towns, and hamlets of France. All were to send representatives to the National Delegation in Paris. Marx says, the system "brought the rural producers under the intellectual lead of the central towns in their districts, and secured to them, in the working men, the natural trustees of their interests"⁹ – a clear recognition of the leading revolutionary role of the proletariat.

The fundamental weakness of the Commune was that the workers had no party and no program; the revolution and the government coming out of the struggle were all improvised. What

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should have been done, already on the 18th, was for the Central Committee acting in the name of the people, to arrest the Thiers government leaders, who were in Paris that day, and then march upon Versailles, the seat of the reactionary government. That government's forces were greatly demoralized by the insurrection, and Thiers later admitted that if an attack had been made promptly they could not have withstood it. Unfortunately, however, they were allowed precious time to reorganize their forces, a fact which became disastrous later on for the Commune. The Central Committee temporized and had conscientious objection to launching a civil war,¹⁰ while in fact the Thiers reactionaries, by their attack on Paris, had already opened the civil war. The Central Committee, uncertain of its own authority, prepared for the holding of local elections. Meanwhile, short-lived insurrections were taking place in other French cities – Lyons, Saint Etienne, Creusot, Marseilles, Toulouse, and Narbonne. Bakunin entered into the revolt in Lyons and wrecked it.¹¹

The elections of March 26, supplemented by further voting on April 15, elected 92 Councillors, who constituted the Commune of Paris. An Executive Committee of nine was chosen, made up of the heads of the various departments: War, Finance, Subsistence, Exterior, Labor, Justice, Public Services, Information, and General Security. The Blanquists and Neo-Jacobins held a majority in the Commune; there was also a considerable group of Proudhonists, some eighteen Marxist Internationalists, and a few of miscellaneous opinion. The Commune was based on a revolutionary alliance between the proletariat and the city petty bourgeoisie, with the workers in the lead. By this time, most of the big bourgeoisie had fled the city, leaving the factories standing idle, with 300,000 workers unemployed.

On April 19 the Commune published its first statement of program. This stayed within the framework of a bourgeois democratic revolution. The program demanded, "The recognition and the consolidation of the Republic, and the absolute autonomy of the Commune extended at all places in France, thus assuring to each the integrity of its rights, and to each Frenchman the full exercise of his faculties and aptitudes as a man, a citizen, and a producer." It then went on to specify needed civil rights. It said further that, "The political unity, as desired by Paris, is a voluntary association of all local initiative, the free and spontaneous coop-

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eration of all individual energies with the common object of the well-being, liberty, and security of the people.”¹² The stress upon local autonomy was partly a reaction against the crass dictatorship under the Second Empire and partly a reflection of the anarchist (Proudhon, Bakunin) ideas then widely current among the French working class.

THE INTERNATIONAL AND THE COMMUNE

In its manifesto of September 9, 1870, written by Marx, the General Council of the I.W.A. had warned the French workers of the “desperate folly” of an attempt at that time to overthrow the new bourgeois republic. But when the insurrection took place, Marx, as a real revolutionist, gave it every possible support. Writing to Kugelmann three weeks after the revolution began, Marx declared that “the present rising in Paris – even if it be crushed by the wolves, swine, and vile curs of the old society – is the most glorious deed of our Party since the June insurrection in Paris.”¹³ He declared that the Parisians were “storming heaven.”

Long afterward, Lenin compared favorably Marx’s attitude to Plekhanov’s in a similar situation. Plekhanov, who opposed the 1905 revolution in Russia, shamefully declared after the heroic struggle that, “They should not have resorted to arms.”¹⁴ But Marx, although he had opposed the revolt beforehand, gave it militant support once it began. On May 30, 1871, two days after the fall of the Commune, he put out an address in the name of the General Council, in defense of the Commune, one of the greatest of all Marxist works, *The Civil War in France*. This historic document was endorsed by all the Council members, except Odger and Lucroft, English labor leaders, who resigned rather than sign it. Marx signed it as the Corresponding Secretary of Germany and Holland, and Engels for Belgium and Spain.

Under the direct inspiration and leadership of Marx and Engels, the various sections of the International gave all possible aid to the embattled Commune. In Paris the Internationalists were very active. Stekloff lists among them, all elected members of the Commune: Varlin, Malon, Jourdes, Avrail, Pindy, Assy, Duval, Theiss, Lefrancais, Frankel, Longuet, Serail, and Johannard.¹⁵ They were active not only in the Commune committees but also in the growing civil war. They were responsible for much of the constructive legislation and action developed by the Commune. The

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many revolutionary European exiles in Paris also actively participated and were given high posts in the Commune, Dombrowski, a Pole, becoming military commander of Paris.¹⁶

In England the rank-and-file workers hailed the Commune, even though their opportunist trade union leaders in the General Council, save Applegarth, turned tail on the great revolutionary struggle. In Germany both the Eisenachers and the Lassalleans supported the Commune, in the face of a strong reactionary capitalist opposition. And in the United States the Commune evoked support far and wide among the working masses, notwithstanding the utter misrepresentation of it made by the bourgeois press, and the constant attempts of the American Ambassador to France, Washburn, to destroy it.¹⁷ The Workingmen's Advocate and other labor papers printed the statements of the General Council. Among the prominent American figures who justified the Commune was General Ben Butler, and on August 15, 1871, Marx told the General Council that Wendell Phillips, the Abolitionist and friend of labor, had become a member of the International. For many years afterward the memory of the heroic Paris Commune was a vivid tradition in American working class circles.¹⁸

THE WORK OF THE COMMUNE

The Paris Commune suffered from many weaknesses and handicaps, including internal dissensions among the various factional groupings and isolation from the rest of France. The lack of a clear-cut program and a solidly organized political party also hung like a millstone around the neck of the Commune from the first to the last. Moreover, the Commune, which existed only 72 days, had to operate in the face of a developing civil war. Although fighting for its life desperately, the Commune nevertheless had many constructive achievements to its credit, enough to write its name imperishably in the revolutionary history of the world's working class and for it to stand out as a veritable light-house to guide the workers along the way to socialism.

Among its major political decisions, the Commune proclaimed the separation of Church and State, abolished subsidies to the Church, did away with the standing army in favor of a people's militia, stripped the police of political attributes, made all functionaries strictly responsible to the electorate, setting 6,000 francs per year as the top limit for salaries, elected and controlled

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all judges and magistrates, established free and general education, burned the guillotine, and tore down the Vendome column as a symbol of militarism. There were also many economic-social measures adopted – the abolition of night work in bakeries, the cancellation of employer fines in workshops, the closing of pawnshops, the seizure of closed workshops, which were to be operated by workers' cooperatives, the organization of relief for the enormous mass of unemployed, the establishment of a bureau of labor statistics; it also rationed dwellings and gave assistance to debtors. All this work was infused with an intense spirit of internationalism, and the Committee had as its flag the red banner of the world revolutionary movement.

Besides its achievements, the Commune suffered from many mistakes and shortcomings. One of these of major importance, already mentioned, was the failure at the outset to push the war vigorously against the reactionary Versailles government. Another was a too tolerant attitude towards the internal enemy, which hindered the hunt for bourgeois spies and traitors, with which Paris reeked, and also left the door open for serious treachery and disruptive action among the officer corps. Also the Commune did not try energetically enough to reach out to the other parts of France and especially to win the peasantry to its cause – a most serious weakness. Another error was the failure to publish the secret state archives dating back to 1789, which fell into the hands of the Commune and were full of the corruption and rottenness of the secret police, the diplomats, the capitalists, and their politicians. Its publication would have been a heavy blow against reaction and an invaluable document.¹⁹

But the most curious mistake was the failure of the Commune to confiscate the three billion francs held by the Bank of France. Instead, the Blanquist and Proudhonist leaders, forgetting their erstwhile pledges and voting down those who wanted to seize the bank, dealt diplomatically with the bank functionaries for loans. All told, the Commune heads got only some 16,700,000 francs; 9,400,000 of which belonged to Paris anyhow, the rest being a loan of 7,290,000 francs – a loan which the bank director first had Thiers endorse before he would make it.²⁰ The seizure of the bank would have dealt a heavy blow to the shaky Versailles regime.

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THE COMMUNE OVERTHROWN

By the beginning of April the civil war was raging. The Communards, or Federalists, fought a brave but losing battle. The Thiers forces, on the basis of monstrous lies and distortions, had lined up most of peasant France against the Commune. Bismarck also released 100,000 French peasant prisoners-of-war to help the Versailles government.²¹ On May 21 the Versailles troops entered Paris and for eight days a bloody struggle took place, with the Communards backing up street by street in the face of heavy odds. On May 28 their last resistance was wiped out in Pere la Chaise cemetery and in Belleville and various other working class districts. The Commune was crushed.

The next few days were days of ruthless butchery. General de Gallifet and his fellow murderers cold-bloodedly shot down at least 30,000 working class men, women, and children. About 45,000 more were arrested. Of these some 15,000 were executed or sent to prison, and hundreds more were exiled to New Caledonia.

The slaughter was far worse even than after the defeat of the June insurrection in Paris in 1848. Tens of thousands of Communards also had to flee the country to Switzerland, to England, and most of all, to the United States. To provide assistance for these exiles was a big job for the I.W.A. in Europe. It was one of the Communard exiles, Eugene Pottier, who in June 1871 penned the immortal words of the great battle song of the world's workers, *The International*.

Behind the barricades, in the bloody struggle and in the spectacular political trials which followed it, the women Communards especially covered themselves with glory. Louise Michel and Elisabeth Dmitrieff were but two noted fighters among thousands of heroines. Before the court, Michel proudly declared, "I belong entirely to the revolution and I wish to accept the responsibility for all my deeds."²² Convicted, she spent ten years in prison exile.

The reactionary rulers of Europe exulted over the wholesale massacres in Paris. They poured in messages of congratulation to the monster Thiers, and they put in motion repressive measures designed to wipe out socialism in their own countries. In France, particularly, says Lenin, "The bourgeoisie were satisfied. 'Now we have finished with socialism for a long time,' said their leader, the

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blood-thirsty dwarf, Thiers, after the bloodbath which he and his generals had given the proletariat of Paris. But these bourgeois crows cawed in vain. Six years after the suppression of the Commune, when many of its fighters were still pining in prison, or in exile, a new workers' movement rose in France."²³

HISTORICAL ROLE OF THE COMMUNE

The Paris Commune taught many great lessons to the world's workers, which are still valid today. Above all others, Lenin understood and drew these lessons most completely. Outstanding among them is the indispensable need of the workers in all countries for a strong, clear-seeing, and disciplined Communist Party, as Marx so strongly insisted, to lead them along the long and difficult road to socialism. Even in a situation where the capitalist government was so rotten that the power fell into the hands of the workers practically without a struggle, as in Paris on March 18, 1871, still the workers could not go on, even from there, without a strong political organization. This was one of the decisive lessons of the Commune, and it completely repudiated the Bakunin contention that a political party was not necessary and that mass spontaneity would suffice.

Another elementary lesson of the Commune was that it provided the basic form of the new society that is to replace capitalism, as Marx pointed out. The close relationship of the organizational form of the Commune and that of the future Russian Soviets is unmistakable. Yet for almost half a century the real significance of the Commune was virtually lost sight of, even by Marxists, until finally Lenin retaught them its meaning.

Of fundamental importance, too, was the clear demonstration given by the experience of the Paris Commune that, after the workers had defeated the capitalists and won political power, they would have to set up a state of their own, although a new type of state, in order, by armed force, to hold in repression the counter-revolutionary forces of capitalism and also to organize to lay the basis of the new society. The Commune also taught, that the "withering away of the state" would be a much more protracted process than was generally contemplated by Marxists, though this lesson, too, was practically ignored for decades. Especially was all this in sharp contradiction to the Bakunin anarchist nonsense that mere spontaneity would provide sufficient organization once

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capitalism had been overthrown.

The Commune also made clear that the way to power for the workers of Europe in the existing circumstances was by the forceful overthrow of the prevailing ultra-reactionary political regimes, which denied the workers every semblance of democracy. But Marx did not make a dogma of this important fact. He also recognized, as indicated in Chapter 2, that in Great Britain and the United States, where there were more advanced types of bourgeois democracy, the possibility existed at that time (in the pre-imperialist period) for the workers to make a peaceful advance to socialism.

The Commune taught, too, that the bourgeoisie would not hesitate to betray the nation in its own class interests. As the feudal reactionaries in the great French Revolution of 1789 had joined with enemies abroad to fight revolutionary France, so did the reactionaries of 1871 join hands with Bismarck against the Commune.

Another lesson of the Commune, greatly stressed by Marx and also later by Lenin, was the fact that the workers, once in power, could not adapt the bourgeois state to their revolutionary needs. In his letter to Kugelmann, April 17, 1871, Marx said, "If you look at the last chapter of my *Eighteenth Brumaire*, you will find that I say that the next attempt of the French Revolution will be no longer, as before, to transfer the bureaucratic-military machine from one hand to the other, but to *smash* it; and this is essential for every real people's revolution on the Continent."²⁴ This was precisely what the Commune was doing in building its new type of workers' state. The general conclusion was later on to be of great importance in the fight against the opportunists, who believed that the workers could transform the capitalist regime bit-by-bit into socialism.

A most vital lesson taught by the Paris Commune, was the practical living demonstration it gave of the dictatorship of the proletariat. In this respect, the Commune was a brilliant demonstration of the soundness of the position of Marx, who already in *The Communist Manifesto*, 24 years earlier, had definitely outlined the revolutionary dictatorship of the proletariat. By the same token, the Commune repudiated the contentions of the anarchists, who were inveterate enemies of rule by the working class, which is the dictatorship of the proletariat.

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The Commune was not made up exclusively of workingmen. In fact, as Lissagaray and Jaekh point out and as Lenin agrees, "the majority of the government consisted of representatives of petty-bourgeois democracy."²⁵ Many of these were revolutionary intellectuals. Of the 92 members of the Commune, only some 25 were workers, and not all of these were members of the International. Nevertheless, with the Parisian working class in full action, the influence of the proletariat predominated. Marx thus puts the situation: "The majority of its members were naturally workingmen, or acknowledged representatives of the working class."²⁶

The Commune also did not have, as we have remarked above, a definitely socialist program. Nevertheless, its socialist trend was implicit. Marx says, "Yes, gentlemen, the Commune intended to abolish that class property which makes the labor of the many the wealth of the few. It aimed at the expropriation of the expropriators."²⁷ He also states that its decisions "bore distinctly a proletarian character." Lenin characterized the Commune "as a popular workers' government," and he declared, that "The Commune tried to carry out what we now call 'the minimum program of socialism.'"²⁸

The Commune was, indeed, the dictatorship of the proletariat. Marx said, "It was essentially a working class government, the product of the struggle of the producing against the expropriating class, the political form at last discovered under which to work out the economic emancipation of labor," and he also said that "The glorious workingmen's revolution of the 18th of March took undisputed sway in Paris."²⁹ Later on, Engels, addressing German "Social-Democratic philistines," declared, "Well and good, gentlemen, do you want to know what this dictatorship looks like? Look at the Paris Commune. That was the dictatorship of the proletariat."³⁰

The Paris Commune, despite its ultimate overthrow, was the first real revolutionary success of the world's working class. It made the initial dent in the capitalist system, which the great Russian revolution, half a century later, was to follow up by smashing a vast, irreparable breach through the walls of world capitalism. Lenin said that, with all its errors, the Commune was "the greatest example of the greatest proletarian movement of the nineteenth century."³¹

10. The Split at the Hague Congress (1872)

Following the downfall of the Paris Commune, the International found itself under increasing persecution in various European countries. The Commune had given the ruling classes a real fright and they were resolved, if possible, to prevent a similar recurrence. The bourgeois press everywhere launched a wild attack against the International. At the Hague congress of the I.W.A. Marx said that, "all the floodgates of calumny which the mercenary bourgeois press had at its disposal were suddenly thrown open and let loose a cataclysm of defamation designed to engulf the hated foe. This campaign of calumny does not possess its match in history.... After the great fire in Chicago, the news was sent around the world by telegram that this fire was the hellish act of the International."¹

In 1871 France passed a law making it a crime to belong to the International and it demanded that all countries should turn over to it the Communard exiles as common criminals. In the same year Holland made an appropriation of 3,000,000 gulden to check the spread of communism. In Germany, Bebel and Liebknecht, who had protested against the annexation of Alsace-Lorraine and declared their solidarity with the Commune, were arrested and sentenced to two years in a fortress. In Spain, Italy, Belgium, and elsewhere hysterical police persecutions were heaped upon the Internationalists. Early in 1872 the Spanish government appealed to other governments to cooperate in suppressing the International.² The Pope added his voice to the cry for revenge, and in 1873 Russia, Germany, and Austria-Hungary signed a mutual agreement to fight the International. They tried also to involve England, but failed.³

THE INTERNAL CRISIS

More dangerous to the International, however, than this police persecution was the internal crisis that ever more deeply involved the organization after the end of the Commune. The substance of this was the growing battle between the Marxists and Bakuninists; between the Alliance, led by Bakunin, and the forces behind the General Council, led by Marx. As we have seen in the previous chapter, the Marxists could well claim that the Commune had endorsed their general political line, but the

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Bakuninists argued violently to the contrary. They insisted that the spontaneous uprising of the workers of Paris and other French cities repudiated Marx's conceptions and generally supported the philosophy of spontaneity propagated by Bakunin. The Bakuninists were encouraged to re-double their factional activities, and they did succeed in building up their strength in a number of countries. They were especially strong in the Latin countries – Spain, Italy, Portugal, French Belgium, and French and Italian Switzerland. Their main city center was Geneva, and Bakunin maneuvered to have the headquarters of the International transferred to that place. The Commune experience practically obliterated politically the Proudhonists and the Blanquists of France, but it gave the Bakuninists everywhere a new lease on life.

In the larger countries, strongholds of the International, the internal crisis sharpened. In France the whole labor movement was prostrate after the downfall of the Commune. In Germany quarrels between the Marxists and Lassalleans, together with government persecutions, threw the labor movement into disarray. In the United States the friendly National Labor Union was in rapid decline. And in England, which had been Marx's chief support in the International, there was also internal trouble. All the trade union leaders except one, in protest against Marx's support of the Commune, resigned from the General Council, while other opportunist union leaders, adopting the characteristic oppositionist method of fighting the General Council, set up a British Federation of the I.W.A. in order to break the direct contacts of the General Council with their unions. This bad situation was aggravated when Eccarius and Hales, successive General Secretaries of the I.W.A., split with Marx.

THE LONDON CONFERENCE

Under these difficult and threatening conditions, the International held a special general conference in London, September 17-23, 1871, to substitute for the congress that had been scheduled for Mainz, Germany, in the previous year. To protect the French delegates, the conference was held privately. In attendance were 23 persons, 17 of them members of the General Council. Marx was the representative for Germany, Engels for Italy, N. Utin for Russia, and Eccarius for the United States.⁴ According to Postgate, the International, counting all factions, then had a press of 58 pa-

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pers, including three in the United States.

The main business before the London conference was the imminent split in the International. Things had already arrived at the point where with the Jura Federation of Switzerland (Bakunin's headquarters) there were two rival organizations in the field. And Jaeckh says the following about the factional situation in Spain: "In most cities there were, beside the sections of the Alliance, also sections of the International, without any contact between them." And he thus describes the Bakunin organization in Italy, which was saturated with Mazzini republicans: "All pretended sections of the International were led by lawyers without clients, by doctors without patients and without knowledge, by students of billiards, by travelling salesmen and other office people, and especially by journalists of the small press and of more or less doubtful callings."⁵ The London conference could do little about the bad situation beyond supporting the line of the General Council.

Drawing one of the main lessons of the Commune, the conference stressed the great need of the workers in the various countries to organize political parties and to engage in political action. It also congratulated the Social-Democratic Workers Party in Germany for its recent electoral successes. All this, of course, was deadly poison to the Bakuninists. The conference set the date of the next congress of the I.W.A. for the coming year.

The Bakuninists refused, however, to abide by the decisions of the London conference. On November 12, 1871, they held a formal congress at Sonvillier, Switzerland. One of the delegates was Jules Guesde, later to play a central role in the development of the French Socialist Party. The congress, made up of Alliance elements, was a direct challenge to the authority of the General Council. It issued a statement, addressed to all sections of the International, denouncing the Council as corrupt and dictatorial, condemning its program of political action, and demanding that an immediate congress be held.⁶ The ideological controversy had developed into an organizational split.

THE CONGRESS AT THE HAGUE

The fifth congress of the I.W.A. was held in The Hague, beginning on September 2, 1872. Marx and Engels, for the first time, both attended in person, Marx having previously written to Sorge

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and Kugelmann that he considered the congress to be “a life and death matter for the International,” and so it turned out. Bakunin himself was not present, but his people, led by James Guillaume, were there in force, and all prepared for a showdown.

The split situation manifested itself immediately at the congress, and three days were spent on the difficult problem of the verification of credentials. Of the 65 delegates finally seated, roughly 40 supported the main line of the General Council, and about 25 the opposition. The Marxists' supporters were: Members of the General Council 16, Germany 10, France 6, Switzerland 3, United States 2 (Sorge, a Marxist, and Deurure, a Blanquist), and Spain, Bohemia, Denmark, and Sweden 1 each. The supporters of Bakunin were: Belgium 7, England 5, Holland 4, Spain 4, Switzerland 2, and France 1. The Italians, Bakuninists, boycotted the congress.

The factional situation was not fully a clear ideological lineup, some of the supporters of both sides being swayed by other considerations than the main issues confronting the congress. Important in this respect were the English delegates, including Eccarius and three other members of the General Council. Pure and simple trade unionists, mainly, they did not share the anarchist views of Bakunin, but they nevertheless voted against the Marxists.

In its series of resolutions, the congress dealt primarily with four questions: the role and powers of the General Council, the headquarters location of the I.W.A., the political line of the International, and the status of Bakunin's Alliance. Let us deal with these separately.

THE POWERS OF THE GENERAL COUNCIL

The Bakuninists made a central issue of this question. Worshipers of spontaneity and extreme local autonomy, their proposal was that the General Council should be nothing more than a correspondence bureau and a collector of statistical data. They violently opposed the idea of the Council applying the decisions of the congresses and acting as the general political guide of the International. Some wanted to abolish the General Council altogether.⁷ The Marxists, on the other hand, insisted upon the need for a considerable international centralization policy and discipline. In view of the severe internal crisis, the congress sustained

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the latter view, voting by 40 to 4, with 11 abstentions, to grant wider powers to the Council in order to enable it to apply more effectively the decisions of the congresses and to establish discipline. These enabled the Council "temporarily to expel, until the next congress, a division, section, Federal Council, committees and federations of the International,"⁸ which might refuse to abide by I.W.A. decisions.

The charges by the Bakuninists that the General Council practiced a dictatorship were unfounded. In fact, ever since the inception of the International the Council had served more as a theoretical than a direct political and organizational center. In a letter to Kugelmann, Marx thus explains its theoretical tasks: "It was not its function to sit in judgment on the theoretic value of the programs of the various sections. It had only to see that those programs contained nothing directly contradictory to the letter and spirit of the Statutes."⁹ The great achievements of the Council (*i.e.* of Marx) were in the field of theory and political policy. The Council also did not initiate strikes or specific political movements in the various countries, but rather supported them once the national sections had gotten them under way. But even this restricted central leadership was far too much for the anarchist Bakuninists, with their exaggerated conceptions of spontaneity. It was only when the life of the I.W.A. was finally at stake that it adopted strong centralization.

THE QUESTION OF POLITICAL ACTION

In the aftermath of the Paris Commune there was a strong trend towards political action in various countries. The workers sought thus to translate into reality one of the most elementary lessons of the historic struggle. In line with this sound trend, the Marxists had re-introduced into the Hague Congress for endorsement what was substantially the resolution of the London conference of 1871 on the matter. The resolution declared: "In its fight against the collective forces of the possessing classes, the proletariat can only act as a class by organizing its forces into an independent political party, working in opposition to all the old parties formed by the possessing classes. Such an organization of the proletariat as a political party is indispensable in order to achieve the triumph of the social revolution, and above all, to attain its ultimate goal, the abolition of classes."¹⁰

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This resolution provoked an intense debate. The Blanquists, through their chief spokesman, Vaillant of France, maintained that "If the strike is one weapon in our revolutionary fight, the barricade is another, and is the most powerful weapon of all." They wanted to amend the resolution to this effect. The Bakuninists, with Guillaume as their leader, attacked the resolution head on and with it *The Communist Manifesto*, as expressing bourgeois politics. "The difference between the positive policies of the majority faction and the negative policies of the minority faction was set forth in the following two axioms: the majority aims at *the conquest of political power*; the minority aims at *the destruction of political power*."¹¹ The congress voted 29 to 5, with 9 abstentions, in favor of the Marxists' resolution.

THE INTERNATIONAL REMOVES TO NEW YORK

The sensation of the Congress was a proposal, presented by Engels, to remove the headquarters of the International to the United States, to New York. The resolution, written in French, reads: "We propose that for the years 1872-73 the seat of the General Council shall be transferred to New York, that it shall be composed of the following members: the Federal Council of North America: Cavanagh, St. Clair, Getti, Carl, Laurel, F. L. Bertrand, F. Bolte, and C. Carl. They will have the right to co-opt but the total numbers shall not exceed 15." – Signed by Marx, Engels, Sexton, Longuet, Dupont, Serrallier, Wroblewski, Barry, McDonnell, Lissner, Le Moussu, at The Hague, September 6, 1872.¹²

This resolution caused a very sharp fight in the congress. The Bakuninists made a battle against it, and so did the Blanquists who in general had been supporting the Marxists in the congress. Sorge, the chief I.W.A. leader in the United States, also opposed the proposition, but was eventually won over to it. After a complicated struggle, with other proposals to locate in Barcelona and Brussels, Engels' motion was finally carried by a vote of 30 to 14, with 13 abstentions. Declaring the International lost, the Blanquists dramatically quit and took no further part in the congress. The new General Council was elected on the basis that its members must reside in the United States. It consisted of Cavanagh, St. Clair, Laurel, Fornacieri, Leviele, Deurure, Carl, Bolte, Berliand, Speyer and Ward. Sorge was elected General Secretary.

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As Engels made clear in his speech introducing the resolution, the removal of the International to New York was dictated by hard necessity. The situation, both within and without the organization, had become such that it was impossible for it to function effectively in Europe. The biggest danger was that it would be captured by the Bakunin anarchists and used to further their sectarian cause, which would have been a disaster to the young world labor movement. There was also the possibility that the General Council would be taken over by the Blanquists, many of whom, refugees from the Commune, had located in London. Under these difficult circumstances, there was nothing practical left to do other than to move the general headquarters to America, where, in the young American labor movement, the International might find a strong base.

THE EXPULSION OF THE BAKUNINISTS

Even as the Hague congress assembled, the split in the International was a reality. This was demonstrated by the holding of the anarchist congress of Sonvilliers, by the dual movements that this opposition had set up in several of the Latin countries, by the reckless bitterness with which the factional fight was being conducted, and by the obvious intention of Bakunin to dominate the movement at any cost. The formal expulsion of the Bakunin leadership at The Hague merely recognized officially the division that was already virtually an accomplished fact in the International.

In preparation for dealing with this matter the congress, at the outset, appointed a committee of five, which included Marx, Engels, and other leaders of both factions, to consider the situation regarding the Alliance, which was working within the International, and also to weigh the charges that had been made against the General Council by various Bakuninist federations. It was according to the majority report of four of the five members of this committee that, towards the conclusion of the congress, the expulsions were carried through.

At the meeting of the General Council on March 5, 1872, Marx had submitted a long report reviewing the whole course of the fight against the Bakunin group, later published in pamphlet form as *The Pretended Secessions in the International*.¹³ The committee, on the basis of this report and of extended hearings and investigations, declared that the Alliance, with rules and purposes

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contrary to those of the International, existed as a broad factional grouping within that organization. It was developed that the Bakuninist federations were dominated by secret cliques of "national brothers" and that the Alliance generally was in the hands of about 100 "international brothers." The committee held that Bakunin and others, by their whole course of conduct, had made themselves ineligible for further membership in the organization.

The majority of the committee therefore recommended that Bakunin, Guillaume, Schwitzguebel, Malon, Bousquet, and Marchand be expelled. Charges against other Bakuninist leaders were dropped, upon their assurance that they had quit the Alliance. The minority report re-stated the Bakunin line, insisting upon the right of the national federations to full autonomy and challenging the right of the General Council to interfere in any way with them. The congress, which by this time had dwindled to only 43 delegates, voted to expel Bakunin and Guillaume. Schwitzguebel was not expelled, whereupon he resigned.

THE AFTERMATH OF THE SPLIT

Following the congress a mass meeting was held in Amsterdam, addressed by Marx, Sorge, and others. Marx reviewed optimistically the work of the congress.¹⁴ He especially stressed the fact that the congress, rejecting the a-political line of the anarchists, had "proclaimed the necessity that the working class shall attack the old and crumbling society on both the political and the social fields." He warned, however, that in so doing, "special regard must be paid to the institutions, customs, and traditions of various lands; and we do not deny that there are certain countries, such as the United States and England, in which the workers may secure their ends by peaceful means. If I mistake not, Holland belongs to the same category. Even so, we have to recognize that *in most Continental countries* force will have to be the lever of the revolution." Marx hailed the great example of the Paris Commune, and declared that, "It fell because there did not simultaneously occur in all the capitals, in Berlin, in Madrid, and the rest, a great revolutionary movement linked with the mighty upheaval of the Parisian proletariat."

On the crucial question of the removal of the headquarters to New York, Marx stated: "The Hague Congress has removed the seat of the General Council from London to New York. Many,

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even of our friends, are not best pleased at this decision. They forget that the United States is pre-eminently becoming the land of the workers; that year by year, half a million workers emigrate to this new world, and that the International must perforce strike deep roots in this soil upon which the workers are supreme.”

In a letter to Sorge a year later, Marx said: “According to my view of conditions in Europe, it will be thoroughly useful to let the formal organization of the International withdraw into the background for a time, only, if possible, keeping some control over the center in New York in order to prevent idiots like Perret or adventurers like Cluseret getting hold of the leadership and compromising the cause. Events themselves and the inevitable development in complexity of things will ensure the resurrection of the International in an improved form.”¹⁵

Certainly Marx and Engels had few illusions as to the significance of the removal to America. But Riazanov remarks, “It was presumed that the transfer of the International would be but a temporary one.”¹⁶ However, it did not turn out that way. The I.W.A. headquarters never returned to Europe, and The Hague gathering was its last real international congress. An attempt was made to hold an I.W.A. congress, the sixth, in Geneva, in 1877, but it was a failure. Only a few delegates appeared and they represented what was a disintegrating movement. The removal to New York was generally understood to amount to the liquidation of the International as a world organization, and it was just that. During its four years of life in the United States, the I.W.A. functioned more as a national than an international organization. Meanwhile, the European Anarchist forces continued their work, trying in vain to carry on the International in their own image and likeness.

11. The Anarchist International (1872-1877)

The Bakuninists refused to recognize the Hague congress decisions, which expelled Bakunin and other Anarchist leaders for carrying on disruptive activities within the International. Instead, declaring that the I.W.A., by these decisions and by moving to New York, had virtually liquidated itself, they went right ahead with their own organization, claiming that it was, in fact, the International Workingmen's Association. Consequently, for the next several years there were two Internationals in existence, both with the same name and both presumably representing the workers of the world.

The two organizations carried on a bitter warfare against each other. The Marxist position was stated in the pamphlet, *The Alliance of Socialist Democracy and the International Workingmen's Association*, written by Engels and Paul Lafargue, and the Anarchist position was outlined in the booklet, *A Complot against the International Workingmen's Association*, prepared under Bakunin's direction.

THE SAINT-IMIER CONGRESS

A few days after the close of the fifth congress of the I.W.A. at The Hague in September 1872, the opposing Anarchist forces held a congress in Saint-Imier, Switzerland. It was, in fact, a continuation and extension of the conference of the Jura Federation at that place. The international congress of the Anarchists lasted through September 15-17. Stekloff lists the participating delegations as follows: Spain 4; Italy 6; Switzerland 2; France 2, and the United States 1, the delegate Lefrancais representing the American sections 3 and 22, which had broken away from the leadership of the Marxists.¹ This group assembled in congress, claimed to be and acted in the name of the International. It was the old Alliance in a new garb.

The Anarchists in the Saint-Imier congress, no longer hampered by the presence of Marxists, formally rejected the decisions of the Hague congress and began to shape their new international in the image and likeness of Bakunin. The congress "categorically denied the legislative right of all congresses, whether general or

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regional, and recognized that such congresses had no other mission than to show forth the aspirations, the needs, and the ideas of the proletariat in the various localities or countries, so that such ideas may be harmonized and unified.... In no case can the majority of a congress... impose its will upon the minority." This was the "center of correspondence and statistics" theory so fervently advocated by Anarchist delegates in congresses of the International, now written into reality. At a later congress the Anarchists, for a while, abolished the General Council altogether.

The Saint-Imier congress declared that "the autonomy and independence of the working class sections and federations constitutes the essential condition of the emancipation of the workers." It declared also, "That the destruction of every kind of political power is the first task of the proletariat." It rejected all forms of political organization and action, declaring "That the proletarians of all lands, spurning all compromises in the achievement of the social revolution, must establish, independently of bourgeois politics, the solidarity of revolutionary action."²

The workers now had to make a choice between the rival Internationals. The Belgian federation soon afterward went with the Anarchists, and so did the Dutch. A section of the British took a similar stand, although being at bottom opportunist trade unionists, they were more interested in carrying on a factional struggle against Marx than they were fascinated by Anarchist doctrines of decentralization, autonomy, and spontaneity. The federations which in the main declared for the Marxist International were the French, German, Austrian, Polish, Danish, Hungarian, and American – a situation which led Jaekch to conclude, "Thus, the majority of the federations remained with the old International."³

But these retained affiliations were more formal than real. The removal of the International to New York convinced the Marxists of Europe that its days were over. Consequently, the Germans and other Marxists, quickly losing further interest in the International, began to turn their attention to the new strong trends toward building up the labor movements and political parties in their respective countries. This is why the Marxist attempt at an International congress in Germany in September 1873 proved such a failure.

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DOWNWARD COURSE OF THE ANARCHISTS

The real life of the Bakuninist international was between the years 1872 and 1877. Such moves as the Anarchists made upon an international scale after the latter date were hardly more than dying convulsions. During these five years the Bakuninists held several international congresses of their so-called I.W.A. Among them were gatherings in Geneva in 1873, Brussels in 1874, Berne in 1876, and Venders (Belgium) in 1877. The final issue of their official organ, *Bulletin de la Federation Jurassienne*, appeared on March 15, 1878.

In July 1881 the Anarchists, at a congress in London, launched a strong effort to revitalize their cause internationally. This resulted in the so-called "Black International." But it was all a shot in the water, the movement failing to take hold again in Europe. It did, however, have considerable repercussions in the United States. In its early stages the Anarchist I.W.A. attracted few American supporters, although Foner reports that, "As far back as 1875, a small group of German Socialists in Chicago had formed an armed club which came to be known as *Lehr und Wehr Verein*."⁴

Serious consequences developed in the United States, however, in connection with the London 1881 movement, the International Association of Working People. This Black International movement attracted considerable support among the foreign-born workers, especially in the Chicago area. These workers, who were mostly non-citizens, employed at the lowest paid jobs, subjected to terrorism in the shops, and the worst victims of recurring economic crises, were influenced by the Anarchist propaganda.⁵ A contributing factor was the opportunist policy then being followed by the leadership of the Socialist Labor Party, which refused to organize the workers for economic struggle. The culmination of the movement was the Chicago Haymarket tragedy during the great 8-hour movement of 1886, in which, as a result of a mysterious bomb explosion at a mass meeting on May 4, four workers' leaders – Albert R. Parsons, August Spies, Adolf Fischer, and George Engel – were barbarously framed-up and executed, another, Louis Lingg, "committed suicide," the police said, and several more were given long prison sentences.

There were also skeleton international Anarchist congresses in 1891, 1893, and 1896, but they were merely small sectarian

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gatherings.

The Anarchist international, during its several years of life on a descending plane, conducted very few mass struggles. The most important of these were revolutionary attempts in Spain and Italy in 1873 and 1874. In Spain the Anarchist international had a strong following. In Barcelona, their chief stronghold, they claimed some 50,000 members.⁶ The country was in a revolutionary ferment, which finally resulted in the establishment of the Spanish Republic in 1873. Due to their apolitical prejudices, the Anarchists took no organized part in this popular movement. In the mass ferment they did, however, develop a general strike in a few cities, which turned out to be a failure.⁷ In Italy, which was also a Bakuninist stronghold during the unsettled political situation of the early 1870's, the Anarchists organized no less than 60 local putsches in two years. Their most serious undertaking was an attempted uprising in Bologna in July, 1874; but this failed completely.

KROPOTKIN SUCCEEDS BAKUNIN

Overtaken by bad health and depressed by the defeats he had suffered in his grandiose plans of revolution, Bakunin withdrew from activity in the middle 1870's. To the end he remained bitterly hostile to Marxism. In his letter of farewell to the workers of Jura, he declared that the socialism of Marx, no less than the diplomacy of Bismarck, represented the center of reaction against which the workers had to carry on a tireless struggle. Marx, on the other hand, challenged Bakunin's sincerity, and characterized him as an enemy of the working class. In 1919 papers were found in the Russian tsarist police archives which cast a bad light on Bakunin. They showed that while in prison in 1851 he had written to the tsar from the standpoint of, as he called himself, "a penitent sinner," with the aim of securing a mitigation of his imprisonment.⁸ Bakunin died on July 1, 1876, in Berne, at the age of 62.

In the Anarchist movement at the time there were a number of outstanding figures, including Admenar Schwitzguebel of Switzerland, Enrico Malatesta of Italy, Domela Nieuwenhuis of Holland, James Guillaume and Elisee Reclus of France, Cesar de Paepe of Belgium, Johann Most of Germany, and various others; but the Anarchist leadership mantle of Bakunin fell upon the shoulders of a comparative newcomer in the field of international struggle, Kropotkin of Russia.

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Peter Kropotkin (1842-1921) was a prince, a member of one of the well-known noble families in tsarist Russia. Among his many activities in Russia, he was a noted geographer. He became interested in the revolutionary movement, and in 1872 joined the International in Switzerland, affiliating himself with the Bakunin wing. As a result of his activities, Kropotkin served several years in prison, mainly in Russia and France. He died in the Soviet Union, an honored citizen, but a confirmed opponent of the Bolshevik regime. Of his many books, the most valuable is, *Mutual Aid: A Factor of Evolution*.

Kropotkin called himself a Communist-anarchist. He carried forward the Bakunin conception of a spontaneous insurrectional revolution and the automatic establishment of a society based altogether on autonomy. He was an enemy of proletarian political parties, of political action, and of the dictatorship of the proletariat. To him the main enemy was the state, not the capitalist class. According to Kropotkin, in their revolutionary period the capitalists also had fought, not the feudal system but the state. Said he, "Think of the struggles the bourgeoisie itself had to carry on against the state in order to conquer the right of constituting themselves into commercial societies."⁹ Bakunin was a man of action and participated in uprisings, but Kropotkin, who was active during a more stable period of capitalism, perforce devoted himself almost exclusively to research, theory, and propaganda.

WHY THE ANARCHIST MOVEMENT SHRANK

The basic reason for the failure of the Anarchist International and for its demise, in a period when the working class was making great progress in many countries, was its theoretical unsoundness: its incurable foreshortening of the perspective of the revolution; its misconception of the class struggle; its false interpretation of the role of the state; its ignorance of the reality of the dictatorship of the proletariat; its understress upon organization and overstress upon mass spontaneity; and its lack of understanding of the need for practical everyday class struggle under the capitalist system. Under the burden of this load of confusion and illusion the Anarchist movement could not possibly succeed.

With the Anarchist International placing all its hopes upon insurrection and practically ignoring the everyday struggles of the workers, the Anarchist movement tended to shrink into a narrow

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sect on the sidelines of the class struggle. The workers in various countries, growing in numbers and class consciousness, were beginning to build broad trade unions, political parties, and cooperatives, and to conduct struggles for partial demands of various sorts – the franchise, wage and hour improvements, factory legislation, etc. But the Anarchists, with their eyes fastened fundamentally on their panacea, the insurrection, and despising all partial demands as deceptions for the workers, remained for the most part outside of and even opposed to the broad stream of working-class life, struggle, and development. They took but little part in strikes and they sabotaged the growing electoral struggles of the workers. This whole course brought out clearly the fundamentally sectarian character of the Anarchist movement.

The elemental move of the European masses of these years towards political action, as the proletariat grew swiftly in numbers and progressively won the franchise, was particularly disastrous for the Anarchists. It undermined the foundations of Bakunin's anti-political-ism, which were based on the facts that, in the main, the workers in the Latin countries did not have the ballot; and also that, in any event, in these countries the proletariat was relatively small and could not look forward towards constituting an electoral majority of the voters. This applied also to Russia, where from the 1870's on, the terroristic People's Will group, considerably influenced by Anarchist ideas, was active for a decade.

The sectarian isolation of the Anarchists was accentuated by the fact that the capitalist system in Europe and the United States, after the late 1860's, largely stabilized itself, and for the next few years thereafter, during its period of rapid development, was much less vulnerable to working-class insurrection. This general course of capitalist development was a body blow to the Anarchist movement, which based everything upon the perspective of early insurrection. It profoundly increased the disastrous, isolating consequences of Anarchist sectarianism. The decline of the Anarchist international was inevitable.

Anarchism, as Stalin points out,¹⁰ puts its stress upon the individual "whose emancipation, according to its tenets, is the principal condition for the emancipation of the masses." This conception put the Anarchists crosswise of the class struggle. On the other hand, "The cornerstone of Marxism, however," says Stalin, "is the *masses*, whose emancipation, according to its tenets, is

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the principal condition for the emancipation of the individual.” This conception put the Marxists fully into the stream of the class struggle. “By its advocacy of individual terror, it [Anarchism] distracts the proletariat from the methods of mass organization and struggle. By repudiating the dictatorship of the proletariat in the name of ‘abstract’ liberty, Anarchism deprives the proletariat of its most important and sharpest weapon against the bourgeoisie, its armies, and all its organs of repression.”¹¹

The pressure of the masses to organize and to fight for their immediate demands, not only exerted itself externally upon the Anarchist movement, but also from within. Consequently, the Anarchist congresses were constantly torn by disputes over practical and theoretical questions – one of the most notable of such discussions being that over de Paepe’s proposal in the 1874 congress in Brussels to endorse what amounted to a people’s state. All this confused and paralyzed the organization and intensified its theoretical bankruptcy. There was also a constant desertion of leading figures – Jules Guesde (France), Carlo Cafiero (Italy), Caesar de Paepe (Belgium), G. Plekhanov and Paul Axelrod (Russia), and many others, to the camp of Marxism.

The downfall of the Anarchist international was caused, concretely, by its incorrigible belief in the immediacy of the proletarian revolution. Marxists, too, as was freely admitted later by both Marx and Engels, erred considerably in this general direction. This was a natural mistake to make in a revolutionary period which, between the years 1859 and 1871, produced the Austro-French, Austro-Prussian, and Franco-German wars, the American Civil War, and several minor wars; when Austrian absolutism was overthrown, united Italy came into being, there was a long revolution in Spain, the Paris Commune was established, serfdom was abolished in Russia, and throughout Europe a broad workers’ movement was rapidly developing.¹² The difference between the Marxists and Anarchists, however, was that the Marxists, thanks to their scientific theory, were able quickly to correct their error in this respect; whereas the Anarchists, loaded down with bourgeois idealism, were not able to readjust to the new situation. Consequently the Anarchist movement shrivelled into an isolated sect, while Marxism went ahead to become the dominant ideology of the world’s working class.

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THE DISINTEGRATION OF ANARCHISM

The Anarchist movement, during the 1870's and 1880's, not only declined organizationally and in general influence among the working masses, but it also, as a result of its practical failure, disintegrated theoretically. The movement, being in a sort of political *cul de sac*, started to degenerate into several more or less mutually conflicting theoretical tendencies and groupings. One of these inner-sect sects was the so-called "philosophical" or "individualist" Anarchists. They traced their political lineage back to Zeno in ancient Greece (400 b.c.), and their bible was Max Stirner's (Kaspar Schmid, 1806-56) *The Ego and His Own*. They tended to become petty-bourgeois "cafe revolutionists," radical Bohemian chatters and phrase-mongers about the revolution which they were only hindering. This trend still lingers on.

There also developed for a time strong terroristic tendencies among the Anarchists. The terrorists were desperate elements who, seeing the hopes of mass insurrection fading, sought by the assassination of leaders of states to apply their doctrine of "propaganda by the deed," and thus to spur the sluggish masses into motion by the daring acts of heroic individuals. Consequently, the Anarchists were blamed, rightly or wrongly, for the various bomb-throwings and assassinations of public figures that took place during the decades up to 1900 and beyond. Among these were the armed attacks upon the German Kaiser in 1878, the Haymarket bombing of 1886 (almost certainly a police frameup), the attempted killing of Frick during the Homestead steel strike of 1892, the bombing of the French Chamber of Deputies in 1893, the assassination of Tsar Alexander II of Russia (1881), of President Carnot of France (1894), of Empress Elizabeth of Austria (1898), of King Humbert of Italy (1900), and of President McKinley of the United States (1901). The Anarchist terroristic tendency was smothered out by the folly of its own acts.

A third Anarchist tendency developed, and this is by far the most important in the general philosophy of Anarchism. That is, the Anarchist-minded workers, more practical by far than the petty-bourgeois Anarchist intellectuals, adapted Anarchism to the trade union movement. This adaptation, however, involved a considerable watering down of Anarchist principles; for trade union discipline, even in autonomous Anarcho-syndicalist unions, col-

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lides with Anarchist ideas of individualism; and the Anarcho-syndicalists' conception of the future society, which would in fact amount to a trade union state, directly contravenes Anarchist anti-statist conceptions. The workers thus produced the important Anarcho-syndicalist tendency, which was later to play a significant role in many countries, and with which we shall deal more fully later. The beginnings of this Syndicalist trend, which is Anarchist trade unionism, were to be seen far back in the earliest congresses of the First International, and the tendency became more pronounced with the growth of the international labor movement. It became the main current of disintegrating Anarchism.

12. The First International in the U.S.A. (1872-1876)

In accordance with the decision of The Hague congress in September 1872, the headquarters of the General Council of the I.W.A. were shifted from London to New York, in October of that year. F. A. Sorge was the general secretary, and Frederick Bolte was secretary of the Federal Council, Central Committee of the North American Section, organized in 1870. As its official organ, the General Council published the *Arbeiter Zeitung*, the first number of which appeared February 8, 1873.

THE AMERICAN SITUATION

Late in 1872 the United States was in the concluding phase of the industrial boom which followed the end of the Civil War. The victorious capitalists, now busily stealing the natural resources of the country, were enlarging their factories, creating industrial monopolies, and subjecting the workers to unprecedented exploitation. Having broken the power of the Southern slaveholders, the Northern industrialists consolidated themselves completely in control of the government.

Pressed by the aggressive capitalists, the workers were in a fighting mood, which was greatly intensified by the outbreak of the deep-going economic crisis of 1873. The National Labor Union, for reasons indicated above, had just about passed out of the national picture; the Knights of Labor, although in existence since 1869, was still small and weak, and the formation of the A.F. of L. in 1881, was nine years off in the future. But the organization of local and national trade unions was proceeding, various labor and farmer parties had been formed, and the country was building up to the great railroad strike of 1877, one of the bitterest class struggles in the history of the United States.

By 1872, Foner reports, "there were about 30 sections and 5,000 members of the First International in the United States,"¹ with local organizations in New York, Chicago, San Francisco, Newark, Springfield, New Orleans, and Washington, D. C. As we have seen, the United States had played no small role in the life of the First International. American delegates attended the respective congresses, and the American question frequently figured in the

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work of the I.W.A. Examples of this were the various letters between the General Council and Presidents Lincoln and Johnson, the fight of European workers, under Marxist leadership, to keep their countries from joining with the Confederacy in the Civil War, the close relations between the International and the National Labor Union. The American section was, in fact, far from being the least important of the organizations of the First International.

THE I.W.A. IN THE AMERICAN CLASS STRUGGLE

Although the transfer of the General Council to New York had been looked upon askance by the American Marxist leaders, it nevertheless, for a time, stimulated the American movement. The numbers of sections and members grew. The I.W.A. leader in the United States, F. A. Sorge (1827-1906), was a music teacher, a native of Saxony, a participant in the 1848 revolution in Germany, a co-worker with Marx, and a clear-headed and tireless fighter.

True to the line of the I.W.A., the American Marxists took an active part in the daily struggles of the workers, in the building of unions and the carrying on of strikes. These activities were enhanced with the arrival of the General Council in the United States. The Marxists had led the great October 1, 1871, New York demonstration for the eight-hour day, with banners reading, Gompers tells us: "Peaceably if we can, forcibly if we must." And Commons thus cites a local labor paper: "Especially cordial was the reception of the Internationals led by the trade unionists at the final counter-march of the procession, and deafening cheers greeted the appearance of their banner (the red flag) on the stage at the mass meeting.... Equally significant was the participation of the colored (Negro) organization for the first time in a demonstration gotten up by English-speaking unions (the German unions have treated them as equals already years ago)."²

The Marxists were also active leaders in the huge demonstration of the unemployed in Tompkins Square, New York, on January 13, 1874. This meeting, a protest against starvation conditions among the jobless, was the largest labor gathering yet held in the United States. The police broke up the meeting violently, injuring many workers. Similar demonstrations were held in Chicago and other big cities.

During these years many prominent labor men were members of or supported the I.W.A. Among them were J. P. McDonnell,

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editor of the *Workingmen's Advocate*, and Adolph Strasser and P. J. McGuire, who later became famous as founders of the American Federation of Labor. Samuel Gompers, who for years was president of the A.F. of L., was also closely associated with the International, if not actually a member. In his autobiography he recalls many trade union leaders of the times who were members of the I.W.A., and says that, "Unquestionably, in those days of the 'seventies,' the International dominated the labor movement of New York City." Significantly, he adds that "New York City was the cradle of the American labor movement."³ Gompers used to claim that he learned German in order to be able to read *The Communist Manifesto* and other works of Marx.

THE STRUGGLE AGAINST THE "SECTS"

As in Europe, the International in the United States had to fight constantly against internal tendencies to prevent the development of a broad working class movement. This fight became especially sharp after the arrival of the General Council in New York. These distorting and crippling influences, of course, had their own specific American features. The most stubborn, enduring, and injurious of them was the tendency of the foreign-born workers, principally Germans, to stand aside in a sectarian manner, from the life and struggles of the broad masses of the native American workers. This was manifested by reluctance to learn the English language, to acquire American citizenship, and to become members and leaders in native organizations and fights of the workers. This harmful tendency, which the General Council did not much improve, was to endure, in a declining degree, for two generations, down to the early days of the modern Communist Party. Engels especially carried on a guerrilla warfare against this narrow practice.

One of the worst of the many bad effects caused by this sectarianism was a gross neglect of the Negro question. Located mostly in the big northern cities, the Marxists were generally known as being friendly to Negro workers, defending their right to work and to belong to trade unions. But the I.W.A. paid little or no attention to the bitter struggle of the Reconstruction Period then being conducted by the Negro people and their white allies in the post-war South against militant counter-revolution.

The I.W.A. Marxists also took a sectarian attitude towards the

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strong woman's suffrage movement of the period. This weakness, in fact, ran generally throughout the work of the whole First International. The American Marxists, while fighting generally for the rights of women in industry, in law, and elsewhere, did not stress their right to vote. The current idea, expressed in the platform of the Workingmen's Party of the United States (1876), was that "the so-called woman question will be solved with the worker question" – a sectarian formulation which largely isolated the Marxists from the current vigorous woman's movement. Similar narrow sectarianism also isolated the I.W.A. from the former movements which were beginning at this time to develop in the Middle West.

The I.W.A. in the United States also had to fight against bourgeois liberals, who tried to capture the organization and to rewrite its program. These alien elements were led by the two well-known sisters, Victoria Woodhull and Tennessee Claflin. Originally they had an organization, "New Democracy," advocating a program of woman's suffrage, sex freedom, spiritualism, and a universal language. They also proposed "voluntary socialism," to be established by a general referendum. In 1870 they disbanded their organization and joined the International. Highly militant and a brilliant speaker, Mrs. Woodhull soon organized Sections 9 and 12 in New York, mostly composed of native Americans, of which she became the leader. The sisters also published their own journal, *Woodhull and Claflin's Weekly*.⁴

The Marxist workers promptly collided with these petty bourgeois intellectuals. The matter was referred to the General Council in London, and receiving an adverse decision on their demand that Section 12, instead of Section 1, should be the leading section in America, the Woodhull forces brought about a split in November 1871. Thereafter two Federal Councils were in existence.

The London General Council, in March 1872, ordered the expulsion of Section 12 and the holding of a new national convention. But the Woodhull group rejected the decision, met in Philadelphia on July 9, 1872 with 13 sections present, mostly American-born, and organized the American Confederation of the International, generally known as the "Spring Street Council." The regular I.W.A. met a few days later, also in Philadelphia, with 25 delegates from 22 sections and 900 members. At The Hague congress, the Woodhull group was again defeated and it refused also

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to accept the I.W.A. decision.⁵ The movement was petering out at the time the General Council arrived in the United States.

Victoria Woodhull was an outstanding personality in the militant woman's rights movement of the time, but obviously she had no place in the workers' International. She was a fighter and declared characteristically: "If the very next congress refuses women all the legitimate results of citizenship we shall proceed to call another convention expressly to form a new constitution and to erect a new government. We are plotting revolution; we will overthrow this bogus republic." Elizabeth Cady Stanton, praising Mrs. Woodhull's speeches and writings, called her "the leader of the woman's suffrage movement in this country."⁶ She ran for President in 1872 on the ticket of the Equal Rights Party. She eventually failed in an attempt to capture the National Woman's Suffrage Association, much as she had failed to take over the I.W.A.

THE MARXISTS AND THE LASSALLEANS

One of the major fights of the Marxists against sectarianism in the I.W.A. was against Lassalleism. Utopian socialism (save in the Bellamy movement in the 1890's) had about died out when the I.W.A. came on the scene. Proudhonism and Blanquism had little following among the workers in the United States, because there had as yet been little Latin and Slavic immigration. Bakuninism, except as noted later in the 1880's, was also a negligible factor. But many of the vast numbers of the German immigrant workers believed in Lassalleism, which they brought along with them from Germany.

For several years the Lassalleian deviation was a major issue and a matter of serious conflict in the American Section of the International. Section One of the I.W.A., the General German Workers Association of New York, had been originally organized by Lassalleans. Generally this group deprecated trade unions as useless, in view of Lassalle's "iron law of wages." They stressed political action, however, with the general objective of the workers finding their way to emancipation through producers' cooperatives subsidized by the government. The fight between Marxists and Lassalleans in the United States reflected the bitter struggle then going on between corresponding elements in Germany.

The fight between the two groups in the United States turned primarily around the question of trade unionism and electoral

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political action. Incidentally, Gompers supported the emphasis placed upon trade unions by the Marxists, as against Lassallean neglect of the unions. At its national convention in 1874 the I.W.A., while strongly supporting working class political action, adopted a statement of principles "rejecting all cooperation and connection with political parties formed by the possessing classes," and declaring that, "The Federation will not enter into a truly political campaign or election movement before being strong enough to exercise a perceptible influence."⁷ This resolution was aimed at the opportunistic political conceptions and activities of the Lassalleans. After 1872 the General Council was in the thick of this fight, which constantly became more severe and paralyzing to the organization as a whole.

INTERNAL CRISIS AND POLITICAL PROGRESS

By 1874 the I.W.A., rent with quarrels, was in deep crisis. The General Council had virtually lost contact with the remnants of the European sections, only the United States, Germany, and Austria paying any dues at all. The American organization, with a declining membership, had split in New York and Chicago. These splits gave birth to two new organizations – in Chicago, in January 1874, the Labor Party of Illinois, and in New York, in May 1874, the Social Democratic Working Men's Party of North America. These were mainly under Lassallean influence and they had little success.

The second national convention of the American Section of the I.W.A., held in Philadelphia, beginning on April 11, 1874, tried in vain to cure the internal crisis. It transferred the functions of the Federal Council to the General Council, and it elected a new General Council, thus making that body virtually an American committee. It adopted the general statement of policy, referred to above, to correct the errors of program being made by the Lassalleans. Members of the new General Council were Sorge, Speyer, Henninger, Huss, Novack, Voss, and Prestacheiz. Sorge was general secretary.⁸

The internal quarrels sharpened, however, following the Philadelphia convention. A bitter fight broke out over the *Arbeiter Zeitung*, which resulted in a lawsuit and the suspension of the paper in March 1875. Shortly after the Philadelphia convention, the General Council suspended Section One of New York, the strongest in the organization. In the struggle Sections 5, 6, and 8

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in New York quit, and Bolte and Carl were expelled by the General Council. On August 12, 1874, Sorge made a motion that the General Council should adjourn for a year. Consequently, it did not meet again until June 1, 1875. The internal struggle resumed then, however, and on September 25, Sorge, weary of the eternal factionalism, resigned his post as general secretary of the International and Carl Speyer was elected in his stead.* During 1875, there was something of a pickup of the I.W.A., with an increase in membership and in the number of sections, especially with the affiliation of the United Workers of America (Irish), led by J. P. McDonnell. But this spirit did not check the general downward trend of the organization. In February 1876 the General Council, therefore, decided to hold a congress of the International in Philadelphia during the coming July, with its liquidation in mind.

Things were not as bad, however, as the disintegrating tendencies in the International would seem to indicate. What was taking place basically was that the American Section of the I.W.A., like the sections in Europe, was giving birth to a national Marxist party. This was in line with the whole evolution of the International at this time. The movement was not decaying, but painfully passing to a higher stage. As for the I.W.A. generally, it had practically ceased to exist as an international organization.

As the International declined organizationally in the United States, new tendencies toward unity developed among the ranks of the Socialists and potential Socialists. The Marxists had largely reestablished their political leadership in the two erstwhile split-off parties – the Illinois Labor Party and the Social Democratic Party of North America – and they also played an important part in the general labor congress held in Pittsburgh, April 17-18, 1876. Unity sentiment became general in Socialist ranks. This was greatly accentuated by the amalgamation of the Marxist and Lassallean parties at the Gotha congress in Germany in May 1875, an event which exerted a profound effect generally among German workers in the United States. Commons sums up the Ameri-

* The general secretaries of the First International were: W. R. Cremer (1864- 66), R. Shaw (1866-67), Peter Fox (1866), J. G. Eccarius (1867-70), John Hales (1870- 72), F. A. Sorge (1872-74), and Carl Speyer (1875-76).

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can socialist situation thus: "By the middle of 1875, the secessionist movement, both in Chicago and the East, had travelled a considerable distance back to the original ideas of the International. The time was ripening for a reunion of the factions of the Socialist movement."⁹

THE DISSOLUTION OF THE FIRST INTERNATIONAL

Although the General Council, as best it could, had notified the European sections about the Philadelphia congress and invited them to send delegates, only one foreign delegate, from the Social-Democratic Party of Germany, showed up when the seventh and last I.W.A. congress assembled in Germania Hall, Philadelphia, on July 15, 1876. The other ten delegates there, among them Sorge and Otto Weydemeyer, were Americans. Without much discussion, the meeting proceeded to liquidate the International. The three-point resolution adopted, declared that "The General Council of the International Workingmen's Association is dissolved," that the Federal Council of the North American Section stands commissioned to maintain and develop present international connections, and that the Federal Council is commissioned to call an international congress when conditions so warrant.¹⁰ Sorge and Speyer were appointed as a committee to preserve the documents of the International and to issue a statement on the dissolution of the I.W.A., appended below.

On July 16-19, following the I.W.A. Congress, the North American Federation of the I.W.A. also met in convention.* There were present 13 delegates, representing 17 sections, and 635 dues-paying members. After electing delegates to the coming Socialist unity congress, due to convene in a few days, the North American Federation also dissolved itself.

Immediately after this, during July 19-22, also in the same Philadelphia hall, as previously planned, the various Socialist groupings assembled and formed the new Marxist organization, the Workingmen's Party of America. It was based primarily upon organizational unity between the forces of the dissolved I.W.A.,

* Altogether, the North American Section held three national conventions: July 6, 1872, New York; and April 11, 1874, and July 16, 1876, in Philadelphia.

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headed by Sorge and Otto Weydemeyer, and of the Lassalleans, led by Adolph Strasser and P. J. McGuire. Phillip Van Patten was elected general secretary, and J. P. McDonnell became editor of the party's English organ, *The Labor Standard*. These steps definitely organized the American Marxist party, which, through the Socialist Labor Party and the Socialist Party, has existed continuously ever since, down to the Communist Party of today.

Thus, in this series of three connected conventions, there was culminated within one week's time the historic evolution that was taking place among socialist ranks generally throughout the world: namely, the dissolution of the First International and the establishment of Marxist political organizations on a national basis.

The historic statement regarding the dissolution of the First International, as prepared by Sorge and Speyer, reads as follows:

"FELLOW WORKING MEN:

"The International Convention at Philadelphia has abolished the General Council of the International Workingmen's Association, and the external bond of the organization exists no more.

" 'The International is dead!' the bourgeoisie of all countries will exclaim, and with ridicule and joy it will point to the proceedings of this convention as documentary proof of the defeat of the labor movement of the world. Let us not be influenced by the cry of our enemies! We have abandoned the organization of the International for reasons arising from the present political situation in Europe, but as a compensation for it we see the principle of the organization recognized and defended by the progressive workmen of the entire civilized world. Let us give our fellow workers in Europe a little time to strengthen their national affairs, and they will surely be in a position to remove the barriers between themselves and the workingmen of other parts of the world.

"Comrades, you have embraced the principle of the International with heart and love; you will find means to extend the circle of its adherents even without an organization. You will find new champions who will work for the realization of the aims of our association. The comrades in America promise you that they will faithfully guard and cherish the acquisitions of the International in this country until more favorable conditions will again bring together the workingmen of all countries to common struggles, and the cry will resound again louder than ever:

" 'Proletarians of all countries, unite!' ”¹¹

13. The Role of the First International (1864-1876)

Under the leadership of Karl Marx* and following the general path of its predecessor, the Communist League, the First International laid the basis of the modern labor movement, both theoretically and organizationally (see Chapter 2). Its fundamental achievement in this broad respect was the popularization and practical application of the proletarian philosophy and world outlook, scientific socialism, as worked out by Marx and Engels. Concretely, it produced working class policy towards the capitalist state and the state in general, it evaluated the roles of the trade union movement, of the cooperatives, of the democratic franchise, and it analyzed profoundly the status of women. It developed the basic functions of the workers' political party, and it established the attitudes of the proletariat toward the peasantry, towards war, and towards the national question. It evaluated the technique of armed insurrection, the relationship between immediate demands and the proletarian revolution, the perspective of the dictatorship of the proletariat, and it began the cultivation of corps of trained Marxist leaders in the various countries.

In working out all these policies and programs, the First International produced a series of imperishable labor documents, written mostly by Marx, including the I.W.A. *Inaugural Address*, and the *Rules of the Association*, as well as that great evaluation of the Commune, *The Civil War in France*. During this period Marx also produced Volume I of *Capital* and other important works.

Together with this theoretical work, the First International gave practical form and reality to the international strivings and impulses of the world's workers. For the first time, and most effectively, it taught the workers the basic lessons of international solidarity. It gathered together the scattered, primitive, and fragmentary labor movements of the period and joined them into an organized world force that struck terror and foreboding into the hearts of exploiters in all countries. It was the pioneer of labor

* Engels was not directly active in the First International until its concluding stages in Europe.

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internationalism. At the founding congress of the Second International in 1889 Liebknecht declared that “the I.W.A. is not dead – it is continued in the powerful labor movements of the various countries and lives on in them. It also lives on in us. This congress is the work of the International Workingmen’s Association.”¹

The I.W.A., in the several countries, led the many important strikes and political struggles of its era; it actively built trade unions, and it did the pioneering work in founding what afterwards became broad socialist parties in many countries. But above all, in this mass work, the I.W.A. was the inspiring force behind the Paris Commune. Engels was historically correct in calling this great event, “the child of the First International.” And not the least, in its support of the Irish, the Polish, and other oppressed peoples, the International laid the basis for future great national liberation struggles.

IDEOLOGICAL DESTRUCTION OF THE SECTS

The Marxist leadership of the First International fought tirelessly and effectively against the many current sectarian tendencies that aimed to misdirect the workers’ efforts into channels alien to their class interests. Marx especially shattered the illusions around utopian socialism of various types, the radical bourgeois republicanism of Mazzini, the petty-bourgeois socialism of Proudhon, the leftist phrase-mongering and conspiratorial tactics of Bakunin, and the pure-and-simple trade unionism of the Odgers and Applegarths. By the time the First International passed from the scene, most of these “sects” had been theoretically defeated, but new and far more dangerous ones, which in our day still have to be fought – opportunist trade unionism, political revisionism, and syndicalism – were beginning to take shape. The First International laid the firm basis for the hegemony of Marxism, of scientific socialism, in the thinking, the organizations, and the policies of the world labor movement.

In meeting the monumental difficulties of pioneering theoretical and practical policies for the working class, naturally, many mistakes were made by Marx and Engels. Not only have the workers’ enemies seized upon these errors, but it eventually became the fashion for many writers in the Second International – Kautsky, Mehring, and others – to dwell upon them *ad nauseum*. Regarding such attacks, Lenin says: “Yes, Marx and Engels erred

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much and erred often in determining the closeness of the revolution," particularly with regard to the 1848 revolution in Germany and France. But, concludes Lenin, and this is the main thing to keep in mind, "*such* errors of titans of revolutionary thought, who tried to raise and did raise the proletariat of the whole world above the level of petty, commonplace, and trifling tasks, are a thousand times nobler, more sublime, and *historically truer and more valuable* than the trivial wisdom of official liberalism, which sings, shouts, appeals and jabbbers about the vanity of revolutionary vanities, the futility of revolutionary struggle, and the charm of counter-revolutionary 'constitutional' rot..."²

THE CAUSES FOR THE DISSOLUTION OF THE I.W.A.

The basic reason why the First International disappeared from the world political arena was that capitalism at that time was entering into a new phase of development, raising up new tasks for the working class, tasks which the First International, under the given circumstances, was in no position to fulfill. The main period of the I.W.A. (1864-1872) "lay at the *dividing line between two epochs*. The International arose at the very end of the first of them, which had begun with the great bourgeois revolution in France in 1789, and which ended with the Franco-Prussian War in 1870. This, said Lenin, was the 'epoch of prosperity of the bourgeoisie, of their complete victory. This was the rising curve of the bourgeoisie, the epoch of the bourgeois democratic movements in general, of bourgeois national movements in particular, the epoch in which the absolutist feudal institutions which had outlived their time were rapidly destroyed'."³ It was a period of the consolidation of growing capitalism upon the ruins of absolute feudalism.

The new epoch which was opening up was a period of expanding capitalism, developing into imperialism. It began with "the heroic rising of the Paris Communards and ended with the great October victory of the Socialist Soviet Revolution in Russia in 1917. This was, on the one hand, the epoch of the rule and decline of the bourgeoisie, of the transition from the progressive bourgeoisie to reactionary and ultra-reactionary finance capital, the growth of capitalism into imperialism and the domination of the latter... it was the epoch in which the proletariat began slowly to gather its forces and later to begin victoriously the world proletar-

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ian revolution.”⁴ The main tasks of the working class in the industrialized countries during the earlier decades of this period were, rather than the carrying through of revolution, to build the mass trade unions, to organize national workers’ socialist parties, and to carry on a broad Marxist educational work.

Lenin says: “The First International finished its historical role and yielded place to an epoch of infinitely greater growth of the labor movement in all the countries of the world, namely an epoch of its expansion, of the creation of socialist proletarian mass parties on the basis of the individual national states.”

NEW TIMES AND NEW TASKS

As it was constituted, the First International could not carry out these specific tasks of the new era. This had to be primarily the job of the young and growing movements in the respective countries. The experience of the I.W.A. had gone to show that its component parts were not yet developed enough to set up a strong Marxist international leadership. Although a mortal blow had been struck at several of the “sects,” they were still strong enough to do much harm. The I.W.A. was built directly upon the mass labor movements, not upon socialist parties as such, and these mass movements in the several countries were still very far from being predominantly Marxist. In England the movement was dominated by opportunist trade unionists; in the United States it was traveling the same path; in Germany and Austria it was still steeped with Lassalleism; and in the Latin and Slavic countries the Bakunin, Blanquist, and Proudhonist tendencies were still vital. Indeed, as we have seen, it was precisely these various sectarian tendencies that had forced the dissolution of the First International.

Trained Marxists were still very few in the several countries. Of the current German socialist movement, which was the most advanced of all, Riazanov says: “The writings of the German socialists during the first half of the ’70s, even the brochures written by Wilhelm Liebknecht, who was a student of Marx, show the deplorable state in which the study of Marxist theory was at that time.”⁵ If in spite of these adverse conditions, the First International for so many years was able nevertheless to give such outstanding leadership, this was due fundamentally to the towering genius of Marx, who wrote all the decisive policy documents of

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the organization.

The new period confronting the young world socialist movement, therefore, demanded new methods and organizations. The movements in the various countries went ahead clarifying and building themselves with the skillful advice of Marx and Engels. But the latter, instead of being the official heads of the world labor movement, as in the days of the First International, were now its unofficial mentors and guides. Their leadership, however, was hardly less powerful. Through the years they remained in the closest touch with the developing movements in Germany, England, France, the United States, and various other countries, as their great volume of international correspondence eloquently indicates. All this was laying the basis for a new organized international movement, which was not long in forthcoming.

Enemies of socialism, whether sailing openly under the pirate flag of capitalism, or sneakingly under the besmeared banner of opportunist Social-Democracy, never tire of telling the working class that the First International was a failure and that it collapsed because of the wrong ideology of Marx. But this is a monstrous lie. The First International was a tremendously constructive force. It laid the very foundation of the world labor movement. The irrefutable proof of the soundness of its general program is the fact that when the working classes of Russia – and later of China, Czechoslovakia, Poland, Bulgaria, Hungary, Rumania, and Albania – really set out to establish socialism in their countries, they turned back to the lessons of Marx and the First International, which had long since been discarded by the reactionary heads of the Second International. One-third of the world marching directly on the road to socialism and communism is the complete answer to the slanderers of Marx and the First International.

14. The Period between the Internationals (1876-1889)

The thirteen years between the dissolution of the First International in 1876 and the foundation of the Second International in 1889 were in general a period of rapid growth and expansion of world capitalism. The capitalist system was developing from its competitive stage into the early phases of imperialism. Despite periodic crises, every decade or so, which temporarily paralyzed the system and threw millions of workers into unemployment and destitution, industrialization went ahead with seven-league boots in Western Europe and North America, and it made a beginning in Asia. This growth of industry did not proceed at an even pace, but at widely varying tempos in the several countries. The industrial development involved not only the traditional countries of capitalism – England, France, Germany, the United States, and others – but also many new lands. Japan was beginning its spectacular industrial development, and in Russia the number of workers employed in the large mills and factories and on the railroads increased from 706,000 in 1865 to 1,433,000 in 1890, indicating a substantial growth of Russian industry.¹ This was a time of the birth and growth of industrial and financial trusts in all the capitalist countries, the beginnings of monopoly capitalism and imperialism. Of all this, however, more in Chapter 18.

Generally, the period was one of relative stability in foreign relations, the longest and most complete ever known to world capitalism. The major capitalist powers had concluded, with the Franco-German war of 1870-71, the long series of national wars that wracked capitalism during the previous decades, and they were not yet embarked upon the big imperialist wars that were to come. By force and violence, they had established their national boundaries, frontiers which with few major changes in Europe, were to last for about 35 years, or until the outbreak of the imperialist Russo-Japanese War of 1905, followed by the Balkan War of 1912 and World War I in 1914. By the same token, during these years prior to 1905 the respective capitalist powers enjoyed a relative internal stability, there being an almost complete absence of

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the great revolutionary insurrectional movements which had marked the foundation period of European and American capitalism from 1789 to 1871, outstanding examples of which were the revolution of 1830 in France, the revolution of 1848 in France, Germany, Italy, Austria, Hungary and elsewhere, the American Civil War of 1861, and the Paris Commune of 1871.

THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE LABOR MOVEMENT

In the leading capitalist countries this was a time of enormous increases in the number of wage workers. It was also one of minor advances in the living standards of the working class, particularly with respect to the skilled workers. The big capitalists of the major nations, notably England, were already embarked upon the policy of corrupting the labor aristocracy with minor concessions, and in this way they were splitting and paralyzing the fighting solidarity of the workers.

Although this was not a period of working class insurrections and bourgeois revolutions it was nevertheless one of many strikes, unexampled in size, discipline, organization, and duration. This was true of France, Germany, and Belgium, but especially so of the United States, with its violent general railroad strike of 1877, and its historic national eight-hour day strike in 1886. Among many other strikes, England had its epoch-making dock strike of 1889. In Russia, too, the workers were beginning to organize and strike. In the space of five years (1881-86) there were in that country as many as 48 strikes, involving 80,000 workers – all of which were violently repressed. The revolutionary Russian proletariat was entering upon the international labor scene.

During the interim years between the First and Second Internationals, there was, correspondingly, also a big expansion of the trade union movement throughout capitalism. By 1889 the English trade unions had reached the unprecedented total of some 1,500,000 members; in the United States the Knights of Labor, which had topped 600,000 members, had just about run its course and the American Federation of Labor had been established eight years previously, and in all the industrial countries trade unionism was taking root. The epoch of the broad expansion of labor unionism was well under way.

The interim period between the Internationals was also marked by the foundation of socialist parties in the respective

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countries. The first was in Germany, which had been established in 1869. This was followed in rapid succession by the organization of socialist parties in Holland 1870, Denmark 1871, Bohemia 1872, United States 1876, France 1879, Spain 1879, England (group) 1880, Russia (group) 1883, Norway 1887, Austria, Switzerland, and Sweden 1889. Dates of parties organized later were, Australia and Finland 1890; Poland and Italy 1892; Bulgaria, Hungary and Chile 1894; Argentina 1896, Japan 1901, Serbia 1903, Canada 1904, China 1911, and Brazil 1916. The pioneer socialist parties for the most part grew out of the old federations and groups of the First International. Far more countries were thus embraced by this new international movement than during the period of the I.W.A.

Many of the new parties, like the trade unions, had to face various forms of persecution by the governments. Outstanding in this respect was the experience of the German Social-Democratic Party. Taking advantage of two assassination attacks made upon the German Kaiser (with which the Socialists had nothing to do), Chancellor Bismarck tried to destroy the party by outlawing it under the notorious antisocialist laws. The period of illegality lasted from October 1878 until the end of 1890, during which time socialist organizations and meetings were prohibited, many leaders were banished and jailed, and the party press was banned. As the other side of his program, Bismarck conceded a skeleton system of social insurance as sops to the workers. The party held its congresses abroad and there also it printed its underground papers. Despite the persecution and trickery of Bismarck, however, the party grew, increasing its national vote from 493,000 in 1878 to 1,427,000 in 1890. The trade unions also grew from about 50,000 to 280,000. These successes not only forced Bismarck to resign, but caused the German government to lift the ban against the Socialists. This big victory inspired the whole international movement. Referring to Bismarck and his reactionary law, Engels said, "If we were paying the old boy, he couldn't do better work for us."²

THE GOTHA COMPROMISE

An event of great ideological importance at the outset of this general interim period between the two Internationals was the amalgamation of the Marxist and Lassallean parties in a congress

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at Gotha, Germany, May 25, 1875. For several years prior to this date these two groups had been at daggers' points, with the result that German labor could make but little progress. At the unity congress the Lassalleans were in a majority, having 71 delegates, representing 16,538 members, as against 56 delegates and 9,121 members for the Marxists.³ Despite the weak stand taken by the Marxists in the negotiations, this unification was the beginning of the end for the Lassallean trend in the international labor movement.

After the dissolution of the First International Marx and Engels had continued their direct political leadership of the developing labor movement. With their great wealth of experience, understanding and training, and their extraordinary knowledge of all the major European languages (they even mastered Russian in their later years), they were brilliantly equipped for such leadership. The ensuing years were marked by a stream of letters from the two great leaders to the respective young and growing parties, and by the visits of many Socialist leaders from the various countries, seeking the advice and counsel of Marx and Engels. Naturally, the latter did not neglect such a vital development as the amalgamation of the Marxists and Lassalleans in Germany. Quite the contrary. Although the Gotha program, as adopted, comprised only a few pages, in analyzing it Marx wrote an extensive booklet. This turned out to be one of the greatest of Marx's analytical and programmatic works.

Marx scathingly criticized the Gotha agreement, which was an early example of the tendency of German Social-Democrats, in the name of party unity, to blur over questions of principle. Marx crucified virtually every phrase in it. In what became his famous booklet, *Critique of the Gotha Program*, Marx condemned its faulty economics, its wrong attitude regarding the state, its surrender to Lassalle's (Malthusian) conception of "the iron law of wages," its adoption of the futile panacea of state aid for cooperatives, its failure to make a definite demand for the eight-hour day, its underplay of internationalism, etc. Engels said that "almost every word in this program... could be criticized."⁴

Another brilliant example of international leadership given at this time was Engels' classical reply a few months later to the blind Professor Eugene Dühring of Berlin University. The latter had recently joined the Social-Democratic Party and was setting

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out to re-write the party's program from top to bottom in a bourgeois direction. Engels' reply was a fundamental presentation of the Marxist position on philosophy and science. It became a great Marxist classic.⁵

That there were already at this time strong opportunist trends in the German party was manifest from its leadership's reaction to these two historic corrections and teachings by Marx and Engels. Marx sent his *Critique of the Gotha Program* to Liebknecht, Mehring says, but "the only result of this powerful letter was to cause the addressees to make a few minor and comparatively unimportant improvements in their draft."⁶ Actually, Bebel, who was in jail at the time, did not get to hear of the document until many years afterward. It was suppressed for 16 years and was not published until 1891.⁷ And Engels' profound criticisms of Dühring, which were first printed in 1877 in the party's central organ *Vorwärts*, aroused such a storm of criticism from official circles that Engels narrowly escaped formal censure.

CONTINUING INTERNATIONAL TENDENCIES

During the period between the two Internationals there was a continuous and growing pressure for cooperation and organization internationally among the various workers' parties and trade unions. The first general expression of this sentiment was the Universal Socialist Congress of Ghent, Belgium, in September 1877. There were 42 delegates, including Liebknecht and Kropotkin. De Paepe represented the utopian Oneida Community of New York. Disputes occurred between the Marxist and Bakuninist factions over questions of the state, collectivism, political action, insurrection, and various other matters. An important proposal was for the founding of a broad international trade union congress. The Anarchists were but a small minority and generally the Marxist point of view prevailed. Hopes entertained by some for an amalgamation of the two tendencies proved futile. During the congress the Marxist delegates caucused by themselves and decided to set up an international bureau in Belgium, but the plan never materialized.

Another Socialist congress was held in October 1881, in the little town of Chur, near Zurich. The Anarchists did not attend. Liebknecht was present, and the American delegate for the Socialist Labor Party was P. J. McGuire, president of the United Broth-

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erhood of Carpenters and Joiners. The question of forming a new international occupied much attention of the delegates, but without positive results. Stekloff says, "the Chur congress itself came to the conclusion that a federation of socialist forces was not yet practicable."⁸ Nor could an international journal be established. The young Socialist parties were still too weak for real international organization.

Repeated proposals were made also during the late seventies and early eighties to re-establish the International, but both Marx and Engels felt such a move to be premature. During 1883 and 1886 international labor conferences were held in Paris, and one took place in London in 1888. The reports to those gatherings showed a rapid growth of Socialist parties and trade unions throughout western Europe, and the labor movement in the United States was blazing along in the forefront of the world's fighting workers. The need of the workers for international solidarity was imperative. The time had finally ripened for the reconstitution of the International on a new basis, and the movement was to come to fruition in the historic congress in Paris in 1889.

THE DEATH OF KARL MARX

On March 14, 1883, the world proletariat lost its greatest leader. Karl Marx died at the age of 65. He passed away peacefully in the afternoon, dozing in his arm chair, at 41 Maitland Park Road, Haverstock Hill, London, where he had been living for some years past. The immediate cause of death was an internal hemorrhage, apparently originating in a tumor in one of his lungs. For years he had been in steadily worsening health, largely caused by overwork and poverty. His dwindling vitality had been further weakened by the shock of the death of his devoted wife Jenny in December 1881, and of his daughter, also named Jenny, in January 1883.⁹ Thus passed the greatest of all political thinkers, the man who wrote the handwriting on the wall for the world capitalist system.

Known to his intimates as "the Moor" because of his dark complexion, Marx lived simply, and he was also interred with simplicity. Only a few of his close relatives and friends were present – besides Engels, Friedrich Lessner and Lochner, comrades from the days of the Communist League; his two sons-in-law, Paul Lafargue and Charles Longuet, Liebknecht from Germany,

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and the two eminent scientists, Carl Schorlemmer, the noted chemist, and Sir Edwin Ray Lankester, outstanding biologist. He was buried on March 17, in Highgate Cemetery, London, where a small stone now stands in his memory. Marx's old-time friend and comrade-in-arms, Frederick Engels, spoke the following words of appreciation over the grave of the immortal battler for human freedom:

“Just as Darwin discovered the law of evolution in organic nature, so Marx discovered the law of evolution in human history; he discovered the simple fact, hitherto concealed by an overgrowth of ideology, that mankind must first of all eat and drink, have shelter and clothing, before it can pursue politics, science, religion, art, etc.; and that therefore the production of the immediate material means of life and consequently the degree of economic development attained by a given people or during a given epoch, form the foundation upon which the forms of government, the legal conceptions, the art and even the religious ideas of the people concerned have been evolved, and in the light of which these things must therefore be explained, instead of vice versa as had hitherto been the case.

“But that is not all. Marx also discovered the special law of motion governing the present-day capitalist method of production and the bourgeois society that this method of production has created. The discovery of surplus value suddenly threw light on the problem in trying to solve which all previous investigators, both bourgeois economists and socialist critics, had been groping in the dark.

“Two such discoveries would be enough for one life-time. Happy the man to whom it is granted to make even one such discovery. But in every single field which Marx investigated – and he investigated very many fields, none of them superficially – in every field, even in that of mathematics, he made independent discoveries.

“This was the man of science. But this was not even half the man. Science was for Marx a historically dynamic, revolutionary force. However great the joy with which he welcomed a new discovery in some theoretical science whose practical application perhaps it was as yet quite impossible to envisage, he experienced a quite other kind of joy when the discovery involved immediate revolutionary changes in industry and in the general course of

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history. For example, he followed closely the discoveries made in the field of electricity and recently those of Marcel Deprez.

“For Marx was before all else a revolutionary. His real mission in life was to contribute in one way or another to the overthrow of capitalist society and of the forms of government which it had brought into being, to contribute to the liberation of the present-day proletariat, which he was the first to make conscious of its own position and its needs, of the conditions under which it could win its freedom. Fighting was his element. And he fought with a passion, a tenacity and a success such as few could rival. His work on the first *Rheinische Zeitung* (1842), the Paris *Vorwaerts Zeitung* (1844), the Brussels *Deutsche Zeitung* (1847), the *Neue Rheinische Zeitung* (1848-9), the *New York Tribune* (1852-61), and in addition to these a host of militant pamphlets, work in revolutionary clubs in Paris, Brussels and London, and finally, crowning all, the formation of the International Workingmen’s Association – this was indeed an achievement of which Marx might well have been proud, even if he had done nothing else.

“And consequently Marx was the best hated and most calumniated man of his times. Governments, both absolutist and republican, deported him from their territories. The bourgeoisie, whether conservative or extreme democrat, vied with one another in heaping slanders upon him. All this he brushed aside as though it were cobweb, ignoring them, answering only when necessity compelled him. And now he has died – beloved, revered and mourned by millions of revolutionary fellow-workers – from the mines of Siberia to California, in all parts of Europe and America – and I make bold to say that though he may have many opponents he has hardly one personal enemy.

“His name and his work will endure through the ages!”¹⁰

15. The Founding of the Second International (1889)

The congress which established the Second International opened in Paris on July 14, 1889, on the 100th anniversary of the fall of the Bastille in the great French Revolution. Called by the German and organized by the French Marxists, it brought together 391 delegates from 20 countries, four of the delegates being Americans. It was by far the largest international gathering in world labor history. The congress was held amid a great blaze of enthusiasm. Across the hall stretched banners reading, "In the name of the Paris of 1848 and of March, April and May of 1871, in the name of the France of Babeuf, Blanqui, and Varlin, greetings to the socialist workers of both worlds."¹

But there was a second "international" labor congress held in Paris at the same time. This was the meeting of the "possibilists," or opportunists (who aimed to achieve socialism within the framework of bourgeois legalism), organized by British trade union leaders and the Paul Brousse group in France. Strong efforts were made in both congresses to bring about an amalgamation, but these failed both before and during the congress. Henry M. Hyndman and others made especially energetic efforts to coalesce the two forces, with Engels opposed. Two years later, at the 1891 congress in Brussels, the groups became united.

The Marxist congress brought together many of the most notable men and women in the world Socialist movement – those who were destined to lead world labor for the next generation and to become both famous and infamous as the Second International unfolded its historic course. Among them were Keir Hardie of England; Liebknecht, Bebel, Eduard Bernstein, Georg von Vollmar and Clara Zetkin of Germany; Jules Guesde, Lafargue, Vaillant and Longuet of France; Anseele and Vandervelde of Belgium; Andreas Costa and Cipriano of Italy; Victor Adler of Austria; Domela Nieuwenhuis of Holland; Pablo Iglesias of Spain; George Plekhanov of Russia.² Gompers of the United States, who had been invited to attend, sent greetings to the two congresses, urging that they join forces. Abe Cahan and Max Pine were delegates from the New York United Hebrew Trades. Small numbers of Anarchists were at both meetings.

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The Marxists' congress in Paris attracted world attention and created enthusiasm among the workers of all countries. The toilers were at last to possess an organization capable of waging successful struggle against capitalism and of one day finally abolishing it altogether. It was to be the re-creation of the First International, but upon a far broader and stronger basis. In the congress itself the new world movement was hailed as the continuation of the old International Workingmen's Association of glorious memory. Presidents of the congress at its opening were Vaillant, a Communard, and Liebknecht, a veteran Socialist.

THE WORK OF THE CONGRESS

A great deal of the time of the congress was taken up listening to reports from the various countries represented. The general picture unfolded was that of a young, vigorous, expanding, optimistic world labor movement. The trade unions were growing in Europe and America, nearly every important country now had a Socialist Party, and Socialists were beginning to be elected to parliaments in Germany, Denmark, and elsewhere. It was altogether a very promising situation.

Due to the many reports of the respective parties, not much time was spent in discussing the several resolutions that were adopted. These included one on the abolition of standing armies and the arming of the peoples. Another was a specific endorsement of the eight-hour day, which had first been brought to the attention of the world's workers at the 1866 congress of the First International. Another resolution dealt with the question of political action, "by means of the ballot box" and on the basis of no compromises or alliances with other parties. This brought forth opposition from the small group of Anarchists, who opposed political action in general and who were, therefore, excluded from the congress. A resolution was adopted, supporting the general proposition of the Swiss government for the establishment of international labor legislation. A proposal of the French delegation to endorse the general strike as "the beginning of the socialist revolution," meeting strong German opposition, was voted down by the delegates.

The most notable decision made by the congress, however, was the establishment of May First as a day for international labor demonstration. This proposal, made by the French delegate,

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Lavigne, was in support of the A.F. of L. proposed general strike for the eight-hour day set for May 1, 1890. The congress resolution reads: "The congress decides to organize a great international demonstration, so that in all countries and in all cities on one appointed day the toiling masses shall demand of the state authorities the legal reduction of the working day to eight hours, as well as the carrying out of other decisions of the Paris congress. Since a similar demonstration has already been decided upon for May 1, 1890, by the American Federation of Labor at its convention in St. Louis, December 1888, this day is accepted for the international demonstration. The workers of the various countries must organize their demonstrations according to conditions prevailing in each country." At later congresses this decision was repeated, and May Day was established as a regular institution. Thus was born the great fighting holiday of the world's workers.³

THE MARXIST ORIENTATION OF THE CONGRESS

The Paris congress demonstrated that Marxism had become dominant in the world labor movement, particularly in its political wing. During the thirteen years since the dissolution of the First International, in the host of new working-class organizations that had developed, the followers of Marx were generally looked to for leadership. Under the guidance of Marx and Engels the number of Marxists had greatly increased and their press had multiplied. This situation was a fundamental advance over the period of the First International, when the Marxists, relatively only a handful in numbers, constantly had to fight for their political life against various militant sects and deviations. This Marxist hegemony did not mean, however, that the several sects that had plagued the life of the First International had been completely extinguished – but at least most of them had been reduced to manageable proportions. The Proudhonists were now largely a memory; the Blanquists were but a minor faction in France; the Lassalleans were on their last legs in Germany and Austria; and the Bakuninist Anarchists – those of them who had not become syndicalists – were pretty much an isolated sect.

The largest numbers of Marxists were in Germany, and already the Social-Democratic Party of that country had established its political leadership in the Second International, a leadership which was to endure virtually unchallenged until the formation of

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the Communist International in 1919. As Lenin remarked later, the German working class was for almost half a century "the model of socialist organization for the whole world."⁴ German capitalism was expanding rapidly, and the party and the trade unions were growing swiftly. Since the time of the First International many new Marxist writers had developed in the various countries (usually not without serious theoretical shortcomings). Chief among these writers was Karl Kautsky of Germany. Kautsky (1854-1938), whose father was a Czech and his mother a German, was born in Austria. After the passing of Engels, he became the outstanding theoretical leader of the Second International. Shortly following the Paris congress of 1889, Kautsky wrote the well-known Erfurt program of the German Social-Democratic Party, which served for many years as a model for other Socialist parties. This program, while ignoring the basic demand for a German democratic republic and passing over the vital question of the dictatorship of the proletariat and also the manner of the abolition of the capitalist system, otherwise followed the general line worked out in the great writings of Marx and Engels.

Existing in a more revolutionary period, the First International at its congress always had to deal with the question of the revolution, either because of actual political developments or under pressure of the strong ultra-leftist sects of the times. But the Second International in 1889, working in a period of relatively calmer capitalist development, did not feel the proletarian revolution to be so urgently knocking at its door, although many Marxists (like the then sectarian Hyndman of England) expected the European revolution to be an accomplished fact before the end of the 19th century. The congress, while identifying itself with the ultimate revolutionary perspectives of the First International, devoted itself basically to such urgent immediate tasks of the current class struggle as the fight against militarism, for the eight-hour day, the extension of the workers' franchise, the enactment of factory legislation, and, of course, the building of the trade unions, cooperatives, and workers' socialist parties.

THE RIGHT DANGER

The bane of the First International had been the strong and impatient, pseudo-revolutionary sects, the ultra-leftists who sought to push the workers into untimely life and death struggles

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with the capitalist class. The curse of the Second International, as it turned out, came from the opposite political direction – from the right opportunists who, paralyzing the fighting initiative of the workers, wanted to reduce the labor movement to the status of a petty-bourgeois auxiliary of the capitalist system. The ultra-lefts were a very minor factor. The right tendency, which eventually was to dominate and ruin the new International, was in evidence, in at least two sharp respects already at the foundation congress.

The first of these right manifestations was the fact that the “possibilists” were strong enough to dare to hold their separate congress and thus to challenge the leadership of the revolutionary Marxists in the world labor movement. During the time of the First International there was an incipient right wing (as well as strong leftist groups), represented by the opportunist English trade union leaders – Odger, Cremer, Applegarth, and others – and by the unaffiliated Lassallean movement in Germany. It did no little damage to the International, as we have seen in passing. The bold arrogance of the Paris congress of the “possibilists” in 1889 showed how much this dangerous right tendency had grown in the intervening years. The “possibilists” congress failed of its immediate objectives, but its very existence was a sinister portent of grave dangers ahead.

The second manifestation of the right tendency occurred within the Marxist congress itself. This went practically unnoticed, but it was none the less dangerous for that. This was the failure of the delegates to set up an international center to carry on the work between congresses. As the course of events was to show, the new International for a dozen years had no international leading committee, no world headquarters, no international journal, no regular constitution, no definite political program, no disciplined carrying out of decisions, and not even a formal name.

In all these respects the Second International fell far behind the First International, which, as shown in previous chapters, had a well-developed international organization – a General Council, a constitution, a paper, a program, and a name. In fact, the Second International lagged behind even the Anarchist conception of an international organization. The insistent demand of the Proudhonists and Bakuninists had been that the International center should be a correspondence and statistical bureau, but the

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Second International, at its foundation and for a decade afterward, did not even reach this minimum of world organization.

It would, of course, have been out of place for the Second International to set up such a strong world center as the First International did at The Hague congress of 1872, in its life and death struggle with the Bakuninists; but not to establish any center at all was to understress greatly internationalism and to overstress heavily national organization and action. This was all the more dangerous, as it turned out in the eventual great clash of 1914, because the possibility of a war collision among the world powers was already beginning to generate, and the supreme danger for the workers in the coming period was that of the labor movement in the various countries yielding to the rising national pressures of the bourgeoisie.

ORIGINS OF RIGHT OPPORTUNISM

The right opportunist tendency in the Second International, which was later to cause such havoc to the world's workers, had two main sources. First and most dangerous of all, it was developed among the skilled workers and labor bureaucracy in the trade unions, whom, through wage concessions, the employers undertook to use against the great mass of the working class, by crippling its strikes, by keeping its unions small and divided, and by fighting against class consciousness and independent working-class political action. The second source of right opportunism was in the large number of petty-bourgeois intellectuals who sought to make careers by leading the political organizations of the workers, by filling the various city, state, and national government posts as representatives of the workers. They constantly strove to reshape labor policy into mild reform programs of importance to the petty-bourgeoisie and the capitalists. Generally, during the life of the Second International these two currents of opportunism worked freely together; the working-class opportunists functioning mainly, but not exclusively, in the trade unions, and the petty-bourgeois intellectuals operating mostly in the political field. Both groups based themselves on the labor aristocracy and both tended to subordinate the interests of the working class as a whole to those of the capitalist class.

At the time of the founding of the Second International right opportunism was furthest developed in the British labor move-

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ment. This was primarily because, during this period, Great Britain was the leading imperialist power and there the employers were most widely applying the internal imperialist policy of corrupting the labor aristocracy and their leaders, primarily on the basis of super-profits wrung from the colonial peoples. The crippling effects of this material and ideological corruption were very pronounced, as Marx, Engels, and others had long before pointed out. Rothstein says "The 80's and 90's of the last century represent the lowest point in the class consciousness of the English workers; action, even in the shape of innocent Labor candidatures as in the middle 70's, was definitely abandoned; individual workers voted either for Liberal or Tory, the very word 'revolution' elicited a scornful shrug of the shoulders, if not direct abuse."⁵ Already in 1879 Engels wrote to Bernstein: "It must be acknowledged that at this moment there does not exist in Britain a real working class movement in the Continental sense."⁶ And this in the land which a generation before had produced the great Chartist movement.

The political line of the employers and of their agents, the conservative labor bureaucrats, was to keep the working class under the tutelage of the Liberal Party; but when in 1880 the Marxists, led by Henry M. Hyndman, formed a group which in 1889 became the Social Democratic Federation, the bourgeoisie had to shift its political policy a bit. This was made manifest by the formation in 1884 of the Fabian League, headed by Sidney Webb, George Bernard Shaw, and other petty-bourgeois radical intellectuals. The main purpose of this organization was to castrate Marxism and to render innocuous independent political action of the working class, all of which was of great service to the capitalists. Preaching a vague, evolutionary socialism, the Fabians attacked every principle of revolutionary Marxism. In view of the non-Marxist ideology of the workers in Great Britain, the Fabians were openly anti-Marxist. Pearse, the Fabian historian, says that the first achievement of the Society was to break the spell of Marxism in England.⁷

Sidney Webb and his co-workers set out to make it "as easy and matter of course for the ordinary and respectable Englishman to be a socialist as to be a liberal or a conservative."⁸ Webb remarks, "It was indispensable for socialism in England that it should be consistent with the four rules of arithmetic, with the

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Ten Commandments, and with the Union Jack. There should be no confiscation.”⁹ Webb also said: “The founder of British socialism was not Karl Marx, but Robert Owen, and Robert Owen preached, not ‘class war,’ but the doctrine of human brotherhood.”¹⁰ Fabianism, with its vague socialist objectives, was a petty-bourgeois reform movement, harmless to the capitalist system. It spread its influence rapidly among the conservative trade union leaders of the 1880’s, and in fact it still dominates the ideology of the British Labor Party.

In the United States opportunism was also sinking its roots in the labor movement. Characteristic examples of reactionary labor bureaucrats at this time were Terence V. Powderly and P. M. Arthur, head of the Railroad Engineers; and the Gompers A.F. of L. leaders, already avowed anti-Socialists, were laying the basis of their ultra-corrupt bureaucracy of the next decades. In France, too, the existence of the Broussist “possibilist” movement testified to the beginnings of right opportunism in that country. It was only to be a few years until the brazen attempts of the French bourgeoisie to corrupt the Socialist leaders in France would rock the Second International from one end to the other.

In Germany, of the big capitalist states, opportunism was least developed at this time. There the Marxists were most firmly in control of the workers’ movement, both in its trade union and political aspects, and the Party was the most proletarian of any in its composition.¹¹ The right wing was still relatively small and un-influential. This was primarily because Germany, with its autocratic, semi-feudal government, was only then becoming a strong capitalist power, and its ruling class had not yet fully developed the characteristic policy of corrupting the labor aristocracy and trade union and political bureaucracy.

The German Social-Democratic Party was still illegal under the anti-Socialist laws – a situation which cultivated the Party’s militancy and scared away numerous petty-bourgeois opportunist careerists – and the trade unions were also operating under various severe legal handicaps. In later decades the German labor movement, with the rise of German imperialism, became heavily corrupted and was the chief poison source of right opportunism in the Second International; but in 1889 it was still the strongest Marxist center in the world, and the whole International looked to it for leadership.

16. Brussels, Zurich, and London (1891-1896)

The Second International held its second, third, and fourth congresses, respectively, in Brussels (August 1891), Zurich (August 1893), and London (July 1896). These years were in general a period of rapid capitalist development in Europe and the United States. Industrialization was growing fast, monopoly capitalism and imperialism were already rapidly becoming dominant, the big powers were dividing up Africa among themselves. England was heavily exporting capital. It was a time of sharpening international tensions among the great states and of increasing class struggle in the respective capitalist countries.

It was correspondingly a period of rapid growth of the Second International and of the workers' trade unions, cooperatives, and political parties that it comprised. The whole structure of international labor had received a strong impetus from the lifting of the anti-Socialist laws in Germany on January 25, 1890, by a Reichstag vote of 169 to 98.¹ Among the many outstanding strikes of this period was that of 200,000 British coal miners in 1893. In the United States the class struggle was especially fierce, the period being marked by such bitter strikes as those of the steel workers (Homestead) in 1892, the New Orleans general strike of 1892, the big coal strike of 1893, the national railroad strike (A.R.U.) in 1894, and the several strikes of the western metal miners of the early 1890's. All these big American strikes reached the acuteness of virtual local civil wars.

GROWING RIGHT OPPORTUNISM

In this period the Second International generally held to a Marxist position, but a most significant and sinister characteristic of the three congresses with which we are now dealing, was the continuously growing right tendencies that they exhibited. This trend, which eventually, two decades later, was to have disastrous consequences to the International and to the world in general, ran through all the proceedings of the three congresses at an increasing tempo. So much so, that by the end of the London congress there was a definitely developing right wing in the International, although it had not yet matured its program and organization. No

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important issue came before these congresses in which the growing right trend was not markedly felt.

On the question of International May Day, an issue of prime importance to the world's workers, the right influence was much in evidence. The German and English opportunists opposed at both the Brussels and Zurich congresses the basic idea of May First, which was to stage a big tools-down demonstration of labor's growing power and to insist upon the eight-hour day and other current demands. Their line was to shift the May First demonstration to the first Sunday in May, which would soften altogether its fighting character. Lenz says, "In proportion to the forces at their disposal, the Germans had done less to carry out the May Day decision of the Paris Congress than any other party."² Finally, at the Zurich Congress in 1893, the Germans had the manner of May Day celebration left up to the respective parties, which meant that they could freely put their own opportunist line into practice. The French and other delegations fought vigorously against this castration of May First. In this and other debates the German leaders also let it be known that in policy matters they would not allow themselves to be "dictated to" by the International.

Another example of right opportunist strength at these three congresses was shown in some implications of the fight against the Anarchists. The Anarchists were a bone of contention at the Brussels and Zurich congresses, but in London (1896) the Marxists finally excluded them by adopting a resolution which demanded, as a condition of membership in the International, the endorsement of political action. This the Anarchists would not accept, and they withdrew permanently. The strong terms of the resolution drawn up by Bebel also could have kept out the Anarcho-syndicalist unions, but the congress voted 57 to 56 not to exclude them.³ But the Second International, while thus correctly raising the bars against the petty-bourgeois ultra-left, characteristically kept the membership doors wide open to the right. A most important result of this line was to admit to membership in France, in 1894, the Jaurès-Millerand-Viviani group of 30 bourgeois radical parliamentary deputies (against Engels' advice). This reactionary step was, in the next few years, to have far-reaching consequences throughout the International.

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THE STRUGGLE AGAINST THE WAR DANGER

Already, in nearly all the congresses of the First International, the question of war was one with which the world labor movement had to concern itself. But in those early years the danger lay chiefly in national wars, such as the involvement of England in the American Civil War of 1861, the war between Prussia and Austria in 1866, and the war between France and Germany in 1870. From the outset, however, the congresses of the Second International had to face up to the danger of a far more serious war menace, the possibility of a general European imperialist war. The big European powers, increasingly imperialist in their composition and relentless in their greed, were already shaping up the war alliances that were finally to clash in World War I, in 1914 – a collision which Engels long before had foreseen.⁴ Germany, Austria, and Italy, in 1882, established their Triple Alliance, and from 1894 on, France, Russia, and England were building their Triple Entente, which finally came to fruition in 1907. The Socialist international congresses of Brussels, Zurich, and London, therefore, dealt extensively with this developing war danger, and here again, and especially in this crucial matter, the growing right opportunism in the Second International manifested itself sharply.

To meet the rising danger of a European war, the resolutions of the Brussels (1891) congress, with much revolutionary phraseology, proposed that the workers should protest vigorously against the war threat and should strengthen their international organization. The Zurich (1893) congress added the provisions that the workers should fight for general disarmament and that their parliamentary representatives should vote against war credits. The London (1896) congress demanded the abolition of standing armies, the arming of the people, the establishment of courts of arbitration, war referendum by the peoples, etc.

As against these prevention measures, the Anarchists and Anarcho-syndicalists at all three congresses brought in resolutions proposing a general strike in case of war. The chief spokesman for this project was Domela Nieuwenhuis of Holland. Nieuwenhuis (1846-1919) was a Social-Democratic member of parliament until 1894, after which he joined the Anarchists. The general strike proposals ran generally along the lines of the resolution adopted by the Brussels (1868) congress of the First Inter-

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national (criticized by Marx as utopian under the circumstances) which called upon the workers to cease work should war break out in their respective countries.

The general strike as a weapon against war was heavily voted down at the three congresses of 1891, 1893, and 1896, with especially strong opposition from the Germans. The Socialist leaders generally took the occasion to condemn the use of the general strike altogether in unmeasured terms. At the Zurich congress, Plekhanov thus stated the position of the committee, "A general strike is impossible within present-day society, for the proletariat does not possess the means to carry it out. On the other hand, were we in a position to carry out a general strike, the proletariat would already be in control of economic power and a general strike would be a sheer absurdity."⁵

Obviously, as Marx maintained and as Lenin was to make very clear in later years, the Anarchists and Syndicalists were laboring under an illusion in thinking that they could halt the approaching war simply by a general strike; nevertheless, the rejection by the Second International of the general strike in principle, which became the line of the right Social-Democrats, was crass opportunism. The working class, obviously, was not ready to give up this powerful weapon – as the English had shown in their fight for the Charter in 1842, the American workers in their eight-hour day strike in 1886, the Belgian workers in their strike for the right to vote in 1892,⁶ and as the workers were to do in many parts of the world in later years.

Already in these anti-war debates the conception of the "defense of the fatherland," which was to serve as the ideological basis of the great betrayal in 1914, was beginning to take shape. The idea was that Germany would have to defend itself against an attack from ultra-reactionary Russia, probably allied with France. In 1893 Engels favored a national defense of Germany against Russian tsarism.⁷ And it was no doubt such a war that Bebel had in mind when he said that he would himself "buckle on the sword," and also Plekhanov when he stated that the Russian people would welcome the German armies as liberators. But, as Stalin later pointed out, Engels' viewpoint was illusory;⁸ the war that was shaping up in the nineties was to be a great imperialist war, and the way the German right-wing Social-Democrats were already getting ready to participate in it was not as a revolutionary

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war to liberate Russia, but as a chauvinist defense of bourgeois Germany.

REFORMISM VERSUS REVOLUTIONARY IDEOLOGY

During the 1890's, with capitalism rapidly expanding and all the organizations of the workers steadily increasing in strength, and with no signs of early proletarian revolution on the political horizon, the main tasks were necessarily the immediate demands of the daily struggle. The Second International, however, definitely developed a right orientation to overstress these partial demands and to understress the development of a rounded-out Marxist ideology. In crass cases this meant to deny outright the revolutionary objectives of socialism. The issue, as stated at the time by the left, was "Reform versus Revolution," and the International leaders more and more supported immediate demands exclusively at the expense of revolutionary ideology.

In the International congresses of this period discussion of the general political program especially came up under the head of "tactics," with the German delegation generally objecting to a full discussion on the grounds that such "tactical" matters fell within the province of the respective national parties. Where the International was heading in this vital respect was well illustrated by the resolution on "tactical" questions at the Zurich (1893) congress. Putting all the weight on the fight for immediate demands, the resolution characteristically almost completely ignored the revolutionary aims of socialism. Lenz thus correctly sums it up: "This resolution, which uttered a warning against unprincipled compromise and recommended the workers never to lose sight of their revolutionary goal, nevertheless indicated a thoroughly reformist conception of the state; not the destruction of the bourgeois state and the creation of the proletarian state, but the transformation of the organs of capitalist rule, that is, of the bourgeois state with its bureaucracy and armed force, into the means whereby to liberate the proletariat."⁹

In the German Social-Democratic Party, the leading party of the Second International, the trend towards right opportunism and reformism was more clearly in evidence than in the International congresses. More and more such documents as *The Communist Manifesto* were pushed into the background, considered as museum pieces. This was to be seen by many developments.

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First, in the matter of the Erfurt program of 1891, which was written by Kautsky and became the model for Socialist parties the world over. This program, while loaded with revolutionary analysis, slurred over or ignored the basic question of the revolution and the dictatorship of the proletariat.¹⁰ It also failed to demand a republic in Germany. A blazing danger signal especially was the opportunist program put forward by Georg von Vollmar at this time. Much in the spirit of the English Fabians, the leading reformists in the International, von Vollmar advocated the progressive achievement of partial demands as the road to socialism, proposed an alliance between the party and the rich peasantry, hailed the Triple Alliance as a guarantee of peace, and supported a policy of collaboration with bourgeois parties. The German party tolerated the membership of this petty-bourgeois reformist.

An especially significant expression of the growing reformist trend in the German movement was indicated by what the official heads of the party did to the Preface to Marx's, *The Class Struggles in France*, written by Engels in March 1895. In this piece Engels stressed the greater difficulties which the development of modern military techniques had placed in the way of barricade fighting in the cities, the traditional manner of winning revolutions. In printing this material, the *Vorwaerts*, with Liebknecht as editor, cut out some key passages, thereby leaving the direct implication that Engels (in agreement with the right wing) had discarded the perspective of armed struggle in the revolution. It will be remembered that the German party leadership suppressed Marx's criticism of the Gotha program of 1875 and also that Engels' criticism of the Erfurt program of 1891 was not published for 10 years.¹¹

The key section deleted from Engels' preface reads: "Does that mean that in the future the street fight will play no further role? Certainly not. It only means that the conditions since 1848 have become far more unfavorable for civil fights, far more favorable for the military. A future street fight can therefore only be victorious when this unfavorable situation is compensated by other factors. Accordingly it will occur more seldom in the beginning of a great revolution than in its further progress, and will have to be undertaken with greater forces. These, however, may then well prefer, as in the whole Great French Revolution on September 4 and October 31, 1870, in Paris, the open attack to the passive bar-

ricade tactics.”¹²

For many years afterward the gross distortion of Engels' preface was used effectively by the reformists against the left wing. But in the many revolutions yet to come it was to be demonstrated that, contrary to the Social-Democratic opportunists, the advanced military techniques of the bourgeoisie would prove to be no final defense against aroused, revolutionary peoples, who could nearly always take large sections of the armed forces with them.

THE FIGHT OF THE LEFT

As against the growing militancy, program, and organization of the right wing in the International, the fight of the left was only partially effective. At the time the left, which in many cases was tending to slur over or to forget vital lessons of Marx and the First International, had no definite program of its own. It also had not clearly differentiated itself from the centrist tendencies which were already beginning to develop. This differentiation of the revolutionary left from the vacillating center – a development which required the highest level of political understanding – could not and did not take place fully until the class struggle had reached a much higher stage of development than it was in then, until the time of World War I and the Russian Revolution.

At this period the Bebels, Kautskys, Plekhanovs, and others, who were eventually to become the center, were already displaying some right tendencies. But they were still hanging on to major elements of Marxism. Indeed, they prided themselves on being the “orthodox” Marxists. They had not yet faced the severe revolutionary tasks and struggles that would crystallize their centrism and ultimately force this tendency into alliance with the right wing. Undoubtedly, however, even at this early date the increasing vacillations of the “orthodox” Marxists – leaders of the Kautsky trend – provided a certain amount of cover and protection for the right wing.

The international “left” wing of the period, therefore, was a broad amorphous grouping, containing many semi-opportunists and potential reformists, as well as such resolute fighters as Rosa Luxemburg, Clara Zetkin, and Franz Mehring. But Kautsky, Guesde, and Plekhanov, the outstanding “orthodox” leaders of the Second International of that time, never were to become Com-

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munists. The trend of this broad grouping was to fire into the main danger, which was the growing extreme right wing, exemplified by such forces as the Fabians in England and the supporters of Von Vollmar in Germany; but within its own broad confines many right errors and deviations were expressed and tolerated.

Engels, who was then far along in years, led this general fight of the left. But the help he got from the “orthodox” Marxist leaders, notably in Germany, was often dubious. Kautsky, with his questionable formulations in the Erfurt program, and Bebel and Liebknecht, with their militant, uncritical defense of the political line of the German party, often undercut the fight against the growing right wing in Germany and in the International as a whole.

In a letter to Sorge in October 1877, Marx had criticized sprouting opportunism in the German Social-Democracy. He said: “A rotten spirit is making itself felt in our party in Germany, not so much among the masses as among the leaders (upper class and ‘workers’).”¹³ And he proceeded to outline a whole series of dangerous tendencies in the party. In a letter to Bernstein in March 1883, Engels stated, “From the outset we have always fought to the very utmost against the petty-bourgeois and philistine disposition within the party.”¹⁴ Marx’s sweeping criticisms of the Gotha program and Engels’ later sharp criticisms of the Erfurt program, were only two incidents of the long two-front fight carried on by these two great leaders – against the right and against the ultra left – against the English opportunist and German petty-bourgeois Socialists, as well as against the Bakuninists. Despite all his long fight against the growing right wing, however, Engels did not fully realize the fatal grip that opportunism was securing upon the German party. In June 1885 he wrote to Becker, “In a petty-bourgeois country like Germany the party is bound also to have a *petty-bourgeois ‘educated’ right wing*, which it shakes off at the decisive moment.”¹⁵ Unfortunately, however, although later on in many internal struggles the party did check or defeat the right wing, at the final time of supreme crisis and imperative need for resolute revolutionary action in 1914, it could not “shake off” the corrupt right wing.

THE DEATH OF FREDERICK ENGELS

On August 5, 1895, the workers’ world was shocked by the death of Frederick Engels in England. He was 75 years old when

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he passed away, from cancer of the throat. His body was cremated and, following his wishes, his ashes were strewn over the sea. The workers of the world lost a brilliant thinker and valiant comrade-in-arms of Marx with the demise of this great Marxist leader.¹⁶

Engels was politically active almost up to the day of his death. After Marx died in 1883, Engels, laying aside his planned further scientific writings, spent the next eleven years of his life mainly in putting into final form the second and third volumes of *Capital*. Marx had been able to finish only one section of his great work, Volume One, and he left the rest largely in the shape of a vast number of notes which were only partly organized. Engels performed a magnificent task in assembling all this material into finished form. At the time of his death Engels was preparing to write a history of the First International, but unfortunately he was cut off before he could undertake it.

Engels was also very much occupied with practical political day-to-day guidance in the international labor movement. During the interim between the two internationals, he and Marx, up to the latter's death, had generally carried on the leading role of the old General Council of the I.W.A. Even after the formation of the Second International Engels continued very much in the same way, for, as pointed out above, the new International went along for over ten years without any formal world organization, journal, or headquarters. Engels, in fact, was generally looked upon as the world Socialist leader, and he remained for years in close touch with the Socialist parties all over the world. He visited the United States and for many years he was a close friend and advisor of the American Socialist movement. Among the classic Marxist writings are his innumerable letters to the parties in France, Germany, Poland, Spain, Russia, the United States, and many other countries.

Brilliant, modest, indefatigable, Frederick Engels made many and great contributions to the thinking and fighting of the world's workers. His name will remain forever enshrined in the memory of the international proletariat, along with that of his great co-worker, Karl Marx. Engels was one of the master builders of socialism.

17. International Trade Unionism

Trade unions are the basic mass organizations of the working class. This is because they are formed exclusively of workers, they are organized in the shops directly at the point of production and exploitation, they embrace the major mass of the workers, and they concern themselves primarily with questions ordinarily of the greatest urgency to the working masses – wages, hours, and working conditions. Trade unions are usually (but not always) the first type of organization set up by the working class in a given country, either in the shape of full-fledged labor organizations or of preliminary “friendly societies.”

When trade unions reach the point of engaging in political action they do this by either setting up or supporting specific political organizations, in the form of parliamentary committees, labor parties, or Marxist parties. They are not equipped, as such, successfully to prosecute political campaigns. By 1900 the steadily growing trade unions had generally won for themselves, after decades of struggle, the formal legal right to organize in Central Western Europe and the United States; but in practice this right was still bitterly contested by the employers, especially in the United States. In Russia and generally in Eastern Europe, the unions at this time, living under terroristic conditions, had no legal existence, although the workers constantly made heroic efforts to form such organizations.

England, where capitalism took its first leap forward, was the birthplace of trade unionism. There trade unions were already to be found in mid-eighteenth century. The workers in all other countries, in establishing their labor organizations, learned much from the British working class; but their unions also were profoundly influenced by their specific national conditions. At the beginning of the 20th century, therefore, trade unions generally fell into three broad categories – pure and simple trade unions, Social-Democratic unions, and Anarcho-syndicalist unions. In several European countries, there were also a few small Catholic unions, organized primarily on the basis of Pope Leo XIII’s encyclical of 1891, *De Rerum Novarum*.

PURE AND SIMPLE TRADE UNIONISM

The pure and simple type of trade unionism, or as Lenin called

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it, “economism,” which, in its classical form, is now virtually extinct, was characterized by a tacit or open acceptance of capitalism; it was marked by a low degree of class consciousness and a weak spirit of internationalism. It worked upon the principle of the protection of the skilled workers at the expense of the broad mass of the working class, a course which fitted right in with the employers’ policy of corrupting the labor aristocracy and trade union bureaucracy. Pure and simple trade unions, usually made up of skilled workers, commonly were built on a craft basis, and with a low level of class solidarity; in strikes they generally followed the principle of each for himself and the devil take the hindmost. They confined their activities mostly to elementary economic questions. In political matters they tagged along after the liberal sections of the bourgeoisie, and their leaders’ slogan was, “No politics in the Unions” – no working class politics, that is.

Pure and simple trade unionism, accepting bourgeois economics, worked along from day to day, with contempt for Marxist theory and without any concrete perspective. As early as 1883, before a U.S. Senate Commission, this primitive labor line was thus expressed by Strasser (an erstwhile socialist), a close co-worker of Samuel Gompers: “We have no ultimate aims. We are going on from day to day. We are fighting only for immediate objects, objects that can be realized in a few years.... We want to dress better, and to live better, and to become better citizens, generally.”¹

The “home” of pure and simple trade unionism was in Great Britain and her white-ruled dominions – Canada, Australia, New Zealand, and South Africa – and also in the United States. This type of unionism was characteristic of the upward swing period of competitive capitalism and the early stages of imperialism, when there were some minor improvements in real wages, especially of the skilled. In the initial phases of capitalism in Great Britain and the United States, on the other hand, when the working class was being formed, the trade unions were radical if not revolutionary, as illustrated by the militant American trade unions of the 1830’s and the great British Chartist movement of the 1840’s. In 1900, the total membership of the British trade unions was 1,972,000² and of the American unions, some 800,000 of which 580,000 were in the A.F. of L.³

The working class of Great Britain, by 1900, was already

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strongly emerging from the stage of pure and simple trade unionism. This was basically because of the increasing economic difficulties of British imperialism in a world of vigorous capitalist rivals. The advance of the British labor movement was marked by its growing politicalization – by the formation of the Social Democratic Federation (Hyndman) in 1881, and the Socialist League in 1882 (both Marxist), the launching of the Independent Labor Party (Keir Hardie) in 1893 (revisionist Social-Democratic), and the setting up by the trade unions of the Labour Representative Committee in 1899, which five years later became the Labour Party, with an essentially Fabian opportunist leadership – MacDonal, Hardie, Burns, Snowden, & Co.⁴ Generally, pure and simple trade unionism far pre-dates the Marxist parties, because in certain countries the workers have confronted less acute problems of making a political fight for domestic rights.⁵ When they arrive at the point of taking up class political action, they set up broad labor parties, instead of endorsing the characteristic Social-Democratic parties.

In the United States, however, the advance from pure and simple trade unionism proceeded at a much slower pace. This was basically because of the stronger position of American imperialism in the world capitalist economy. In no country were the evils of trade union primitivism so emphasized as in the United States. In 1900 Samuel Gompers (1850-1924), an avowed enemy of socialism, stood at the head of the American Federation of Labor. Many trade union leaders, openly affiliated with the Democratic and Republican parties, were sunk in depths of personal corruption altogether without parallel in world labor circles. They flagrantly stole money from their unions, sold “strike insurance” to employers, barred Negroes and women from the unions and the industries, made agreements with corporations to keep the unskilled workers unorganized, and ruled their unions at the point of the gun. Class collaboration was their principle, socialism their big enemy, and the sacredness of union contracts their holy slogan. They broke innumerable strikes with their craft union scabbery, and they systematically kept the labor movement politically impotent. Many of them became wealthy, with their various forms of graft and corruption.

In 1900-01 American Socialists, breaking with De Leon’s sectarian Socialist Labor Party, established the Socialist Party, head-

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ed by Debs and Hillquit. But the Socialists were not fated to win the political leadership of the trade unions from the corrupt Gompers clique. Today, the bulk of American trade unions, which have at least developed elementary political programs of immediate political demands and engage in much political activity, can no longer be classed as pure and simple trade unions. But their top leaders, rigidly anti-Marxist, still generally remain enemies of independent working-class political action, and are frank and ardent defenders of American capitalism.

MARXIST TRADE UNIONISM

In the 1900 period Social-Democratic trade unionism was characteristic of practically all the continental nations, except the Latin countries, from the English channel up to and including Russia, with certain national variations. In the latter respect the Russian unions were the outstanding example, being far more revolutionary than the Social-Democratic labor organizations in Western Europe – but of all this, more further along.

The European Social-Democratic trade unions, differing generally from those in the United States, endorsed the perspective of socialism and either officially or unofficially accepted the political leadership of the Social-Democratic parties. Industrial in form and centralized in controls, they were definitely political in their outlook. Their greater politicalization was partly because of the influence of the Marxist parties, but also because in these countries the remnants of feudalism were much stronger and the workers had to devote more of their activities than in England or the United States to the winning of elementary political rights – to vote, to organize, to strike, etc. Generally these unions were built under the leadership of the Socialist parties, or largely so.

The German unions were the world models for this type of trade unionism, and the Austrian unions were close behind them. The pioneers among the German unions began to take shape, mostly as craft organizations, about the time of the 1848 revolution. They were wiped out by the reaction following this lost revolution. By the middle 1860's they began again to grow, but slowly, until they were hit by the anti-Socialist law of 1878, which liquidated most of them and virtually wiped out the whole trade union press.⁶ Like the Social-Democratic party, however, the trade unions, after the first shock, gradually began to grow. By the time

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the repressive law was lifted, in 1890, they were stronger than ever, with a total membership of 280,000 organized into 58 national unions. By 1900 the German unions numbered 680,000 members and they were entering into a period of rapid growth. In 1890, when the General Federation of Trade Unions was formed, Karl Legien (1861-1920) became the general secretary, and he remained at the head of the German labor movement until he died thirty years later.

The top German trade union leadership early grew opportunist, and eventually it became (organizationally if not theoretically) the strongest center of revisionism in the entire German labor movement, political and economic. The leaders established strict centralized controls in the unions, reduced trade union democracy to a minimum, and systematically played down all manifestations of rank-and-file militancy, their castration of the May First demonstration being only one of many examples of this policy. The Social-Democratic trade union leaders, while professing allegiance to the party, endorsed the principle of the “neutrality” of the unions and sought to build them up under their own bureaucratic control – a tendency which, as we shall see, wrought havoc in the German labor movement. The left wing fought this separatist tendency and urged joint relations with the party.⁷

ANARCHO-SYNDICALISM

The Anarcho-syndicalist unions, which likewise constituted a well-defined labor tendency by 1900, generally had a background of Proudhonism and Bakuninism. They were the dominant form of labor unionism in France, Italy, Spain, and Portugal, although in all these countries the Marxist trade unions had considerable strength. In Latin America – Chile, Argentina, Mexico, etc. – the Syndicalists eventually exerted considerable influence in the trade union movement, and there were some syndicalist tendencies (from 1905 on) in the United States, England, Australia, and Canada, principally in the Industrial Workers of the World. The major forces which produced strong syndicalist trade unions were largely the same as those which developed anarchism in general – namely, industrial backwardness, small handicraft industries, franchise limitations, extreme political corruption in government, Social-Democratic opportunism, and Catholic authoritarianism.

The Anarcho-syndicalist unions of the period were character-

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ized by a revolutionary perspective, looking forward to a future society operated by the trade unions. Their revolutionary weapon was the general strike, growing into insurrection. They were aggressively "direct actionist" and anti-political; they eschewed all participation in electoral and organized parliamentary activities. They also practiced sabotage in strikes, and largely in the form of go-slow movements in the shops. Organizationally, the Syndicalist unions were decentralized and highly autonomous. For united action they depended largely upon mass spontaneity and the organized activities of the "militant minority." While accepting broad Marxist principles of the class struggle, generally their ideology was permeated with Anarchist and semi-Anarchist conceptions. Lenin criticized Anarcho-syndicalism, with its rejection of "petty work" as "waiting for the great days," with "an inability to muster the forces which create great events."⁸

France was the main stronghold of Anarcho-syndicalism. There the trade unions were born into traditions of Proudhonism, Blanquism, and Bakuninism, and they had in their background a long series of revolutionary struggles. The first substantial trade unions in France grew up shortly after the Paris Commune of 1871. The law of 1884 granted the workers, with limitations, the legal right to organize trade unions. But this, says Lefranc "only legalized the fact"⁹; for the workers were unionizing without legal sanction, five national federations existing in Paris before 1884. The French trade union movement developed along two main organizational lines, that is, it built up two distinct national sections: of local trades councils (*bourses du travail*) and of national industrial and craft federations. In 1895 the movement was united in the General Confederation of Labor (C.G.T.)

The recognized founder of the French Syndicalist, or revolutionary trade union movement, was Fernand Pelloutier, a Communist-Anarchist, who laid down its general principles. Georges Sorel, a French intellectual, undertook to theorize Anarcho-syndicalism, his principal contributions being the glorification of violence as such, and the metaphysical concept of the general strike as a social myth.¹⁰ In later years Sorel's ideas played an important part in the ideological set-up of the Italian fascists. The French Syndicalist movement finally formulated its program at its congress in Amiens (December 1906), which produced the famous *Charte d'Amiens*. This document states that the C.G.T.

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“prepares complete emancipation, with the general strike as the means of action, and it considers that the trade union (*syndicat*), today the group of resistance, will be in the future the group of production and distribution, the basis of social reorganization.”¹¹ The Syndicalist trends in Italy and Spain largely followed the French pattern.

TOWARD A TRADE UNION INTERNATIONAL

From their beginnings the trade unions of the various countries displayed strong international tendencies. It was the trade unionists of France and England who founded the First International in 1864, and they always played a big part in the congresses and other activities of that organization. The First International concerned itself very much with questions of trade union struggle, and it was this phase of its work that interested the National Labor Union of the United States. In later years, as the trade unions expanded and multiplied and as the First International became more and more concerned with political questions, sentiment grew for the establishment of an additional international, composed only of trade unions.

This matter was discussed at I.W.A. conventions, and the general idea was endorsed at the Universal Socialist Congress in Ghent, in September 1877 (Chapter 14), but nothing concrete came of it. Throughout its history the First International accepted trade union affiliations. The Second International also, continued to include trade unions, but the matter of a separate trade union international was discussed already at the Zurich and London congresses of the Second International in 1893 and 1896. Meanwhile, the urge towards international trade union organization was expressing itself concretely by the formation of international trade conferences and secretariats. The cigarmakers in 1871,¹² the printers in 1889, and the coal miners in 1890 took the lead in this direction. By 1900 there were 17 of such secretariats,¹³ covering major crafts and industries. These movements gave the unions some measure of the inter-country cooperation that the workers found to be indispensable.

Pressure for the establishment of an all-inclusive trade union international continued and grew stronger. “The British and French trade unionists,” says Lorwin, “resented the domination of the Socialists in the Second International.”¹⁴ The American Fed-

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eration of Labor, which also did not follow the lead of the European Social-Democracy, likewise favored closer international trade union cooperation. To this end it proposed a world congress of trade unionists, to take place in Chicago at the same time as the World's Fair of 1893. This plan fell through when the 1891 Brussels congress of the Second International refused to endorse it.

The big obstructionists in the way of a trade union international were the conservative Social-Democrats standing at the head of the German labor movement, the growing Legien machine. Seeing the anti-Social-Democratic orientation of the British, French, and American trade union movements, they were afraid that an independent international movement would escape their control. Although pushed along by the growing movement for international labor cooperation, they, for the time being at least, succeeded in preventing its crystallization in the desired separate trade union international.

At a broad trade union conference in Copenhagen, August 21, 1901, called for the purpose of considering the holding of periodic world trade union congresses, the German leaders led the opposition to founding a trade union international. "Legien and most of the others in attendance, felt that the Second International was the proper forum for the discussion of the larger problems of labor and that international trade union congresses were unnecessary."¹⁵ However, after a further conference in Stuttgart in 1902, and at a succeeding conference in Dublin in 1903, in response to the growing demand for a trade union international, a compromise proposition was adopted in the shape of the International Secretariat of National Trade Union Centers. The following year this body had as affiliates 14 national centers with 2,378,955 members.¹⁶

This secretariat, made up of two representatives from each national center, was scheduled to meet biennially. It served to block the formation of a broad international organization until after World War I.* The general secretary of the International

* In Budapest, August 1911, an effort was made by the I.W.W. (delegate, Wm. Z. Foster) to have itself seated as representing the labor movement of the United States, but its motion was defeated, only the two delegates from the C.G.T. of France voting for it.

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Secretariat was Karl Legien, the Gompers-like head of the German trade union movement. It was also this ubiquitous gentleman who became general secretary of the International Federation of Trade Unions which, under increasing French, British, and American pressure, was finally launched in skeleton form in 1913, but which did not become a broad representative international movement until it was reorganized in 1919. At the outbreak of World War I the I.F.T.U. had as affiliates a score of national centers, with some 7,500,000 members, the only important unaffiliated labor movements being those of Japan, Argentina, Bulgaria, and Australia.

18. Imperialism and Millerand: Paris (1900)

The fifth congress of the Second International met in Paris in September 1900. By now the imperialist epoch of capitalism had well begun. As Marx had long before indicated, world capitalism, evolving from its early stage of competition, had become increasingly monopolist and eventually imperialist.* The period 1870-1900 was a period of transition to imperialism. Lenin says that, "For Europe the time when the new capitalism definitely superseded the old can be established with fair precision; it was the beginning of the twentieth century."¹ In his great book, *Imperialism, the Highest Stage of Capitalism*, written in 1916, Lenin calls imperialism "the monopoly stage of capitalism," "the epoch of finance capital." He analyzes it as including the following five essential features:

"1. The concentration of production and capital, developed to such a high stage that it created monopolies which play a decisive role in economic life. 2. The merging of bank capital with industrial capital and the creation on the basis of this 'finance capital,' of a financial oligarchy. 3. The export of capital, which has become extremely important, as distinguished from the export of commodities. 4. The formation of international capitalist monopolies which share the world among themselves. 5. The territorial division of the whole world by the greatest capitalist powers is completed."²

The growth of monopoly capitalism, or imperialism, in the last quarter of the 19th century, was marked by the development of many great industrial and financial cartels, syndicates, and trusts in all the leading capitalist countries. In the United States, which by 1900 had far outstripped England in industrial development, there were already 440 industrial, franchise, and transportation trusts, capitalized at \$20 billion,³ and the next years brought many more. In Germany in 1896 there existed 250 monopolistic cartels; this number jumped to 385 in 1905, and it con-

* Modern imperialism, based upon monopoly capitalism, is not to be confused with the ancient imperialism of Rome, Athens, etc., which was based upon slavery.

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tinued rapidly to increase. In 1870 the three biggest French banks had 64 branches, with total deposits of 427 million francs; whereas by 1909 they had 1,229 branches and 4,363 millions in deposits. In England, although its tempo of development was falling far behind that of the United States and Germany, a broad expansion and consolidation of industry and banking were also taking place. Characteristically, the big banker-industrialists had become by 1900 not only the real masters of industry, but also of the governments of the respective great capitalist powers.

The period of imperialism, based on an intensive growth and monopolization of industry and the domination of financial oligarchies in the chief capitalist countries, also brought with it, by various means, the organized economic and political penetration and subjugation of the less developed countries by the large powers. There took place increasingly the export of capital, which gives the exporting power a commanding position in the importing country. In this respect Great Britain was the leader, its total foreign investments climbing from about £200 million in 1850 to some £2,000 million in 1905,⁴ and to £4,000 million in 1913. Also, a network of cartel agreements spread over many undeveloped countries, dividing up their markets and natural resources among the imperialist monopolies.

Most vital, the imperialist powers proceeded to divide among themselves the various undeveloped territories of the world whose peoples were unable to protect themselves. In the last quarter of the 19th century Africa and Polynesia were taken over almost completely by the marauding imperialist states. From 1884 to 1900, according to Hobson, England grabbed 3.7 million square miles of territory with a population of 57 million; France got 3.6 million square miles with 36.5 million people, Germany one million square miles with 17 million people, Belgium 900,000 square miles with 30 million people, and Portugal 800,000 square miles with 9 million people.⁵

One of the most dynamic aspects of this growth and evolution of the capitalist system was that, as capitalism always does, it proceeded at widely varying tempos in the several countries. This disparity was according to the law of the uneven development of capitalism, promulgated by Lenin in 1915: "Some countries, which previously held a foremost position, now develop their industry at a relatively slow rate, while others, which were formerly back-

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ward, overtake and outstrip them by rapid leaps.”⁶

“In 1880,” says Eaton, “Britain’s output of pig-iron was 7.7 million tons against Germany’s 2.5 million and U.S.A.’s 3.8 million; by 1913 Britain’s output had risen to 10.3 million tons but Germany’s had risen to 19.3 million and the U.S.A.’s to 31 million.”⁷ “Finance capital and the trusts,” says Lenin, “are increasing instead of diminishing the differences in the rate of development of the various parts of the world economy.”⁸ This unevenness of capitalist development greatly accentuates the sharp conflicts among the imperialist powers and it is a basic cause of modern imperialist war. For, as Lenin points out, “When the relation of forces is changed, how else, *under capitalism*, can the solution of contradictions be found, except by resorting to *violence*?”⁹ The first of the armed conflicts in this broad period, heralding the advent of ultra-predatory imperialist war in general, were the Spanish-American war of 1898, the Anglo-Boer war of 1899, the intervention of the big powers in China in 1900, and the Russo-Japanese war of 1904.

Of special significance also to the world labor movement during the rise of imperialism was the fact that it tended to increase the disparity in wages between the skilled and unskilled workers in the principal capitalist countries. The last quarter of the 19th century, a period of intense industrial expansion and increasing exploitation of labor, was a time of slowly rising real wages in the major capitalist lands. In the pattern of the English employers generally, the capitalists used a portion of the super-profits wrung from the colonies to favor the skilled workers at home, with the objective of thus weakening the militancy and solidarity of the working class as a whole. Everywhere, however, the great mass of the workers slaved in near destitution. Thus, whereas in Germany the real wages of the working class (generally at poverty levels) went up from point 100 in 1887 to 105 in 1909, those of the labor aristocracy increased to 113 in the same period.¹⁰ Similar conditions obtained in other capitalist countries. They had profound effects upon labor policy, the right opportunist Social-Democrats basing their revisionist theories and class collaboration policies upon the relatively more prosperous labor aristocracy, at the cost of the broad labor movement. This wage trend, however, was to be reversed in later years.

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THE MILLERAND CASE

During this period of capitalist upswing and growing imperialism, right opportunism grew in the socialist parties of the chief capitalist countries throughout the Second International. This evil development came to a head at the Paris 1900 congress in the celebrated cases of Alexandre Millerand in France and Eduard Bernstein in Germany. The fights around these two opportunists, the first real international struggles between the right and the left in the Second International, shook the organization from one end of it to the other and threatened to split the movement.

At the outset, Marxism in France had a hard time to get established, in the face of strong Proudhonist, Blanquist, Bakuninist, Broussist, syndicalist, and other counter tendencies. As late as 1898 there were no less than five Socialist parties in France, representing the various groupings. These parties were led by such figures as Guesde, Vaillant, Allemane, Brousse, and Jaurès. It was not until 1905 that the several groups joined together and formed the United Socialist Party of France.

In the fight around the question of Millerandism the two outstanding party leaders were Jules Guesde and Jean Jaurès. Guesde (1845-1922), who had supported the Commune, became a Marxist in 1878 and joined the party in the early 1880's, and was one of its pioneers. He was doctrinaire and sectarian, one of the "orthodox" Marxists. Jaurès (1859-1914), who was a professor of philosophy at Toulouse university, became a Socialist in 1890, and later was one of the founders of the party organ, *L'Humanite*. He stood in the extreme right wing of the party, his socialism being heavily tinged with petty-bourgeois republicanism.

The background of the Millerand case was the famous Dreyfus affair. Alfred Dreyfus, a Jewish officer in the French Army, was framed by military reactionaries for treason, convicted, and finally sent off to Devil's Island. Saturated with anti-Semitism, the case caused profound repercussions in France and throughout the world. In the face of the big uproar nationally and internationally over the outrageous affair, Dreyfus was eventually released and, in 1906, definitely cleared of the false charges.

At first, Guesde, true to his left sectarian conceptions, took the attitude that the Dreyfus affair was none of the concern of the proletariat and stood aside from it. Jaurès and his right-wing

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group, the Independent Socialist Party, going to the other extreme, decided that the fate of French democracy was at stake, and in 1899 had their man, Millerand, without even consulting the party, accept a post in the Waldeck-Rousseau cabinet as Minister of Commerce. In the same cabinet also sat Gallifet, the butcher of the Communards. Immediately after Millerand's entry the government displayed its reactionary character by having its police shoot down striking workers in Martinique and at Chalons.

THE LEFT DEFEATED IN THE PARIS CONGRESS

The Millerand case occupied the center of attention at the 1900 congress of the Second International. The congress had just passed a resolution limiting the possibilities of coalition with the bourgeois parties. In the discussion, specifically around the Millerand case, three well-defined positions developed. The first, expressed in the Guesde resolution, condemned Millerand's action in principle, stating that the congress "allows the proletariat to take part in bourgeois governments only in the form of winning seats on its own strength and on the basis of the class struggle, and it forbids any participation whatever of Socialists in bourgeois governments, towards which Socialists must take up an attitude of unbending opposition." Guesde's position was strongly supported by Vaillant and Rosa Luxemburg, the latter stating: "In bourgeois society Social-Democracy, by its very nature, has to play the part of an opposition party; it can only come forward as the governing party on the ruins of the bourgeois state."¹¹

The second point of view, that of the extreme right, was presented by Jaurès, with his customary eloquence. Like Guesde, Jaurès also raised the matter as a question of principle, but from the opposite direction. He actively defended Socialist Party coalitions with bourgeois parties, and he specifically endorsed the individual action of Millerand in entering the French Cabinet. Jaurès declared that by this action they had saved the Republic, and he pictured such a participation in capitalist governments as the beginning of the socialist revolution.

The third point of view – centrist – was presented by Kautsky. He wrote a resolution (known as the *caoutchouc* [rubber] resolution), which took the position that the question at issue was not one of principle but of tactics. And, he said: "The congress does not have to decide upon that." After thus leaving the door wide

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open for such opportunistic maneuvers as that of Millerand, the Kautsky resolution proceeded to criticize any Socialist who "becomes a minister independently of his party, or whenever he ceases to be the delegate of that party." In such a case he should resign.

While the left bitterly attacked the Kautsky resolution, the right wing, including Jaurès, rallied behind it. It was finally passed by a vote of 29 to 9. Each country was entitled to two votes; Bulgaria and Ireland voted two each against the resolution, with France, Poland, Russia, Italy, and the United States* each casting one vote against it.¹²

This was a stinging defeat for the left. It cleared the way for further opportunist betrayers of the Millerand type. As Lenz remarks, "This was the first great defeat for the revolutionary wing of the International." One of the vital lessons of the historic struggle was the manifestation of the growing danger of centrism, as well as of rightism. Kautsky, who had been generally taking a position with the left against right opportunism, was directly responsible for the left defeat by his surrender in principle to the right wing, while at the same time making a shallow showing with radical phrases. This was a forecast of his sinister centrist role to come in later years. As for Millerand, he refused to resign from the cabinet, was expelled from the party, and for many years he served the capitalists as a betrayer of labor into the hands of their class enemies. He died in 1943, honored by the capitalist class and leaving a name which to the world's working class remains a symbol of treason to the labor movement.

THE STRUGGLE AGAINST MILITARISM AND WAR

Like all other congresses of the First and Second Internationals, the 1900 congress dealt with the growing danger of militarism and war. This increasing menace was a specific manifestation of the dawning period of imperialism. Rosa Luxemburg presented the main resolution on the question. Her resolution analyzed the capitalist origins of war and proposed three major steps to combat it. These were, the education and organization of the youth, Socialist members of parliament to vote against military credits,

* The S.L.P. voted against the Kautsky resolution, the S.P. for it.

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and united anti-war demonstrations to take place during international crises. The resolution was adopted unanimously.

As usual, a minority of delegates, mainly from the Latin countries, proposed the general strike as the main means to combat war. This proposal was rejected, with the German opportunist trade union leader, Karl Legien, making a speech against the general strike in principle. Aristide Briand of France, then a loud-mouthed phrasemonger and soon to be a renegade, led the fight for the policy of the anti-war general strike.

Except for the defeat suffered earlier on the question of Millerandism, due to Kautsky's treachery, left sentiment in the congress was dominant. This was shown on both the questions of militarism and colonialism. In the latter matter the congress took the position that the workers should actively combat the colonial policies of the imperialist states, and that socialist parties should be established in the colonial countries. Up to this time, the Second International had grossly neglected the situation of the colonial peoples; nor was the organization, in fact, ever to develop an effective program of struggle for and with the exploited peoples of the colonies.¹³

THE INTERNATIONAL SOCIALIST BUREAU

An important step taken by the 1900 congress was the establishment of the International Socialist Bureau (I.S.B.). For a decade, ever since its foundation in 1889, the Second International had gone along with no organized world center whatever. This was a basic weakness, and there was a continuous demand that this glaring political and organizational defect should be remedied. Finally, therefore, the I.S.B. was set up.¹⁴

The I.S.B. was located in Brussels, with a paid secretary and an annual budget of 10,000 francs. The Bureau was made up of two delegates of each national delegation to the congresses, or in all some 50 to 70 persons. It was to meet four times a year, and in the period between meetings the Bureau was to be managed by the Executive Committee of the Belgian Labor Party. The chairman was Vandervelde and the secretary, Camille Huysmans, both Belgians. With the establishment of the I.S.B., it was also laid down that only those organizations – parties, trade unions, cooperatives, etc. – that recognized the general principles of socialism, could affiliate to the International. Henceforth, the congresses,

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variously known in the past, would be called International Socialist congresses.

The I.S.B., although constituting a step ahead, still fell far short of the General Council of the First International. The latter was a real leading body, cultivating a true international spirit and action; whereas the new Bureau was still within the category primarily of a correspondence and statistical center. Although somewhat enlarged in later years, and acting as a sort of referee between the quarreling national parties, the functions of the I.S.B. remained very limited. The secretary was charged with the specific tasks of calling the congresses, publishing resolutions, reports and proceedings, collecting information, and the like. The Bureau was not a body to enforce the decisions of the congresses nor to interpret them. This was left to the voluntary action of the national parties and other affiliated bodies.

The rock upon which the Second International finally came to disaster was that of national chauvinism. From the outset, internationalism was at a low level in its life, with the German and other decisive parties insisting upon virtual autonomy in working out their affairs. The failure of the International, for eleven years, to set up any world center at all, and then when it did establish a Bureau, its refusal to give this body normal leading powers, were both the consequence and a cultivation of the latent danger of bourgeois nationalism in the affiliated parties. The smash-up in 1914 was the ultimate result of this general trend.

19. Bernstein Revisionism: Amsterdam (1904)

The central question before the sixth congress of the Second International, in Amsterdam in 1904, was that of Bernstein revisionism. This system of opportunism, organically related to that of Millerand, was directly a product of the rise of imperialism in general and of German imperialism in particular. It was also the fruition of right-wing tendencies that had been developing ever since the foundation of the Second International.

Eduard Bernstein (1850-1932), a former bank clerk and son of a railroad engineer, was born in Germany. During the anti-Socialist law period he was an exile in England, a coworker with Engels and the editor of the journal, *Sozialdemokrat*. On the basis of characteristic features of the early imperialist period, Bernstein arrived at the conclusion that Marxism was all wrong. Among these features, signaled by Bernstein, were the rapid expansion and relative stability of the capitalist system, the widespread growth of great trusts, the minor increases in the real wages of the workers, particularly the skilled, the great expansion of working-class economic and political organizations, the winning by the workers of certain democratic rights, especially regarding the franchise, and the growth of the "new middle class" (intellectuals, technicians, etc.). On the basis of these developments, Bernstein, who formerly was closely under the influence of the British Fabians in London, developed the general idea that capitalism, instead of becoming obsolete and reactionary, was gradually evolving into socialism.

Going far beyond the earlier opportunism of Vollmar, while still pretending to be a Marxist (because of the broad popularity of Marxism among the German working class), Bernstein undertook to "revise" (i.e., to destroy) Marxism root and branch, in both theory and practice. He first made known his ideas officially in October 1898 in a letter to the convention of the German Social-Democratic Party in Hannover. In 1899 he wrote a book embodying his revisionist system entitled, *Die Voraussetzungen des Sozialismus*, translated into English as *Evolutionary Socialism*.

Bernstein challenged the Marxist theory of surplus value, repudiated the theories of the class struggle and of the materialist

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conception of history, denied the law of the concentration of capital, and averred that the middle class, instead of declining, was growing. He supported bourgeois patriotism, endorsed Millerandism, and gave his blessing to imperialism and colonialism. He especially attacked the Marxist theory of the relative and absolute impoverishment of the working class, interpreting the temporary small improvements in real wages during the boom period of German imperialism as positive and progressive gains. Ridiculing the term "dictatorship of the proletariat," Bernstein declared that a revolution was both unnecessary and impossible. He especially made use of the distorted article of Engels (see Chapter 16), in which the latter, because of his stressing the greater obstacles in later times against barricade fighting, was made to appear as if giving up all idea of an eventual revolution.

Bernstein presented a "gradualist" approach to "socialism," basically akin to that of the Fabians in Great Britain. He said: "A greater security for lasting success lies in a steady advance than in the possibilities offered by a catastrophic crash."¹ He declared that for him the final aim of socialism meant nothing, the day-to-day movement everything. (Gompers was saying essentially the same thing.) The rigid institutions of feudalism had to be destroyed by violence, as they were, but the "flexible institutions" of capitalism needed "only to be further developed." Denying the reality of the class struggle, Bernstein based his program upon class collaboration, stating that, "The right to vote in a democracy makes its members virtually partners in the community and this virtual partnership must in the end lead to real partnership."²

Rosa Luxemburg, who assailed Bernstein, thus sums up his system: "According to the present conception of the party, trade union and parliamentary activity are important for the Socialist movement because such activity prepares the proletariat, that is to say, creates the *subjective* factor of the socialist transformation, for the task of realizing socialism. But according to Bernstein, trade-unions and parliamentary activity gradually reduce capitalist exploitation itself. They remove from capitalist society its capitalist character. They realize *objectively* the desired social change."³

Bernstein thus lays down the anti-Marxist program of right-wing Social-Democracy. It all sums up to an acceptance of capitalism, of trying to make the best of that system. His program re-

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mains that of opportunist socialism down to this day. What essentially have since been added to it have been successive injections of Ebert-Noske counter-revolution, of Hitlerite anti-Soviet hysteria, and of Keynesian conceptions of "progressive capitalism" through subsidizing industry.

THE FIGHT IN THE GERMAN PARTY

The Bernstein letter, which created a sensation, was placed on the agenda at the Stuttgart national convention of the German party in 1898, and after a hot three-days' debate, it was rejected. Bernstein's line was also defeated at the Hannover convention of 1899, but it suffered its biggest set-back at the national party convention in Dresden in 1903, when it was voted down by 288 to 11. Bebel and Kautsky, and especially Bebel, actively led the struggle against Bernstein. Although themselves slipping gradually into a centrist line, they were not prepared to accept the complete surrender of socialism implicit in the Bernstein program. Kautsky condemned Bernstein revisionism as "an abandonment of the fundamental principles and conceptions of scientific socialism," and upon this basis the fight was made.

Especially outstanding in this fight against Bernsteinism was Rosa Luxemburg (1870-1919), the young leader of the German left wing. She was born in Poland, and from 1883 was active in the Socialist Party of that country. After 1897 she turned her main attention to the German Social-Democratic Party. She declared that Bernstein's theory meant to "renounce the social transformation, the final goal of the Social-Democracy and inversely, to make of social reforms, the means of the class struggle, its aim.... What Bernstein questions is not the rapidity of the development of capitalist society, but the march of the development itself, and consequently, the very possibility of a change to socialism."⁴ She made a brilliant refutation of Bernstein's whole line, showing the fundamental incompatibility of opportunism with Marxism.

Bernstein revisionism came to a climax at this Dresden convention of 1903 as a direct result of the important successes of the German Social-Democracy in the elections of that year. "Compared with 1898, its votes had increased from 2.1 million to 3 million, its percentage of the total poll from 18.4 to 24, and the number of its seats from 32 to 55."⁵ On the basis of this increased strength, the right wing felt that the time had come to insist upon

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participation in the government, on the Millerand model – in this case to secure the post of vice-president of the Reichstag. Vollmar and a large section of the Reichstag fraction supported Bernstein's demand to this effect.

Under the existing circumstances, this step would put the party into collaboration with the bourgeoisie and its government, which was precisely what the revisionists wanted. The convention, therefore, overwhelmingly rejected the Bernstein proposals and in a strong resolution condemned working-class participation in capitalist governments. In the discussion Kautsky half-heartedly agreed that he had made an error in the 1900 congress of the International by soft-peddling the Millerand treachery. Although defeated at the convention, Bernsteinism dovetailed with the opportunism being developed by the trade union leaders, and the junction of these two tendencies was to wreak havoc with the German party and the whole International.

THE INTERNATIONAL STRUGGLE AGAINST REVISIONISM

The fight over Bernstein revisionism quickly spread throughout the International, practically every important party being involved in it to a greater or lesser degree. Especially urgent became the specific question of Socialist participation in capitalist governments. Undoubtedly, the employers in Europe, seeing the rise of the Socialist movement, realized that a potent way to undermine and weaken it was by drawing its leaders into the respective governmental cabinets, where they could be controlled and corrupted.

Millerand was but the first of a whole flock of traitors in this general respect. Undoubtedly, the employers were behind Bernstein's attempt to get the German Social-Democracy organically tied up with the Kaiser's government. It was in this general period, 1905-06, that John Burns, prominent labor leader and erstwhile member of the Social-Democratic Federation in England, was made a member of the Cabinet of Sir Henry Campbell-Bannerman, and Aristide Briand and Rend Viviani, French socialists, were sucked into the Cabinets of the Serrian and Clemenceau governments. All three of these renegades, in the governments, faithfully served the employers in misleading the workers. Briand and Viviani eventually became premiers of France. Before long, they were to be followed into capitalist governments by many other right-wing traitors to the working class.

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The struggle against Bernsteinism internationally was made by the broad left, which included many of a centrist trend. In the various countries this fight was typified by the following outstanding figures: In Germany, Bebel, Kautsky, and Luxemburg against Bernstein, Legien, and Vollmar; in France, Guesde against Jaurès; in Russia, Plekhanov and Lenin against Martov; in England, Hyndman against Henderson and MacDonald; in the United States, De Leon, Hillquit, and Debs against Berger, Untermann, and Gompers. The fight also went on in all other countries that had substantial Socialist and trade union movements.

One of the great weaknesses of the broad left in this key struggle was to make a fetish of party unity – not to realize that unity with the Bernsteinites was a source of weakness rather than of strength for the parties. Above all, Lenin understood this danger; it was during this general struggle in 1903 that the Russian Bolsheviks split from the Mensheviks. Rosa Luxemburg also sensed the danger, and at the Dresden convention of the German party she proposed to expel all those who voted for Bernstein's proposal, but Bebel and Kautsky did not support her. Plekhanov, who was still a Marxist, also favored the expulsion of Bernstein.⁶

Generally, the right wing, particularly in the key parties of Germany and Austria, maneuvered against a split. They even voted for motions condemning their position, seeking by the most unprincipled devices to avoid a head-on collision with the powerful left. At any price, they wanted to keep within the mass parties. In the United States, in 1901, the Socialist Party, headed by Debs, Hillquit, and Berger, had been organized in a breakaway from the sectarian Socialist Labor Party, led by De Leon, but the left in the Socialist Party was still much too immature to make a real stand against the blatant Bernsteinites, whose chief spokesman was Victor Berger.

WHITE CHAUVINISM IN THE AMERICAN SOCIALIST PARTY

One of the worst forms of opportunism in the Second International was white chauvinism, such as expressed in the American Socialist Party towards the Negro people. For many decades the Negro masses, after being freed from chattel slavery by the Civil War of 1861-65, were subjected to the most barbarous persecution. They were denied the rights of education, to work in industry, to vote as citizens, to serve in the armed forces, to enjoy the

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common rights of travelers in hotels, railroad cars, etc. And almost weekly the world was shocked by barbarous lynchings in which Negroes were whipped, shot, hanged, or burned to death.

But the Socialist Party calmly ignored this whole dreadful situation. It did not demand the abolition of lynching and the Jim Crow system. Kipnis, commenting upon this criminal lethargy, says: "There is no record that the party ever actively opposed discrimination against Negroes from 1901 to 1912" (the period of his study).⁷ Indeed, the party press reeked with white chauvinist slanders of the Negro people, in which such outstanding Bernsteinites as Berger and Untermann were the most notorious offenders. The party itself even theorized its indifference towards the tragic position of the Negro people by declaring repeatedly that, being the party of the working class as a whole, it could not raise special demands for specific groups in the population. The only relief the party held out to the outraged, exploited, and murderously oppressed Negro people was that some day socialism would be established and they would then be freed.

In 1903, prior to the Amsterdam congress, the International Socialist Bureau, stirred by shocking stories of Negro persecution in the United States, wrote to the American Socialist Party as to its stand regarding lynching. This letter brought forth the following shameless white chauvinist reply: "The Socialist Party points out the fact that nothing less than the abolition of the capitalist system and the substitution of the socialist system can provide conditions under which the hunger maniacs, kleptomaniacs, sexual maniacs, and all other offensive and now lynchable human degenerates will cease to be begotten or produced."⁸ This shameless justification of lynching apparently did not shock the I.S.B., for nothing further was heard of the matter.

THE LEFT CARRIES THE AMSTERDAM CONGRESS

A very important question before the congress in Amsterdam was the newly-begun Russo-Japanese war. This was the first large-scale war of the imperialist period. The two Socialist parties most concerned – the Russian and the Japanese – took a sound revolutionary position, strongly opposing the war. The dramatic high point of the congress came when Plekhanov of Russia shook hands warmly with Sen Katayama of Japan and they both pledged the solidarity of their respective parties in a common struggle

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against the war.⁹ As usual, however, the resolution for a general strike in case of war was voted down by the congress. The recent general strikes in Belgium 1902, Sweden 1902, and Holland 1903, were sharply raising this question throughout the International.

The major attention of the Amsterdam congress was directed towards the burning question of Bernsteinism. The heated discussion took up most of the sessions. The German party led the fight. As Lenz says, it "appeared at the Amsterdam congress as the guardian of the Marxist line in opposition to revisionism."¹⁰ The fight against revisionism was led by Bebel, Kautsky, Plekhanov, Lenin, Luxemburg, Guesde, and De Leon. Jaurès, aided by Vandervelde, Auer, and others, conducted the fight for the right wing.

The final battle turned around the adoption of what was substantially the resolution of the Dresden congress of the German Social-Democracy in 1903 on the question, which was re-introduced by the Guesdists. This resolution sharply condemned revisionism and ministerialism, and militantly endorsed a class struggle policy. The Jaurèsist following would have been satisfied with a re-endorsement of the Kautsky "rubber resolution" of 1900. Adler and Vandervelde undertook to come to the rescue of the revisionists with a weasel-worded resolution which, while making a play of class struggle phraseology, specifically failed to condemn revisionism as such. De Leon also introduced a resolution, rejecting outright the Kautsky resolution of four years earlier.

In the congress balloting De Leon's resolution got only his own vote. But the Adler-Vandervelde resolution almost carried; the vote for it was 21 to 21, but it failed of passage because of the tie vote rule. The Dresden-Amsterdam resolution carried by a vote of 25 to 5, with 6 parties, holding 12 votes, abstaining. The countries voting against were Australia 2, England 1, France 1, Norway 1. The abstainers were Argentina 2, Belgium 2, Denmark 2, Holland 2, Switzerland 2, Sweden 2. The text of the resolution reads as follows:

THE DRESDEN-AMSTERDAM RESOLUTION

"The congress repudiates to the fullest extent possible the efforts of the revisionists who have for their object the modification of our tried and victorious policy based on the class war, and the substitution, for the conquest of political power by an unceasing attack on the bourgeoisie, of a policy of concession to the estab-

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lished order of society.

“The consequence of such revisionist tactics would be to turn a party striving for the most speedy transformation possible of bourgeois society into socialist society – a party therefore revolutionary in the best sense of the word – into a party satisfied with the reform of bourgeois society.

“For this reason the congress, convinced, in opposition to the revisionist tendencies, that class antagonisms, far from diminishing, continually increase in bitterness, declares:

“1. That the party rejects all responsibility of any sort under the political and economic conditions based on capitalist production, and therefore can in no wise countenance any measure tending to maintain in power the dominant class.

“2. The Social-Democracy can strive for no participation in the government under bourgeois society, this decision being in accordance with the Kautsky resolution passed at the International Congress of Paris in 1900.

“The congress further repudiates every attempt to blur the ever-growing class antagonisms, in order to bring about an understanding with bourgeois parties.

“The congress relies upon the Socialist parliamentary groups to use their power, increased by the number of their members and by the great accession of electors who support them, to persevere in their propaganda toward the final object of socialism, and, in conformity with our program, to defend most resolutely the interests of the working class, the extension and consolidation of political liberties, in order to obtain equal rights for all; to carry on more vigorously than ever the fight against militarism, against the colonial and imperialist policy, against injustice, oppression and exploitation of every kind; and finally to exert itself energetically to perfect social legislation and to bring about the realization of the political and civilizing mission of the working class.”¹¹

The combined left and center won the victory at the congress, but obviously the right wing was not decisively beaten. The strength of the revisionists was shown in full in the vote on the sneaky right-wing Adler-Vandervelde resolution, which so narrowly escaped passage. The large number of abstentions on the main resolution was a further manifestation of opportunist strength. The International was yet to hear much from the Bernstein revisionists, to its own ultimate disaster.

20. Lenin: The Party of a New Type

By the turn of the century the historic trend of the Second International was definitely away from Marxism and towards right opportunism. The major parties comprised in the International were increasingly falling victim to petty-bourgeois illusions bred by the “prosperity” of the upswing period of imperialism in their respective countries. True, the right wing was defeated in the Amsterdam congress of 1904 and during the next few years it was also to suffer many other formal defeats, especially in the German party, the eventual stronghold of revisionism. Yet the right wing generally tended to become stronger and, with its revisionist program, to get more and more entrenched in the leadership of the several Socialist parties. Moreover, the developing and vacillating center group was proving steadily less capable of resisting the advancing right and was tending constantly to surrender to it. As for the weak left wing in most of Europe, it was generally confused, immature, and quite unable to overcome the process of political degeneration that was gradually engulfing the International.

Powerful opposition from the left nevertheless was developing against the stifling revisionism of the Second International, and by 1904 it was already well marked. Its center was in Russia, an industrially backward country that had hitherto played only a small role in the International, and its leader was Lenin, who was generally but little known at that time in world labor circles. The Russian Social-Democratic Workers Party could and did come forth as the leading Marxist, anti-revisionist force in the Second International. This occurred basically because, whereas in the western capitalist countries the socialist revolution seemed vague and far off, in Russia, as the follow-up of the impending bourgeois revolution, it was obviously knocking at the door and imperatively demanding basic attention. The new revolutionary program, developed chiefly by Lenin, was Bolshevism, or as it came to be later known, Marxism-Leninism.

“Leninism,” says Stalin, “is the Marxism of the epoch of imperialism and the proletarian revolution.”¹ Marxism-Leninism was the product of developing world imperialism and the Russian Revolution. Its natural point of origin was tsarist Russia, where the contradictions of imperialism were the sharpest, and where the proletarian revolution was rapidly brewing. The great signifi-

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cance of Lenin is that, with his brilliant intellect and indomitable revolutionary spirit, he was able to interpret theoretically the basic economic and political currents of the imperialist period and to translate them into successful revolutionary action.

LENIN AND HIS WORK

Lenin (1870-1924) was born on April 10, 1870, in Simbirsk, Russia. His father, by birth a peasant, had become a school teacher, and his mother was also of modest origin. His older brother Alexander, one of the most active organizers of Narodnaya Volya (People's Will), a terrorist organization, was hanged by the tsar's government in 1887. The same year Lenin entered the Kazan university, the universities in St. Petersburg and Moscow being barred against him as the brother of an executed revolutionary. He at once became active in the university's revolutionary student movement and got expelled one month after his entry. He finally managed, however, chiefly on the basis of self-study, to get a degree in law from St. Petersburg, but he never practiced the profession. He participated vigorously in the workers' revolutionary movement, for which in 1897 he was banished to Siberia for three years. Thereafter, except for a short while during the time of the revolution of 1905, he lived abroad until early in 1917.

Like Marx and Engels, Lenin was a man both of theory and action. Not only did he resurrect the main theories of Marx, which the revisionists thought they had safely buried forever, but he also developed Marxism further to embrace the many problems generated by the period of imperialism in all countries. All his adult life Lenin was an active participant in the concrete struggles of the workers. The synthesis of his immense theoretical and practical work was his triumphant leadership of the workers and peasants in the great Russian Revolution of November 1917.

Lenin, who collided with the revisionists on all major points, especially attacked their fundamentally wrong analysis of imperialism. The revisionists saw in the phenomena of expanding imperialism the softening of class antagonisms, the necessity of class collaboration, the transformation of the state into an organism standing apart from classes, the increase of capitalist stability, the development of "organized capitalism," and generally the ending of the period of revolution and the opening up of opportunities for the workers to make a gradual and peaceful advance to social-

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ism. They considered the works of Marx and Engels obsolete, as applying only to the earlier, competitive state of capitalism. Lenin, on the other hand, saw in imperialism the intensification of class and national antagonisms, the beginning of the decline of capitalism, the opening of a new era of great wars and revolutions. He defended the writings of Marx and Engels as having full validity in this period, and he made them the basis of all his further analysis and revolutionary activity.

THE BUILDING OF A REVOLUTIONARY PROGRAM

On this basis Lenin, in practice and in his many great writings, proceeded to reestablish the whole body of Marxian theory, which the revisionist heads of the Second International had long since discarded. As against the revisionist acceptance of bourgeois democracy and of the bourgeois state, Lenin demonstrated with crushing force that the capitalist state was an organ of the capitalist class for the repression of the working class, and that the workers, in order to emancipate themselves, would have to destroy it and to construct a new regime. He further demonstrated in theory, as well as by the practice of the Paris Commune, and finally by the Russian Revolution itself, that the form of social organization the victorious workers would set up after the abolition of capitalism would be none other than the dictatorship of the proletariat, so brilliantly foreseen by Marx and Engels.

On the solid foundation of Marxist principles, Lenin also widely developed proletarian revolutionary strategy and tactics for the period of imperialism, and he directly cultivated the Marxist forces in many countries. Among the basic propositions worked out by him were: the leading role of the proletariat in all present-day revolutions, bourgeois or socialist; the alliance between the workers and the peasantry, and between the workers in the imperialist countries and the peoples in the colonial lands; the class differentiation in the villages; the question of self-determination for oppressed peoples; the relationship between immediate demands and the fight for socialism; the role of the trade unions and their relationship to the party; the law and techniques of proletarian insurrection; the general structure upon which socialism will be built; the possibility of the establishment of socialism in one country; the growing over of the bourgeois revolution into the proletarian revolution, and many more. All

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this was in fundamental contrast to the current right-wing policies of tailing the working class after the bourgeoisie, casting off the peasantry as a reactionary mass, having contempt for self-determination and the struggles of the colonial peoples, concentrating solely upon immediate demands, and their general failure to consider or to fight for socialism.

One of Lenin's greatest accomplishments was to theorize and construct the Communist Party itself, without which all talk of working class emancipation and socialism would be vain chatter. In opposition to the bourgeois conceptions of the right wing for an amorphous party, without a real program, including all sorts of trimmers and opportunists and bereft of discipline, Lenin built a party on the basis of the principles laid down by Marx and Engels; that is, as the vanguard of the proletariat. Lenin's is a party of revolutionists, based on the working class and its allies, made up of the best fighters and most devoted workers in the labor movement, the various people's organizations, cooperatives, etc., self-critical, and with a highly developed Marxist ideology – a party which in every respect: on the battlefields, in the workshops, on the farms, in the colleges, and in the legislative halls, truly stands at the head of the working class and the whole nation. The Communist Party, as conceived and forged by the great Lenin, is the most highly developed type of political organization ever produced by humankind, an indispensability for achieving socialism.

With his great political and organizational program, Lenin laid down the science of revolutionary struggle for the period of imperialism, and he therewith provided the theoretical basis for the later revolutions in Russia, China, Czechoslovakia, Poland, Hungary, Bulgaria, East Germany, Rumania, Albania, Latvia, Lithuania, Esthonia, Indo-China, Korea, and many others that are still to come. By the time of the outbreak of the Russian Revolution in 1905, Lenin had already worked out most of the main essentials of his revolutionary program, which constituted the basic challenge to the revisionism that was becoming increasingly dominant in the Second International.

EARLY DEVELOPMENT OF THE PARTY IN RUSSIA

The first organized Marxist force in Russia was the Emancipation of Labor group, formed in 1883 by G. V. Plekhanov, together with Martov, Paul Axelrod, Vera Zasulich, and Leo Deutsch.²

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Plekhanov (1856-1918), was formerly a Narodnik, or Populist, but became a Marxist, and in his early years he was one of the most brilliant Marxist theorists in the whole Second International. His eventual general orientation, however, was away from Marxism, through centrism to revisionism. Lenin, arriving in St. Petersburg in 1893, became active in the Marxist ranks, organizing there the League of Struggle for the Emancipation of the Working Class. Lenin's group took a militant part in the growing strike movement and in further clarifying the line of the Russian Marxists, thus preparing the way for the foundation of a national Marxist political organization.

As a Marxist party must, the Party in tsarist Russia grew in struggle, not only against the employers and the reactionary landlords, but also against the various alien political tendencies arising among the working class and its allies. The first ideological enemy that it had to overcome was Narodism (Populism). The Narodniks, while vaguely advancing a socialist perspective, "erroneously held that the principal revolutionary force was not the working class, but the peasantry, and that the rule of the tsars and the landlords could be overthrown by peasant revolts alone."³ The Narodniks belittled the future development of capitalism and the proletariat in Russia.

Plekhanov, and later Lenin, waged a brilliant polemic against the petty-bourgeois Narodniks. They pointed out the rapid capitalist development that was already taking place in Russia and they demonstrated the factors making for its continued growth. They proved the proletariat to be the leading revolutionary class and argued for a program of organized political action on the basis of the working class. They condemned the Narodniks' (People's Will group) advocacy of individual terrorism. The general result of this historic ideological warfare was to establish the hegemony of Marxism in the ranks of the working class. The Narodniks, however, retained their strength among the peasantry, and later, as Socialist-Revolutionaries, they were to play a very important part in the oncoming revolutions.

After the arrest of Lenin and in the midst of the developing trade union struggle, specifically in 1899, a new deviating group appeared in the ranks of Russian workers. These were the so-called Economists. "They declared that the workers should be called upon to wage only an economic struggle against their em-

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ployers; as for the political struggle, that was the affair of the liberal bourgeoisie, to whom the leadership of the political struggle was left.... They were the first group of compromisers and opportunists within the ranks of the Marxist organizations in Russia.”⁴ Lenin identified this opportunist group with the Bernstein revisionists, and after his return in 1900 from Siberia, with sledgehammer blows, he routed it. During this historic controversy Lenin, in his book, *What Is To Be Done?* composed the most profound analysis of trade unionism ever written.

Still another major deviation within Russian Marxist ranks in these crucial, formative years, was that of the “legal Marxists,” led by Peter Struve and others. This group “cut out the very core of Marxism, namely, the doctrine of the proletarian revolution and the dictatorship of the proletariat.” They strove “to subordinate and adapt the working class movement to the interests of bourgeois society, to the interests of the bourgeoisie.”⁵ Relentlessly, Lenin tore into this petty-bourgeois tendency and broke up its following, such as it was, among the workers. The “legal Marxists,” what was left of them, eventually went over outright to the Octobrists and Constitutional Democrats, the main parties of the capitalists in the 1917 Revolution.

During these intense and profound ideological struggles Lenin quickly came forward as the main spokesman of Russian Marxism, early outstripping the former leader, Plekhanov. It was then, too, that Lenin wrote several of his famous books and pamphlets, laying the foundations of communism in Russia, including, *Development of Capitalism in Russia*, *What the “Friends of the People” Are and How They Fight Against the Social Democrats*, *What Is To Be Done?* and *The Tasks of the Russian Social Democrats*.

The first attempt to establish the party on a national scale took place in 1898 while Lenin was in Siberian exile. Nine Marxists met in Minsk in March of that year and set up the Russian Social-Democratic Labor Party at an underground convention. In the face of the existing tsarist terrorism, however, the effort did not prosper. Immediately after the convention the Central Committee members were all arrested. The new organization, with no concrete program or constitution and with but few members, did not succeed in establishing definite bonds among the widely scattered Marxist groups. The party did not actually get established until five years later.

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THE BIRTH OF BOLSHEVISM: LONDON, 1903

The London convention which founded the party, met in the midst of a rising wave of mass struggle in Russia. There was an industrial crisis which largely crippled the industries between 1901-3, and there were big strikes in many parts of the country. These strikes, constantly becoming broader and more revolutionary in tone, were met with brutal violence from the tsar's government. During 1902 the movement spread to the peasants and they set fire to the landlords' mansions and seized their lands. Students also became involved, and militant demonstrations took place in many universities. Russia was building up to the Revolution of 1905.

Lenin laid solid preparations for the construction of the party in London. He led in the establishment of the journal, *Iskra*; he published his famous book, *What Is To Be Done?*, and he led a broad educational campaign among the various Marxist groups. Already in this preliminary work, Lenin gave a clear picture of the disciplined, vanguard party that was to be built.

The congress opened on July 30, 1903, in Brussels; but owing to police persecution it had to be moved to London. There were 43 delegates, representing 26 organizations. The *Iskra*-ists had some 24 solid supporters. Lenin, Plekhanov, Martov, Axelrod, Zasulich, and Trotsky were present. Stalin was not there, being in Siberian exile. The opposition opposed the introduction into the program of the dictatorship of the proletariat – which no other party in the Second International specifically endorsed. They also opposed including the right of self-determination and the formulation of demands for the peasantry. The program had both minimum (immediate) and maximum (ultimate) demands. Lenin, with the cooperation of Plekhanov, beat back the opposition, and the revolutionary *Iskra* program was adopted.

The central fight took place over the party constitution. Around this organizational question the two opposing political currents in the convention took shape. Lenin's plan (supported then by Plekhanov) provided that one "could be a member of the party who accepted its program, supported it financially, and belonged to one of its basic organizations"⁶; whereas Martov, supported among others by Trotsky, wanted a broad, amorphous organization. To be a member all one needed was to accept the pro-

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gram and support the party financially – actual membership and activity not being necessary. The difference was that Lenin wanted a fighting revolutionary party, a strong vanguard party; whereas the opposition strove for a loose, undisciplined organization, on the opportunist Social-Democratic model of the West.

Lenin could not make his conception fully prevail at the congress, but when it came to the election of a Central Committee and editors for the *Iskra*, Lenin's group prevailed. It was in this vote in the elections that the two factions acquired their historic names of Bolsheviks (majority) and Mensheviks (minority). After the convention the factional fight became intense, and by January 1905 the party was split, each group having its own central body and press. During this struggle Lenin produced his famous book on party program and organization, *One Step Forward, Two Steps Back*. He led the Bolsheviks; while Martov, with increasing help from Plekhanov and Trotsky, led the Mensheviks.

THE INTERNATIONAL INTERVENES

In line with the decision of the Second International at Amsterdam in 1904, that only one party from each country could be affiliated, the International Socialist Bureau intervened in the Russian Party split, with the avowed aim of establishing unity. In February 1905 a proposition was adopted in the I.S.B. to set up an arbitration committee headed by Bebel, to consider the Russian situation. This amounted to letting the German party settle the Russian factional fight. The Mensheviks accepted the proposal and nominated Kautsky and Clara Zetkin as their representatives. Lenin, however, refused to agree, stating that the issue was a matter of principle and therefore a question for a party congress rather than for an "arbitration committee" to dispose of.

This whole incident was important chiefly as showing how little Lenin's position was understood or accepted by the "lefts" – Bebel, Kautsky, and others – in the International at this time. In *Die Neue Zeit*, the chief weekly of the German Social-Democracy, Rosa Luxemburg wrote unsympathetically of Lenin's group, and Kautsky, the editor of the paper, refused to publish Lenin's side of the controversy. Protesting against such treatment, Lenin declared that Luxemburg's article "extolled disorganization and treachery" and condemned Kautsky's action as "an attempt to muffle our voice in the German Social-Democratic press by such

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an unheard-of, rude and mechanical device as the boycott of the pamphlet.”⁷ “Kautsky declared that if he had been present at the Second congress [London, 1903] he would have voted for Martov, against Lenin.”⁸ The development of the revolution in Russia brought the futile party unity negotiations to an end.

The International had no inkling of the tremendous political significance of the crystallization of the Bolshevik movement in Russia. Lenin’s party of the new type meant the shaping of a strong turn, away from the opportunist-infected parties of the West which were increasingly forgetting the principles and perspectives of Marx, and toward the beginning of a truly revolutionary party, based firmly upon the elementary principles laid down in *The Communist Manifesto*. This was, in fact, the seed corn of a new and better International, which the revolutionary course of events eventually was to bring to fruition. The victory of Lenin’s group in Russian Marxist circles was, with the years, to have profound effects not only within the Second International, but throughout the entire world.

21. The Russian Revolution of 1905

The Russo-Japanese war (1904-05) was an imperialist clash between two great rival powers striving to dismember and to occupy the northern areas of China (Manchuria). Anticipating the Pearl Harbor pattern, Japan struck first, without declaring war, inflicting crippling damage upon the Russian fleet at Port Arthur on February 8, 1904. This was the first of a series of naval and military disasters for Tsar Nicholas II's forces. Incompetent, corrupt, arrogant, the Russian high command suffered one blow after another.

Port Arthur was lost in December 1904; a crushing defeat was suffered at Mukden in February 1905, where of 300,000 Russian troops, 120,000 were killed, wounded or missing; in May 1905, the Russian fleet was wiped out at the battle of Tsushima; and on August 23, 1905, under the chairmanship of President Theodore Roosevelt, the peace treaty was signed in Portsmouth, N. H., stripping Russia of Port Arthur, Southern Sakhalin, its Korean sphere of influence, and the whole of Southern Manchuria. It was a disastrous defeat for Russian imperialism.

THE RISING REVOLUTIONARY WAVE

From the outset, the Russian workers had no taste for this reactionary, imperialist war. They were already in a revolutionary mood, which was greatly accentuated by the brutal slaughter of the war and by the criminal actions of the tsar's government and field officers, who sent half-starved, half-armed troops in to be butchered ruthlessly. The bitter tragedy of the war added to overflowing to the cup of misery of the oppressed people, and they replied with the great revolution of 1905.¹ This began even while the war was going on. It was the first example of transforming an imperialist war into a people's revolution.

The historic movement started with a series of strikes. These were headed mainly, but not exclusively by the Bolshevik wing of the party. In December of 1904 a big Bolshevik-led strike of oil workers developed in Baku. It resulted in a victory and a collective agreement for the workers, something unheard of previously in Russia. "The Baku strike," says Stalin, "was the signal for the glorious actions in January and February all over Russia." Many other strikes developed, chief among them the January strike in

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the biggest metal works of St. Petersburg, the Putilov shops – a party stronghold. The strike quickly spread all over the city.

There one of the most tragic events in Russian labor history took place, the “Bloody Sunday” massacre before the Winter Palace in St. Petersburg on January 9, 1905. The peaceful demonstration of 140,000 persons was led by the priest Gapon, who had secret police connections. The Bolsheviks warned the workers that the tsar’s officers would order the troops to fire upon them, but nevertheless the demonstration went ahead. The masses’ petition demanded “amnesty, civic liberty, normal wages, the land to be gradually transferred to the people, convocation of a constituent assembly on the basis of universal and equal suffrage.”² As the party had warned, the tsar turned his guns against the unarmed masses, with the result that more than 1,000 were killed and 2,000 wounded in a horrible butchery.

The tsar hoped by this frightfulness to crush the general strike in St. Petersburg and also to terrorize the workers all over Russia. But it had just the reverse effect. A great cry of outrage went up from the Russian masses, in fact from labor all over the world. The revolutionary movement, instead of being extinguished, blazed up with vastly greater vigor. Strikes broke out in many parts of the country. During January 440,000 workers struck, or more than in the previous ten years. The revolution had begun.

During the next several months, as the war against Japan still went on, the strike movement spread into all the industrial centers. Lenin says that in this revolutionary year there were some 2,800,000 strikers, or twice the total number of workers. In Lodz, Poland, the workers built barricades in the streets and fought off the troops. And in Ivanovo-Voznesensk, an important textile center, the workers, in a long, fiercely fought strike, set up a Council of Representatives, “which was actually one of the first Soviets of Workers’ Deputies in Russia.”³

The revolutionary movement also spread to the peasantry. Lenin states that during the Autumn of 1905, “the peasants burned down no less than 2,000 estates and distributed among themselves the provisions that the predatory nobility had robbed from the people.”⁴ Among various of the oppressed nationalities revolutionary sentiment also flared up. Students tore up the tsar’s pictures and the Russian schoolbooks, and they shouted to the government officials, “Go back to Russia.” Polish pupils demand-

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ed a Soviet. Sensational was the revolt of the battleship Prince Potemkin, in the Black Sea in June. The other warships of the fleet refused to fire upon the rebellious crew. Finally, however, running out of coal and provisions, the Potemkin had to steam to Rumania and surrender there.

Frightened at the growing revolution, the tsar, on August 19, "conceded" a "Duma of the Empire" to the Russian people. Based on a crassly unjust system of class voting, this was to be a sort of "advisory parliament," and its political purpose was to divert the rising revolutionary current into harmless parliamentary channels. It was the time-honored Bismarckian device of ruling classes, who, finding themselves unable to rule solely by violence, also made use of pseudo political concessions.

TWO TACTICS: MENSHEVIK AND BOLSHEVIK

The Russian Social-Democratic Labor Party grew rapidly in the great mass upheaval. "The hundreds of revolutionary Social-Democrats," said Lenin, "suddenly grew into thousands." But the party was split, not formally but actually, into Menshevik and Bolshevik sections. In order to secure some degree of united action, the Bolsheviks tried to bring the Mensheviks into the party convention in London in April 1905; but the latter refused, and instead held their own convention, in Geneva. As a result, two conflicting political lines were developed; the disputes between the two groups over "organizational" questions emerged, as Lenin well understood beforehand, as sharply varying political programs of action.⁵

The Mensheviks understood the current struggle in Russia to be simply a bourgeois revolution of the old style. Therefore, according to them, the bourgeoisie had to lead it. The role of the working class was to support the bourgeoisie in overthrowing tsarist absolutism, but in so doing it must not engage in revolutionary activities on its own account, as this would frighten the bourgeoisie into the arms of feudal ultra-reaction. The peasantry they wrote off as non-revolutionary, a viewpoint shared by Trotsky. Plekhanov said that, "apart from the bourgeoisie and the proletariat we perceive no social forces in our country in which oppositional or revolutionary combinations might find support."⁶ The Menshevik perspective after victory was for a long developmental period of Russian capitalism, with the prospect of socialism being

shoved away off into the dim future – presumably to await some distant time when the workers would quietly vote themselves into power.

The Bolsheviks also understood the developing revolution to be bourgeois in character; but at this point their agreement with the Mensheviks ceased. The proceedings of the London convention of the party and also Lenin's great book, *Two Tactics of Social Democracy in the Democratic Revolution*, written shortly after the convention, attacked the Menshevik position at all decisive points and developed a basically different analysis and program. Lenin made it clear that the bourgeoisie could not and would not firmly lead the revolution; afraid of the working class, it would tend to compromise with tsarism, as it did. Therefore, the working class must lead. Lenin also saw in the peasantry a powerful revolutionary ally, as it was, which would march under the general leadership of the proletariat.

Lenin envisioned a fundamentally different revolutionary perspective – not the establishment of a classical type bourgeois government and then a decades-long, indefinite period before socialism would be introduced, such as was previously the widespread Social-Democratic belief, but the immediate setting up of a democratic dictatorship of the proletariat and peasantry. This, although still within the framework of capitalism, would have the objective of a relatively rapid transition to a socialist regime. Said Lenin: "From the democratic revolution we shall at once, and according to the degree of our strength, the strength of the class-conscious and organized proletariat, begin to pass over to the socialist revolution. We stand for continuous revolution. We shall not stop half way."⁷

Contrary to the Mensheviks, Lenin understood clearly that the revolution could be victorious only through armed struggle. This was the sole effective answer that the workers and peasants could make to brutal tsarist autocrats who had replied with "Bloody Sunday" to the peaceful demands of the people. The pacifist illusions of the Mensheviks in this respect were high-lighted by Plekhanov's revealing and treacherous remark after the defeat of the December uprising: "They should not have taken up arms."

Lenin's general revolutionary line, based fundamentally upon principles laid down long before by Marx, represented in the conditions of modern imperialism a new program. It was basically

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opposed to the general theories and policies prevalent throughout the Second International, of which the Russian Menshevik program was typically representative. Lenin's was the broad revolutionary path along which the Russian workers and peasants, in November 1917, were to march to victory over the ruins of tsarism and capitalism, and which was to open new perspectives to the workers of the whole world.

THE HIGH TIDE OF THE REVOLUTION AND REACTION

During the Fall of 1905 the revolution took on great impetus. In October a general strike of railroad workers swept the country. This strike was joined by hosts of workers in other industries, also by government employees, students, and intellectuals. About 1,500,000 workers struck. In the center of the strikes was the demand for the eight-hour day. Peasant uprisings multiplied in large sections of the country, national revolts began to take shape, and scattered mutinies occurred in the army and navy. The Bolshevik slogan of the political mass strike had come into reality. Crook calls it "the greatest political mass strike that the world had known."⁸ Soviets of workers' deputies, in many instances including peasants, sprang up in Moscow, St. Petersburg, and many other cities and towns.

On October 17, the tsar issued another manifesto to the people, this time promising them political reforms and a "legislative" Duma. The Bolsheviks had boycotted his first "consultative" Duma proposal. They also boycotted this second one.* The Mensheviks, on the other hand, who did not want to overthrow tsarism by uprising but "to reform and improve it," fell right into line with the Duma plans of the tsar. "The Mensheviks sank into the morass of compromise and became vehicles of the bourgeois influence on the working class, virtual agents of the bourgeoisie within the working class."⁹

The climax of the Revolution was the December 1905 uprising in Moscow. Lenin had returned to Russia in November, remaining in hiding from the tsar's police. The party issued a call for an

* Lenin later called this second boycott a mistake, as the revolution by then was on the downgrade – the first boycott being justified by the fact that the revolutionary wave was then rising.

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armed uprising. The political strike had grown into insurrection. The call met with wide support among the masses, but with determined opposition from the Mensheviks and other opportunists. Trotsky, Parvus,* and others, leading the St. Petersburg Soviet, the most important of all, kept that body from responding to the call for armed struggle. On December 20, the insurrection began in Moscow. Barricades quickly spread over the city, and for nine days an heroic but losing struggle was conducted in the face of the tsar's overwhelming armed forces. There were uprisings also in Krasnoyarsk, Perm, Novorossisk, Sormovo, Sevastopol, and Kronstadt, but they were all crushed.

During 1906 and 1907 the strike wave continued, but on a diminishing scale; the crest of the Revolution had passed. On June 3, 1907, the tsar dissolved the Duma, and the reaction under Premier Stolypin formally set in. What was left of the freedom won in 1905 was ruthlessly abolished. But the Russian working class soon recovered from its defeat. Despite severe terrorism and repression, already by 1912 the workers were again on the advance with broad strikes and political struggles. But this time they were developing a cumulative strength that was able to carry them through to ultimate victory.

There were various elementary reasons why the Revolution of 1905 failed.¹⁰ Among them were the lack of a stable alliance between the workers and the peasants, the disinclination of a large section of the peasants to fight for the overthrow of tsardom, and the help received by the tsar's government, politically and financially (two billion rubles),¹¹ from the western imperialist powers. But the most important factor in the defeat was the political split in the party itself, with the Mensheviks sabotaging every phase of the struggle. Lenin called the 1905 Revolution a "dress rehearsal" for the great November Revolution of 1917, and a part of that dress rehearsal was that the right-wing Social-Democrats had their apprenticeship in counter-revolution.

THE INTERNATIONAL AND THE REVOLUTION

The 1905 Revolution produced far-reaching repercussions throughout the world of labor. It also had a deep influence upon

* He became a German agent in World War I.

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the oppressed peoples of the Middle and Far East, as the oncoming national liberation revolutions in China, Persia, and Turkey were soon to make clear. Capitalist circles all over the world also were deeply shocked by the great upheaval. Never since the days of the Paris Commune had they seen socialism thus staring them in the face, but this time it was on a vastly broader and more threatening scale. The whole capitalist system felt the great earthquake shock.

One of the pronounced effects of the Revolution was to speed up the ideological differentiation within the labor movement. In the light of the powerful attempt of the Russian toilers to overthrow tsarist absolutism, theoretical disputes between the various groupings took on real flesh and blood. From this period on, the internal tendencies and groupings became definitely more marked. The right became more conscious and aggressive; the center began to assume more concrete shape and to veer more to the right, and the left started to feel its way towards a definite program and organization.

The Revolution developed a host of urgent lessons for the international movement. It made clear many vital questions – the application of the armed insurrection under modern conditions, the methods and results of the mass political strike, the relation between the bourgeois and the socialist revolutions, the role of soviets as the base of the future society, the indispensability of a solid, disciplined Marxist party, the treacherous role of the Mensheviks, the Anarchists, and the Socialist-Revolutionaries. It was fundamental that these elementary lessons be brought home to the workers of the world.

The left wing, and to some extent the center, tried to do this. Lenin wrote voluminously and brilliantly on the Revolution. Rosa Luxemburg said that the labor movement would be many years in absorbing the basic lessons that the great struggle had to teach. The right opportunists, however, understood from the start that, at all costs, they had to keep from the workers the real message of the Revolution. So for the most part their discussion of the great upheaval was confined to pouring out glowing praises in public speeches for the heroism of the Russian workers. The 1905 Revolution belongs more to the tradition of the First and Third Internationals than to that of the Second International.

The right opportunists were especially anxious to keep from

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the workers in the West the tremendous significance of the Russian workers taking up arms. They had thought that by the distortion of Engels' article (see Chapter 16) they had forever done away with this most inconvenient question. They took refuge in Plekhanov's treacherous comment, "They should not have taken up arms," and they undertook, and largely succeeded, in brushing aside the whole matter on the basis that such a resort to armed struggle – a sign of the feudal primitiveness of Russia – could not take place in the western capitalist countries where the workers generally had the franchise. The revisionists were thus able to blur over the validity of the traditional revolutionary weapon, the insurrection, which the workers had learned side-by-side with the petty bourgeoisie in many revolutions; but they could not, however, fully obscure the significance of that great modern revolutionary weapon, developed by the workers themselves, the general strike.

THE QUESTION OF THE POLITICAL MASS STRIKE

Throughout the life of the First and Second Internationals there had been an insistent demand, which was raised at almost every congress, to endorse the use of the general strike, usually as a means to fight war or as the road to the revolution, but sometimes also as a means to win the vote for the workers. However, the proposition was generally voted down, except in the 1868 congress of the First International, when it was adopted as an anti-war measure. In later years, the right-wing opportunists and revisionists outdid themselves in "proving" how, under any and all circumstances, the general strike was an impossibility. They argued that it was wrong in principle. General strikes in various European countries since 1900, but especially in the Revolution of 1905, knocked this nonsense into a cocked hat. With their huge mass political strikes, the Russian Bolsheviks had demonstrated beyond any doubt the great power of this elementary weapon as one of the highest forms of the workers' struggle.

Consequently, sentiment for the mass strike spread rapidly in many countries. Rosa Luxemburg especially championed it in the Second International.¹² In Vienna, in October 1905, when the news reached there of the great Russian strikes, the Social-Democratic Party, then in convention, adjourned and prepared for an immediate mass strike. Mass demonstrations began, and

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on November 28 the industries all over Austria were paralyzed by a solid walkout demonstration.¹³ Barricades were erected in Prague. The central demand was for universal suffrage. In January 1907, after stalling the issue as long as possible, the vote was granted by the government under the threat of a still broader general strike. In the Spring elections of that year, the Austrian party got over a million votes and its parliamentary representation increased from 11 to 87.

The issue of the mass strike came to a head in the German Social-Democracy, the basic organization of the Second International. The question was to knock out the class system of voting and to establish the universal, direct, secret, and equal suffrage. Thus, in Prussia in the 1903 elections the Socialists polled 314,149 votes and the Conservatives 324,137, but the Conservatives got 143 Representatives and the Socialists got none. The revisionist leaders promptly saw the great danger the proposition of the political mass strike held for their whole program of class collaboration, and they resolved to kill it by any means. Already in May 1905, the Legien leaders of organized labor, at their trade union convention in Cologne, sharply condemned the general strike. They knew the question was later to be passed upon by the convention of the party and they undertook to pre-determine the latter's action. The resolution, overwhelmingly adopted, said: "The congress considers that the general strike, as it is portrayed by the Anarchists and other people without any expression in the sphere of the economic struggle, is unworthy of discussion; it warns the working class against neglecting its day-to-day work by the acceptance and dissemination of such ideas."¹⁴

The Social-Democratic Party congress met in Jena in September 1905. Bebel made a report on the mass political strike, presenting it as a defensive weapon. Rosa Luxemburg, Clara Zetkin, and others on the left, made vigorous Marxist speeches for the political strike. The center wobbled on the question, but the right wing made an all-out offensive against it. Legien, David, and other opportunists denounced the general strike as "general nonsense," asserted that in any case it was impossible, and declared that it constituted the revolution itself. The convention, however, voted overwhelmingly in the sense of Bebel's report, adopting a resolution which gave a limited endorsement of the mass political strike, as follows: "In the event of an attack on the universal,

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equal, direct, and secret franchise, or on the right of association, it is the duty of the whole working class to use every means which is appropriate to ward off the attack. The party congress considers that one of the most effective means of preventing such a political crime against the working class or of winning rights which are essential to their emancipation is the widest possible use of mass cessation of work.¹⁵

The contrary actions of the national trade union and party conventions, one condemning the general strike and the other endorsing it, thus created a crisis in the German labor movement. It was the climax of the tug-of-war that had been developing for several years between the authority of the unions and that of the party, or more concretely, between the clique of reactionary bureaucrats who were controlling the already powerful trade unions and the group of more radically inclined petty-bourgeois intellectuals who were dominating the party. A way was found out of this impasse by holding a secret conference at Mannheim in February 1906 between the Central Committee of the party and the General Commission of the trade unions, at which the party leaders agreed not only to abandon their project for mass political strikes, but also to accept the trade union leaders' ultimatum that the matter could not even be discussed in the ranks of the labor unions. Bebel organized this surrender.¹⁶

The surrender of the Bebel-Kautsky party leadership to the opportunist trade union bureaucrats marked a tragic milestone in the history of the German Social-Democracy. It enormously strengthened the position of the right wing and weakened that of the center and left groups. The opportunist trade union leaders became dominant in the party. Illustrative of the type of leadership then in the party, the Reichstag representatives, from 1903 to 1906, consisted of the following: 13 intellectuals and bourgeois, 15 petty bourgeois, 54 of proletarian origin, most of whom were high trade union officials.¹⁷ The 1906 debacle largely laid the basis for the line-up of revisionist leadership that was to mislead the German working class to overwhelming disaster a decade later in the first great world war.

22. Colonialism and War: Stuttgart (1907)

The seventh congress of the Second International was held at Stuttgart in August 1907, the first of such world congresses of labor ever to take place in Germany. In attendance were some 1,000 delegates, a number which was in striking contrast to the tiny congresses held by the First International a generation before. The reports to the congress showed a continuous and rapid growth of the workers' organizations in many countries – parties, trade unions, cooperatives – and an atmosphere of enthusiasm prevailed. A demonstration of 50,000 workers opened the congress. The whole labor world focussed its attention upon this important international gathering.

Since the meeting of the Second International in Amsterdam in 1904 the tremendous political fact of the Russian Revolution had taken place. But the opportunist leaders of the International, as Lenz remarks, did not want the congress to pay too much attention to this great event, for it was packed with explosive lessons. So, in their speeches they confined themselves mostly to glowing praise for the heroism of the Russian workers and to easy general pledges of solidarity with them.

A highly significant feature of the Stuttgart congress was that Lenin attended it as the head of the Russian delegation. His standing was not great among the well-known world figures who led the congress and who generally looked upon him as a leftist extremist bred of the special Russian situation.

THE COLONIAL QUESTION

One of the basic questions handled by the congress was that of the colonies. During the previous 30 years all the major powers had helped themselves to vast stretches of territory, as we have remarked earlier, and they had set up the most atrocious systems of oppression and exploitation among the populations. These powers were now quarrelling ominously over their colonies, and colonialism had become an urgent political question.

Notoriously, the right Social-Democrats in all countries either openly or covertly supported or conciliated the colonial policy of their national imperialist bourgeoisies. The trade union bureaucrats also were not slow to observe that the capitalists, to win the acquiescence of organized labor, were not averse to sharing with

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the skilled labor aristocracy some crumbs of the rich super-profits wrung from the colonial peoples. The petty bourgeoisie also shared in the “prosperity” bred of the looting of the colonies, and the Social-Democratic intellectuals reflected this fact.

Despite the occasional protests of Marxists, the labor movement in England was no serious obstacle to the seizure of an immense empire by Great Britain during the last half of the 19th century. Most of the top trade union leaders of the period raised no objection to the overrunning of backward lands by the great powers, particularly by their own country. Cole and Postgate say of the Fabians: “Many of the Fabians, especially Bernard Shaw, were not without a touch of the imperialist spirit. Shaw, for example, intensely disliked small nations and backward peoples as obstacles to the onward march of civilization, and was inclined to regard the British Empire... as a potentially civilizing force.”¹ Generally, revisionist Social-Democrats in Germany, France, Belgium, Holland, and other imperialist lands held views akin to Shaw’s, although usually they were not so frank in expressing them. Nor were some left wingers entirely free from such illusions.

Imperialist tendencies were no less crass in labor’s ranks in the United States. At first the Gompers trade union oligarchy made some protest against the American seizure of Cuba, Puerto Rico, and the Philippines in the Spanish-American imperialist war of 1898, but they soon subsided and became ready for any imperialist adventure on the part of the super-arrogant monopolists. Kipnis thus sums up the attitude of American socialist policy at the time regarding imperialism: “To the Social-Democrats of both parties [S.P. and S.L.P.], imperialism was no issue at all. They held it was a bone of contention between large and small capitalists, but of no concern to the working class.... Since the workers could buy back only half of what they produced, and since capitalists could not consume all of the other half, the great trusts were forced to seek markets abroad.” Commenting on a statement by Chauncey Depew that the United States had only five percent of the markets of the Orient and needed 50 percent, Eugene V. Debs, left-wing leader (in a speech on September 29, 1900), remarked: “The getting of the other 45 percent constitutes the white man’s burden at the present time.”² Characteristically, the American socialist movement almost completely ignored the

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long-continued shocking persecution of the Negro people in the United States.

The debate on the colonial question was immediately precipitated at the congress by the recent experience of the Social-Democratic Party of Germany. The Reichstag fraction, in 1904, in protest against the butchery of the Hereros in Southwest Africa by German troops, had withheld their vote from the war credits (later voting against them). As a result of petty-bourgeois defections in the ensuing national elections of 1906, the party, although it gained some quarter million votes all told, lost 38 seats.³ The right-wing leaders, therefore, concluded that the time was ripe for them to work out a "Socialist" colonial policy which would in the future prevent such unfortunate clashes with the imperialists over the colonial question. To this end, the matter was put on the agenda of the congress at Stuttgart.

Accordingly, the Stuttgart congress commission, under the leadership of the notorious Dutch revisionist, van Kol, adopted a resolution in which these passages occurred: "The congress declares that the usefulness or the necessity of the colonies in general – and particularly to the working class – is greatly exaggerated. It does not, however, reject colonial policy in principle and for all time, for under a socialist regime it may work in the interests of civilization." The effect of this conception, of course, would have been formal recognition of imperialism. As it was, the Second International parties were doing little or nothing to fight colonialism, especially not in the colonies themselves, and this resolution would have made things even worse.

The left and center in the congress, however, militantly rejected the crass opportunism of the commission and struck out the offending paragraph on "socialist" colonialism. Gankin and Fisher remark that, "The voting on the paragraph containing this statement revealed the interesting fact that a majority of the delegations from large countries possessing colonies, and all the delegates of the small colonial powers, favored retention of the paragraph."⁴ The congress, nevertheless, by a vote of 127 to 108,*

* In this congress for the first time, the various parties were prorated delegates, from two for the smallest parties to 20 for the largest.

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adopted the amended resolution, endorsing the previous resolutions of 1900 and 1904 and condemning outright "capitalist colonial policy;" but set no definite perspective for the independent development of the more backward peoples industrially and politically. This was a defeat for the revisionists, but of course they did not let it interfere with their opportunist practices.

ANTI-MILITARISM AND ANTI-WAR

The high point of the Stuttgart congress was its action against the growing war danger. Already the premonitory rumblings of a great European war were to be heard and the workers everywhere were deeply concerned. The several big powers were beginning to pile up armaments and they were increasingly colliding with each other. In 1899 the Hague Peace Tribunal, forerunner of the League of Nations, was set up, but it was obviously unable to compose the sharp differences among the imperialist governments. The Algeiras conference of 1906 had also failed to achieve a definite agreement between Germany and France on the Moroccan question.

Four resolutions against war, three of them from the French delegation, came before the congress. The most significant were by Bebel and Gustav Hervé. Bebel's resolution, couched in vague terms, followed the traditional line of the Second International on the question. It was so general in terms that even the extreme right wing rallied enthusiastically to its support, to Bebel's embarrassment. The second resolution was presented by Hervé in the name of a fraction of the French delegation. Hervé, an intellectual and a dabbler in syndicalism, was a noted opponent of patriotism in all its forms, although he eventually supported World War I. His resolution demanded that "In view of the diplomatic notes which threaten the peace of Europe from all sides, the congress calls upon all comrades to answer any declaration of war, no matter from what side it is made, with the military strike and with insurrection."

The discussion of the several resolutions exposed the great amount of confusion and opportunism prevailing in the International on the general question of the struggle against war. Bebel incorrectly believed that it was possible to determine which country was the aggressor on the basis of who fired the first shot. "Affairs," said he, "are no longer in such shape when the threads of

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war catastrophe are hidden to educated and observing students of politics. Closet diplomacy has ceased to be." Hervé made no distinction between just and unjust wars, but condemned all alike. The Jaures-Vaillant position had in it the elements of the "patriotic" defense of the bourgeois fatherland, as also did that of the notorious revisionists of Germany, Austria, and other countries.⁵

Lenin intervened in the question. Like Marx, Lenin did not believe that a general strike was sufficient to combat war. He declared that imperialist war could only be successfully countered by proletarian revolution. Consequently he and Rosa Luxemburg formulated an amendment to this effect to the Bebel resolution, which Rosa Luxemburg, in the name of the Russian and Polish delegations, presented to the sub-commission. Martov also signed the proposal. Bebel insisted that the wording be toned down sharply, as otherwise it would result in the dissolution of the German Social-Democratic organizations by the government.⁶ But the heart of the proposal remained. The Lenin-Luxemburg amendment expressed the policies followed by the Bolsheviks during the Russo-Japanese war and it laid down the line of future revolutionary struggle against imperialist war. As Lenz remarks, it "gave Bebel's ambiguous resolution a clear revolutionary character." The amendment, which in substance proposed to counter the threatening imperialist war with a fight for socialism, comprised the last two (italicized) paragraphs of this famous resolution, which is included below in full.

The resolution, after considerable debate, was adopted by acclamation. This action was another example of unprincipled voting on the part of the right-wingers. Certainly these opportunists, as they were soon to demonstrate, had nothing in common with Lenin's revolutionary proposal, but they voted for it nevertheless. Hervé acidly noted this fact, stating that the "Bebel and Vollmar speeches in the commission were black, whereas the resolution is white." He said that in view of this gross contradiction it would be appropriate for the German delegation to give the congress a pledge that they really intended to carry out the resolution.

In presenting the resolution to the congress, Rosa Luxemburg argued that the amendment went beyond the views of Jaurès and Vaillant in contending that "in case of war the agitation should be directed not merely toward the termination of war, but also toward utilizing the war to hasten the overthrow of class rule in

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general.” She also pointed out that, “The Russian Revolution sprang up not merely as the result of the war; it has also served to put an end to the war.” Lenin, in later commenting on the anti-war resolution, criticized Hervé’s mechanical approach to “all wars,” pointing out the necessity to distinguish revolutionary wars, and he said, “This struggle must consist... in substituting not merely peace for war, but socialism for capitalism. It is not a matter of preventing the outbreak of war, but a matter of utilizing the crisis resulting from the war to hasten the overthrow of the bourgeoisie.” He sharply criticized the inadequacies of Bebel’s resolution.⁷

THE STUTTGART RESOLUTION

“The congress ratifies the resolutions against militarism and imperialism, adopted by previous International congresses and declares once more that the struggle against militarism cannot be separated from the socialist class struggle in general.

“Wars between capitalist states, generally, result from their competitive struggle for world markets, for each state strives not only to assure for itself the markets it already possesses, but also to conquer new ones; in this the subjugation of foreign peoples and countries comes to play a leading role. Furthermore, these wars are caused by the incessant competition in armaments that characterizes militarism, the chief instrument of bourgeois class rule and of the economic and political subjugation of the working class.

“Wars are promoted by national prejudices which are systematically cultivated among civilized peoples in the interests of the ruling classes for the purpose of diverting the proletarian masses from their own class problems as well as from their duties of international class solidarity.

“Hence wars are part of the very nature of capitalism; they will cease only when the capitalist economic order is abolished or when the number of sacrifices in men and money, required by the advance in military technique, and the indignation provoked by armaments drive the peoples to abolish this order.

“For this reason, the working class, which provides most of the soldiers and makes most of the material sacrifices, is the natural opponent of war, for war contradicts its aim – the creation of an economic order on a socialist basis for the purpose of bringing about the solidarity of all peoples.

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“The congress therefore considers it the duty of the working class, and especially of its representatives in the parliaments, to combat with all their power naval and military armaments and to refuse the means for these armaments by pointing out the class nature of bourgeois society and the motive for maintaining national antagonisms. It is also their duty to see to it that the proletarian youth is educated in the spirit of the brotherhood of peoples and of socialism and is imbued with class consciousness.

“The congress sees in the democratic organization of the army, in the substitution of the militia for the standing army, an essential guarantee that all offensive wars will be rendered impossible and the overcoming of national antagonisms facilitated.

“The International is not able to mold into rigid form the anti-militarist actions of the working class because these actions inevitably vary with differences of national conditions, time, and place. But it is its duty to coordinate and strengthen to the utmost the endeavors of the working class to prevent war.

“Actually, since the International congress of Brussels, the proletariat, while struggling indefatigably against militarism by refusing all means for navy and military armament and by endeavoring to democratize military organizations, has resorted with increasing emphasis and success to the most diverse forms of action so as to prevent the outbreak of wars or to put a stop to them, as well as to utilize the disturbances of society caused by war for the emancipation of the working class.

“This was evidenced by the agreement concluded after the Fashoda incident by the English and French trade unions for the maintenance of peace and for the restoration of friendly relations between England and France; by the conduct of the Social-Democratic parties in the German and French Parliament during the Moroccan crisis; by the demonstrations conducted by the French and German Socialists for the same purpose; by the joint action of the Socialists in Austria and Italy, who met in Trieste for the purpose of thwarting the conflict between these two countries; further, by the emphatic intervention of the Socialist workers of Sweden for the purpose of preventing an attack upon Norway; and, finally, by the heroic, self-sacrificing struggle of the Socialist workers and peasants of Russia and Poland waged against the war unleashed by tsarism and then for its early termination, and also for the purpose of utilizing the national crisis for the liberation of

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the working class.

“All these endeavors are evidence of the proletariat’s growing power and increasing strength to render secure the maintenance of peace by means of resolute intervention. This action of the working class will be all the more successful if its spirit is prepared by similar actions and the workers’ parties of the various countries are spurred on and consolidated by the International.

“The congress is convinced that, under pressure exerted by the proletariat and by the serious use of courts of arbitration, instead of the pitiful measures adopted by the governments, the benefit derived from disarmament can be assured to all nations and will enable them to employ for cultural purposes the enormous expenditures of money and energy, which are now swallowed up by military armaments and war.

“If a war threatens to break out, it is the duty of the working class and of its parliamentary representatives in the country involved, supported by the consolidating activity of the International [Socialist] Bureau, to exert every effort to prevent the outbreak of war by means they consider most effective, which naturally vary according to the accentuation of the class struggle and of the general political situation.

“Should war break out none the less, it is their duty to intervene in favor of its speedy termination and to do all in their power to utilize the economic and political crisis caused by the war to rouse the peoples and thereby to hasten the abolition of capitalist class rule.”⁸

AMERICAN NATIONAL CHAUVINISM

Many Social-Democratic parties were infected with national chauvinism. The Socialist Party of the United States was a crass example. This showed up in many respects, among others, on the question of immigration. Both the Amsterdam and Stuttgart congresses dealt with this question, mostly at the instance of the American delegations. For many years, in trade union circles, there was a strong agitation going on, aimed at cutting off immigration into the United States. This was in line with the monopolistic tendencies of the skilled workers to build walls around their particular crafts. It received its worst expression in the slogan, “The Chinese Must Go,” on the Pacific Coast, but it was also largely directed against workers coming into the United States from Europe.

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The Socialist Party, dominated by petty-bourgeois intellectuals and trade union bureaucrats, instead of taking a stand against such reactionary trends, whose stronghold was in the Gompers A.F. of L. bureaucracy, tended to surrender to them. Consequently, at Amsterdam in 1904, on the basis of party instructions, Hillquit and the other American delegates had joined with Verdorat and van Kol of Holland and Thompson of Australia, and submitted a resolution broadly implying the exclusion of "backward races (Chinese, Negroes, etc.)." De Leon blasted this, and upon its obviously meeting no favor among the delegates, it was tactfully withdrawn.⁹

Undeterred, the American delegation, again headed by Hillquit, came back to the Stuttgart congress three years later with another resolution of the same type, proposing to exclude immigrants "who are incapable of assimilation with the workingmen of the country of their adoption." Meanwhile, in the American Socialist Party chauvinist leaders such as Victor Berger and Ernest Untermann, were openly carrying on an exclusionist campaign. The Stuttgart congress rejected the American proposals and adopted a sound resolution on the immigration question. While condemning the importation of contract labor, the resolution also repudiated all measures aimed at restricting the freedom of immigration on racial or national grounds. It proposed to protect national living standards of workers by organizing the immigrants and seeing to it that they got equal economic and political rights.¹⁰

The fact in the United States was, of course, that the foreign-born, making up 30 to 75 percent of the workers in the basic industries, were always to be found in the front ranks of the workers fighting to improve wages and working conditions, to build the trade unions, and to establish a strong Marxist political party. For over half a century the Marxist movement in the United States rested upon the shoulders of foreign-born workers.

The action of the Stuttgart congress, in rejecting their proposed exclusion of immigrants, greatly incensed the chauvinist opportunists among the leaders of the American Socialist Party. Kipnis thus describes their general reaction: "The right wing and sections of the center and left were outraged at the Stuttgart resolution. Victor Berger immediately denounced the American delegates to the Congress, Hillquit, Algernon Lee, and A. M. Simons,

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as a group of 'intellectuals' who had betrayed the American proletariat by permitting passage of a resolution which would admit 'Jap' and 'Chinaman' coolies into the United States. If we are ever to have socialism in America and Canada, said Berger, we must keep them 'white men's' countries."¹¹ This was quite in line with the party's even more disgraceful tolerance of Jim Crow, lynching, and other outrages against the Negro people in the United States. Debs vehemently protested against the exclusionist attitude of the party.

23. The Copenhagen Congress (1910)

Copenhagen was the scene of the eighth congress of the Second International, beginning on August 28, 1910. The delegates met in a situation where military armaments were being greatly increased, and the war danger had obviously grown more acute during the three years since the previous congress, in Stuttgart. Hence, once again, the fateful question of what to do in case war should break out, and also how in the meantime to fight against the growth of militarism, occupied the attention of the parliament of the Socialists.

A further characteristic of the current unsettled situation was an increase in struggle among the peoples of the colonial and semi-colonial countries. A deep ferment was beginning to work among the Indian and Chinese peoples, and there had just been revolutions in Turkey and Persia, the latter aimed against tsarist Russian imperialism. To support such movements was remote from the intentions of the right-wing leaders of the Second International, so they contented themselves merely with sending perfunctory telegrams of congratulations to the fighters in Turkey and Persia.

THE ANTI-WAR RESOLUTION

The advocates of the general strike as a panacea against war, as usual, raised their point, but this time stronger than ever. Keir Hardie of England joined with Vaillant of France in submitting an amendment to the proposed resolution, reading as follows: "The congress considers the general strike of workers – especially in the industries which provide war supplies (weapons, munitions, transport, etc.) – and also active agitation among the people when conducted by extreme methods, to be the most effective of all means which should be used to prevent wars."

The movement for the general strike against war had been strengthened by recent events in Spain. On July 26, 1909, the workers of Barcelona, to emphasize their economic demands and to protest against the reactionary Spanish war in Morocco, called a general strike. This strike, extremely militantly waged, spread far and wide, until an estimated 300,000 workers were out. The strike lasted until July 31, but a second, national strike, to take place on August 2, failed to materialize, in the face of police ter-

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rorism, with the arrest of the leaders of the Socialist Party and of the Anarcho-syndicalist trade unions.¹

Ledebour of Germany made the main fight against the general strike amendment. Although himself a centrist, he used the stock argument of the German revisionists against every form of militancy by the workers – that it would bring down the police on the Social-Democratic organizations, with fatal results. He was doubly emphatic this time, as Karl Liebknecht had been arrested not long since for making an anti-militarist speech.² The general strike amendment was defeated in the commission by a vote of 119 to 58, and the whole matter was referred for further study to the International Socialist Bureau.

The anti-war resolution finally adopted followed along the basic lines of the Stuttgart resolution: “By adhering to the repeatedly expressed duty of the Socialist parliamentary representatives to combat armaments with all their strength and to refuse funds for them, the congress expects these representatives: (a) continually to reiterate the demand for compulsory international courts of arbitration in all conflicts between states; (b) continuously to renew proposals the ultimate aim of which is a general disarmament and, first and foremost, the convocation of a conference which would limit naval armaments and abolish the right of seizure at sea; (c) to demand the abolition of secret diplomacy and the publication of all the existing and future treaties and agreements between the governments; (d) to intervene in favor of the people’s right of self-determination and their defense against armed attack and forcible repression.” Then followed the two famous Lenin-Luxemburg paragraphs of the Stuttgart resolution, which called for a fight for socialism in the event of a great war (see Chapter 22).

The resolution was adopted by a unanimous vote. Radek of Poland, speaking for the left, opposed the resolution’s proposals for armament reduction and international arbitration as fruitless, but supported the resolution on the basis of its revolutionary Lenin-Luxemburg paragraphs. The right wing, as usual, voted for the resolution tongue-in-cheek, certainly having no intention of doing what the resolution proposed, namely to counter an imperialist war with a socialist revolution.

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NATIONALIST TRADE UNIONISM

The rock upon which the Second International was finally to split was that of bourgeois nationalism – that is, the revisionist leaders controlling the various parties and unions, allowed their nationalist prejudices and policies to prevail over the class interests of the workers, until they eventually led the movement on to shipwreck in World War I. This alien bourgeois national element ran through all the work of the International and its various congresses. The disastrous weakness came sharply to the fore in Copenhagen in the discussion on the trade union question, concretely in the matter of the nationalist split of the trade union movement in Austria.

One of the great achievements of Lenin during these years, with the close collaboration of Stalin, was the working out of a sound proletarian policy in the complex national question. Russia being a multinational state, this was an issue of fundamental importance to the party and the working class in that country. Lenin's solution was based upon two elementary propositions. The first was that all the socialists in Russia, in a true spirit of internationalism, should belong to one Social-Democratic party, and second, that the party and the respective peoples should insist upon the right of self-determination for the oppressed peoples, including the right of separation. This is today the highly successful policy of the Soviet Union, People's China, and other countries now on the way to socialism and communism.

The Social-Democratic revisionists at the head of most of the major parties of the Second International, however, being themselves fundamentally nationalist and imperialist, would not accept this revolutionary internationalist solution of the national question. Generally, they did nothing to upset the existing capitalist imperialistic "settlement" of the national question. But certain centrists worked out also the opportunist proposition of "national cultural autonomy" for the oppressed peoples within the framework of the existing empires. The chief theoreticians of this thinly-disguised imperialistic line were the Austrian leaders Victor Adler, Otto Bauer, and Karl Renner. Austria, a multi-national state, was the main scene of application of this theory. The general effects were to split the labor movement, to allow the cultivation of the worst nationalist prejudices among the workers, and to

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throw the party under the ideological influence of the bourgeois national parties.

Stalin thus describes how the theory worked out in practice: "Up to 1896 there was a united Social-Democratic Party in Austria. In that year the Czechs at the International congress in London first demanded separate representation, and got it. In 1897, at the Vienna (Wimberg) party congress, the united party was formally liquidated and in its place a federal league of six national 'Social-Democratic groups' was set up. Subsequently these groups were converted into independent parties. The parties gradually severed contact. The parties were followed by the parliamentary fraction, which also broke up – national 'clubs' were formed. Next came the trade unions, also split along national lines. Even the cooperatives were affected."³ In Russia the Jewish Bund, opportunistically led, tried to apply this same principle of "national cultural autonomy," claiming jurisdiction over all Jews in Russia, but the party consistently rejected this disruptive policy.

The Copenhagen congress stressed the need for more solidarity generally on an international scale among the trade unions, and specifically dealing with the Austrian situation, it declared for the unity of the trade union movement in that and every other country. But such declarations were of little avail. The real splitting disease lay in the bourgeois nationalism that affected the leadership of the various parties and the low level of proletarian internationalism prevailing, and the opportunist leaders were not at all disposed to do anything effective about that. So the evil continued and grew.

OPPORTUNIST CONCEPTIONS OF THE COOPERATIVES

Another question occupying major attention at the Copenhagen congress, which once again exposed the deep opportunist currents existing in the Second International, related to cooperatives. As we have seen in previous chapters, confusion as to the role of the cooperatives in the class struggle was the basis for many deviations and sectarian movements during the history of the First and Second Internationals. It will be recalled that already the Inaugural Address of the First International dealt with errors in the role of cooperatives. The root of these cooperative deviations was always the idea, expressed in one way or another, that the cooperatives provided a major if not the main road to

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working class emancipation. In his famous article on cooperatives, one of the very last things he ever wrote, Lenin said: "There was much fantasy in the dreams of the old cooperators. Often they were ridiculously fantastic. But why were they fantastic? Because these old cooperators did not understand the fundamental, root significance of the political struggle of the working class for the overthrow of the rule of the exploiters."⁴ Notoriously, revisionism was entrenched in the cooperatives, and the same historic illusions as to the role of the cooperative movement tended to crop out once more at Copenhagen.

With his wonderful grasp of the labor movement as a whole, Lenin paid the very closest attention, both in a theoretical and a practical sense, to every phase of the workers' organization and struggle. Consequently, he was a profound authority not only upon the party and its theory and program, but also regarding trade unionism, cooperatives, women's work, youth political activities, and every other labor sphere. Characteristically, therefore, the Russian delegation introduced a resolution into the Copenhagen congress, proposing the Marxist line on cooperatives. It was not adopted.

Lenin was especially critical of one phrase in the main resolution before the congress, which had been inserted by Jaurès. This was the expression that the cooperatives would assist the workers "to prepare democratization and socialization of production and distribution." Lenin sensed that lurking behind this formulation was the characteristic Bernstein revisionist conception of "growing over into socialism." To guard against this, he and Guesde proposed to amend the resolution by the words, "Cooperatives assist to a certain extent to prepare the functioning of production and of distribution after the expropriation of the capitalist class." As usual, this amendment was rejected. Lenin voted against the resolution in the commission but voted for it in the open session. He said later that despite its defects, in the main it was "a correct definition of the tasks of proletarian cooperatives."⁵

KAUTSKY AND LEGIEN

During 1909-10, in the period of the Copenhagen congress, a celebrated debate took place in Germany between Karl Kautsky, editor of *Die Neue Zeit* and since Engels' death the leading theoretician of the Second International, and Karl Legien, head of the

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German trade union movement and secretary of the International Secretariat of National Trade Union Centers. The immediate question debated was as to the validity of Marx's theory of the absolute impoverishment of the workers, with Kautsky taking the affirmative and Legien the negative. Kautsky expressed his views in a booklet, *Der Weg zur Macht (The Road to Power)*, and Legien his, also in a pamphlet, *Sisyphusarbeit oder Positive Erfolge (Sisyphus Labor or Positive Success)*.

Behind their ideological facade was an attempt of the most powerful group of revisionists in the German party, the trade union bureaucracy, to cut down the prestige of the "left" petty-bourgeois intellectuals and to strengthen themselves as the actual leading force in the whole Social-Democratic movement. It was also an expression of the anti-party "neutralism" common to Social-Democratic labor bureaucrats, which, on a world scale, reached its most extreme development in the violently anti-party attitude of a Gompers. The German debate was most instructive for the light it threw upon the degenerative tendencies at work in the Second International.

Kautsky, who in his general orientation had by this time definitely become a centrist and thereby a shield for the right-wing opportunists, in his pamphlet sang his swan song of Marxism. In the manner of centrists, to whom, as Lenin remarked, the revolutionary word was everything and the revolutionary deed nothing, Kautsky made a rounded-out statement of Marxist principles, pointing out the futility of revisionism and foreseeing a period of intensified class struggle and proletarian revolution. But when he came to practical measures, his argument leaned definitely to the right.

The deep disease which was then corroding the German Social-Democracy, and with it the whole Second International, was the pest of revisionist opportunism, with its consequent playing down of all militancy by the party. But when Kautsky pointed out the dangers confronting the party, he said not a single word of warning against the right wing; what he feared was that the party, because of impatient leftists, might be thrown into premature and disastrous conflict with the forces of German reaction. He iterated and reiterated this theme. Typically, he said, "The interest of the proletariat today more than ever before demands that everything should be avoided that would tend to provoke the ruling class to a

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purposeless policy of violence.” He warned the party against any “insane uprising... any purposeless provocation of the ruling class that might give their statesmen an opportunity to rouse a mad rage against the Socialists.”⁶

This was shooting entirely in the wrong direction. In the German party the danger of leftist provocation to “insane uprisings” was about zero; the real danger came from the fact that the trade union and petty-bourgeois revisionists on the right were killing off the militancy and fighting spirit of the party. Kautsky’s line played right into the latter’s hands. It tended still further to damp down and weaken the badly needed political aggressiveness of a party which, already weakened in its fibre, in the near future would be called upon to carry out the great and imperative tasks of fighting against a great imperialist war and of leading a proletarian revolution.

In his pamphlet Legien made a naked presentation of the opportunist Bernsteinian theory that the workers were basically improving their conditions under capitalism and would continue indefinitely to do so. He maintained that the trade unions had “opened the road upward.”⁷ In Legien’s conception the ultimate goal of the breakup of capitalism and the establishment of socialism went aglimmering. His perspective was Gompersism, dressed up with socialist phrases, as he made manifest in his pre-war visit to the United States, including a speech in congress, which Lenin sharply criticized.⁸ This went to emphasize again that left-wingers, especially in England and the United States, were inclined to draw too sharp a line of demarcation between such professed Socialist trade union leaders as Legien and Leipart, and avowed labor supporters of capitalism as Havelock Wilson and Samuel Gompers. Actually, performing the same role of employers’ agents among the workers, they were all cut from the same cloth. They were opportunist Social-Democrats, with their demagoguery attuned to the different stages of class-consciousness of the workers in their respective countries.

Despite all the smoke and fury of the Kautsky-Legien debate, it was essentially a sham battle. Both men were working in the one general direction, towards the right. The same was true of Gompers and the opportunist Socialist leaders in the United States, who at this time were also waging a violent conflict against each other.

24. Thickening War Clouds: Basle (1912)

The congress of Copenhagen set the next world gathering of Socialist labor to take place in Vienna, in August 1914. This ninth congress, on the 25th anniversary of the founding of the Second International, was to have been a very special affair, but the threatening international situation caused a change in plans. The International Socialist Bureau had to call an extraordinary conference in Basle in November 1912, presumably to adopt measures to protect the interests of the workers and of world peace.

The situation was one of rapidly growing tension among the big imperialist powers and their satellites. Europe experienced one crisis after another. In July 1911 Germany and France narrowly escaped a clash over Morocco, when the Kaiser sent a cruiser into Agadir to defend German imperialist interests – known as the “Agadir Incident” – but the crisis was patched up by a temporary agreement. Then there was the Italo-Turkish war of 1911 over Tripoli. But the special crisis that brought the forces of the Second International together was the outbreak of war among the Balkan states early in October of 1912. Turkey, Greece, Serbia, Bulgaria, and Montenegro were involved. Within six months Turkey was beaten. But in June 1913, the second Balkan war started, a general struggle among all the Balkan powers, which lasted until August of that year.

Originally, these wars began as national struggles of the oppressed Balkan Christian peoples, parts of the Turkish empire, to break loose from their Mohammedan masters, but they immediately took on the aspect of preliminary struggles among the great European powers, of which the countries were respectively satellites. The Triple Alliance and the Triple Entente, the two great imperialist combinations, were feeling for each other’s throat.

THE BASLE MANIFESTO

The Basle conference issued a manifesto designed to prevent the spread of the Balkan war and to avert the outbreak of a general European conflict. The manifesto, basing itself on the two famous Lenin-Luxemburg paragraphs of the Stuttgart resolution, warned of the grave danger of the Balkan war leading to a general conflagration. The congress viewed “with satisfaction,” however,

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the “complete unanimity among the socialist parties and the trade unions in all countries on the war against war.” And, over-optimistically, it declared that, “The fear of the ruling classes that a world war might be followed by a proletarian revolution has proved to be an essential guarantee of peace.”¹ Efforts were made at the congress, as usual, to write in the general strike as the main means against war, but they failed.

The manifesto, which congratulated the Russian workers for their growing revolutionary struggle, laid down specific tasks for the parties in the Balkans, based roughly on the principle of the self-determination of the respective peoples. “But the most important task in the International’s activities,” declared the manifesto, “devolves upon the working class of Germany, France, and England. At this moment, it is the task of the workers of these countries to demand that their respective governments withhold all support to both Austria-Hungary and Russia, that they abstain from any intervention in the Balkan troubles and maintain absolute neutrality. A war between the three great leading civilized peoples because of the Serbo-Austrian dispute over a port would be criminal madness.... The workers of Germany and France cannot concede that any obligation whatever to intervene in the Balkan conflict exists because of secret treaties.”

Calling upon “the workers of all countries to oppose the power of the international solidarity of the proletariat to capitalist imperialism,” the manifesto declared: “Let the governments be mindful of the fact that, with European conditions and the attitude of the working class as they are, they cannot let loose a war without causing danger to themselves. Let them recall that the Franco-German war was followed by the revolutionary outbreak of the Commune, that the Russo-Japanese war set in motion the revolutionary forces of the peoples of the Russian Empire, and that competitive military and naval armaments have accentuated in an unprecedented fashion the class antagonisms in England and on the continent and have unchained vast strikes. It would be sheer madness for the governments not to realize that the very thought of the monstrosity of a world war would inevitably call forth the indignation and the revolt of the working class. The proletarians consider it a crime to fire at each other for the benefit of the capitalists’ profits, the ambition of dynasties, or the greater glory of secret diplomatic treaties.” The manifesto wound up with a ring-

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ing appeal to the workers of the world to oppose militantly all steps leading towards war.

WORDS VERSUS DEEDS

In its terminology, the Basle resolution called for a revolutionary stand against the threatening imperialist war. Had its terms been carried beyond words into practice, it would have resulted in a widespread revolutionary response all over Europe to the launching of the monstrous World War I. Yet the opportunist right wing voted solidly for it, and with "enthusiasm." It was carried unanimously in the conference, *by acclamation*. The revisionists, of whom there were many in the delegations, had not a thing to say against it, not even in the commission.

The explanation for one phase of this sinister anomaly was to be found in the tremendous militancy and anti-war spirit then prevailing among the workers all over the capitalist world. This militancy was marked, among other manifestations, by the rising revolutionary wave in Russia,* by the crisis in the ranks of German Social-Democracy, by the developing big "Triple Alliance" movement of miners, general transport, and railroad workers in England, by the growing fighting spirit of the Italian workers, which culminated in the general strike of June 1914, by the many extremely militant strikes then being conducted by the C.G.T. in France, and by the wave of the big I.W.W. and other strikes in the United States – Lawrence, Paterson, West Virginia, Calumet, and on the Harriman railroads.

Moreover, in meeting the repeated war crises of the past decade, the Socialist parties (mostly the lesser ones) had given a good account of themselves, and the general feeling of the left and center was that this record would be continued and bettered if the imperialist powers should dare to launch a world war. Thus, in the Russo-Japanese war of 1904-05, the Russian and Japanese parties had shown a splendid example in their stand against the war; the Spanish party and the syndicalist unions had also taken an internationalist proletarian position in the Moroccan war of 1909; the Italian and Balkan parties were evidencing a Marxist

* In the Lena goldfields strike of 1912, 500 workers were killed or wounded by tsarist troops.

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anti-war attitude in the current Balkan wars; and in November 1912, the French Socialist Party called upon the working class “to prevent war by every means, including parliamentary intervention, open agitation, manifestoes, as well as a general strike and insurrection.” All this was in the glorious tradition of the French and German workers during the Franco-German war of 1870.

In view of this strong and rising mass anti-war spirit, the right-wingers at the Basle congress concluded it was the better part of wisdom to pull in their horns and to bide a more favorable opportunity to apply their policies. Lenin, however, was not deceived by this show of unanimity. Upon reading the manifesto, he said: “They have given us a large promissory note; let us see how they will meet it.”²

Meanwhile, as the great European war crisis drew nearer, several developments took place expressing the sinister trend of events in the foundation party of the Second International, the German Social-Democracy. The Chemnitz congress of the party in September 1912, loaded with trade union and party bureaucrats as delegates, heavily voted down the left wing on the colonial question, indicating that in the matter of imperialism both the center and the right were essentially united around an opportunist conception.³ Also in 1913 by a roundabout method, the Reichstag fraction voted for the military credits.⁴ And in the Reichstag session in May, 1914, only by a vote of 51 to 47 did the Social-Democratic fraction decide to remain seated while the cheering went on for the Kaiser.⁵ But on the surface all looked well – in the elections of 1912 the party increased its vote from 3,290,000 to 4,250,000, and its Reichstag seats from 43 to 110.

In 1913 August Bebel died. A worker, for 42 years he stood at the head of the German Social-Democratic Party. In his earlier, revolutionary, years Bebel had many great achievements to his credit, including the formation of the party upon an independent basis in 1869, his opposition to the Franco-Prussian war and his imprisonment in 1872, his guidance of the party during the twelve-year period of the anti-Socialist laws, his lifelong agitation for socialism, etc. As we have seen in passing, however, during the last years of his life he slumped over to a centrist position. As the result of his death, the party passed more firmly into the hands of the right wing.

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THE FORCES OF THE SECOND INTERNATIONAL

On the eve of World War I the Second International had affiliated to it 27 Socialist and labor parties of 22 countries, with a combined electorate of about 12,000,000 voters. Lorwin lists their strength thus: "The Social-Democratic Party of Germany had 1,085,000 members and polled 4,250,000 votes in the elections of 1912; the Austrian Socialist Party had 145,000 members and polled 1,041,000 votes in the elections of 1907; the Socialist membership of Czechoslovakia was 144,000, and in Hungary 61,000; the unified Socialist Party of France had 80,300 members and polled 1,400,000 votes in the elections of 1914; the Italian Socialist Party had 50,000 members and polled 960,000 votes in the elections of 1913; the Socialist Party of the United States had 125,500 members and polled 901,000 votes in the elections of 1912. Large votes were also cast during these years for the Socialist parties of Belgium, Sweden, and Argentina, and for the labor parties of Australia and New Zealand."⁶ At this time, the Labor Party of Great Britain had an affiliated membership of 1,612,000.⁷ And Lenin says that in the seven Russian districts that elected opportunist Social-Democrats (Mensheviks) to the Duma in 1913, there were 214,000 workers, but in those that elected the six Bolsheviks there were 1,008,000 workers.⁸

In 1914 the parliamentary representatives of the main Social-Democratic parties were as follows: Germany 110, France 103, Finland 90, Austria-Hungary 82, Italy 80, Sweden 73, Great Britain 42, Belgium 39, Denmark 32, Norway 23, Russia 13, and Holland 16.⁹ At this time the Australian Labor Party was in control of the Federal Parliament. But for the "class system" of voting prevailing in Germany, Russia, and other countries, these figures would have been considerably higher. There were thousands of representatives in lower state bodies.

The Second International also had a large trade union membership under its general influence and leadership. In 1912 there were affiliated to the International Trade Union Secretariat – headquarters Berlin, Karl Legien, general secretary – 19 national trade union centers with 7,394,461 members. These included Germany 2,553,162, United States 2,054,526, Great Britain

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874,281,* and France 387,000.¹⁰

The workers' cooperative movement of Europe was also largely under Social-Democratic leadership. In 1914 there were a total of some 30,000 distributive cooperatives in Europe with about 9,000,000 members. In Great Britain there were, in round numbers, 3,000,000 members, Germany 2,000,000, Russia 1,500,000, France 881,000, etc. There were 24 wholesale cooperatives throughout Europe, five of which did an annual business of \$40,000,000 or more per year. These figures do not include large numbers of building, loan credit, agricultural, and production cooperatives.¹¹ The cooperatives were usually a source of heavy financial contributions to the respective Social-Democratic parties.

The Social-Democratic parties also carried on specific activities and organizations among women and the youth. They had a loosely organized international women's commission, of which Clara Zetkin was the head for 20 years. It held its first international meeting in Stuttgart in 1907. At the same time and place an international youth group, a sort of information bureau, was also established,¹² which by 1914 had some 100,000 members in various European countries. Both groups also held conferences at the Copenhagen congress.

Despite the enormous importance of these associated trade union, cooperative, women, and youth movements, the Social-Democratic parties had a record of having neglected them, particularly in the earlier years. Notoriously, the Social-Democratic leaders were reluctant to grant to the women and young people the freedom of action necessary to build up strong movements. Complaints of gross neglect by the political leaders were also routine in cooperative circles. And Zwing, the mouthpiece of Legien, deploras at length the early deep undervaluation, even jealousy, of the German party leaders for the trade unions – partly a heritage from Lassallean times and partly a fear of trade union domination. He describes the strong opposition against the establishment of the General Commission of the labor unions, and says this opposition was even able to prevent the holding of a trade union congress in 1895.¹³

* At this time the total number of British trade unionists was 4,145,000.

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RIGHT AND LEFT WINGS PRIOR TO WORLD WAR

At the outbreak of the war the right-wing elements definitely controlled the majority of the most important political parties in the Second International, including those in Germany, Austria, England, France, Belgium, and the Scandinavian countries. Most of the rest, including the party in the United States, were controlled by the centrists, together with the revisionists. The characteristic of the center group at this time was a closer and closer working with the right wing. Lenin said, "The 'center' is a realm of honeyed petty-bourgeois phrases, of internationalism in words and cowardly opportunism and fawning on the social chauvinists in deeds." He called centrists "routine-worshippers, slaves to rotten legality, corrupted by the atmosphere of parliamentarism, etc."¹⁴ In the key German Social-Democratic Party the great mass of the membership supported the Kautsky-Haase-Ledebour centrist tendency.

The essentially right opportunist combination throughout the International was supported by a very large number of office-holders and officials of many sorts. Among these were almost 1,000 members of national legislative bodies and several thousand more members of local and provincial legislatures. Then there were literally tens of thousands of paid functionaries in the many parties, trade unions, cooperatives, sports bodies, and other organizations. They had as their class base the skilled aristocracy of labor. These bureaucratic armies, mostly made up of picked right-wing elements, constituted a tremendous stand-pat force to keep things as they were. As it turned out, they were the decisive power in determining the tragic course of the Social-Democracy in the ensuing crucial years. They succeeded in frustrating and defeating the revolutionary will of the working class of central and western Europe.

On the eve of the great war, the left wing was, on the other hand, relatively weak and immature. The period that the Second International had been passing through during the 25 years since it was formed – one mainly of capitalist "prosperity" – was not generally favorable for the development of a left wing, strong organizationally and politically. It was to take war and revolution to do this.

Generally, the left wing of the period, within and without the

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Second International, fell into three categories. First, there were the syndicalist trade unions and anarchist groupings in the Latin countries, together with sprinklings of them in the United States, England, Germany, the Scandinavian countries, and Latin America. These elements, apolitical and usually also otherwise sectarian, "revisionists from the left," were unable to give the broad political leadership which was so badly needed by the misled working class.

The second category of the current left-wing forces was the scattering of left-inclined workers and leaders who were to be found in various countries – such as Luxemburg, Liebknecht, Zetkin, Mehring, Lensch, and Pieck in Germany; Radek and Marchlewski in Poland; Hyndman in England; Braun in Austria; Guesde in France; Garter, and Pannekoek in Holland; Hoeglund in Sweden; and Debs, Haywood, and De Leon in the United States.* These relatively left elements were by no means a homogeneous group, and they had no definite program.

By far the best developed among them was Rosa Luxemburg, leader of the weak left wing in the Social-Democratic Party of Germany; but she, as measured against the policies of the great revolutionary leader Lenin, displayed many theoretical and tactical shortcomings. Already, in passing, we have noted some of them. At this period, her most serious errors related to the national question, the peasant question, the centralized disciplined party of the new type, mass spontaneity, and the armed uprising. Also, as the war and the Russian revolution advanced, she developed other serious errors.¹⁵ Nevertheless, Rosa Luxemburg was a real revolutionary fighter, and Lenin called her "The Eagle."

The third category of left forces at this time, and this was the brain and heart of the whole international left wing, were the Bolsheviks in Russia. They had both the necessary program and leadership for a broad left wing. In Prague, in January 1912, the Russian Social-Democratic Labor Party set the political pace for the Second International by expelling the Mensheviks. Henceforth the Bolsheviks were an independent party, with the support of about four-fifths of the active workers in Russia.¹⁶ Up to the outbreak of the war, the International Socialist Bureau, with the as-

* De Leon died May 11, 1914.

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sistance of Trotsky and other Mensheviks, was unceasing in its efforts to re-unite the Russian party; but as Lenz remarks, fortunately it did not succeed. Consequently, when the war broke out at least one party "was capable of putting into practice the principles of proletarian internationalism."¹⁷

The Bolsheviks, in first line Lenin, sought actively to organize the scattered, immature left wing of the Second International. They gave a splendid example of revolutionary program and tactics themselves in their own party's work in Russia. Besides, during this general period, in 1909, Lenin made a monumental contribution to Marxist theory with his book, *Materialism and Empirio-Criticism*. The Bolsheviks also tried concretely to establish effective bonds among the lefts of all countries. At the Stuttgart congress (1907), Lenin held a conference of left elements, with this general idea in mind. From then on he was a member of the I.S.B., where almost uniformly his proposals were rejected. In Copenhagen (1910) Lenin had a similar left wing meeting. Among those present were Jules Guesde, Charles Rappaport, Rosa Luxemburg, J. Marchlewski, A. Braun, Lenin, Plekhanov, Riazanov, de Brouckere, and P. Iglesias. But there was a confusion of counsel, Lenin was little known, and besides, there was a tendency to blame him for the split in the Russian party. So nothing practical developed from these two meetings.¹⁸ The Marxists of the West little understood the policies Lenin was developing in Russia.¹⁹ In the United States, for example, his name was practically unknown.

In his work in the Second International, Lenin strove to organize the left and as much as possible the center against the revisionist right wing. Among their many other slanders against Lenin, the Trotskyites have tried to interpret this wise policy as underestimating the danger of centrism. The fact is, however, no one knew better than Lenin the menace of opportunism in all its forms. He not only ruthlessly attacked the right revisionists, but he also criticized the mistakes and shortcomings of both the left and center. As the center – the Bebels, Kautskys, Ledebours, and their like – through the years moved more and more to the right, Lenin sharpened up his criticism of these elements, always seeking to drive a wedge between their large following and that of the opportunist right-wing leadership.²⁰ But with all his wonderful flexibility, skill, and energy in theory, polemic, and tactics, Lenin

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was not able to create a general broad working left wing within the Second International during the pre-war years. The best that could be done, as we have seen in passing, was for the left forces, by temporary line-ups, to win occasional victories over the forces of opportunism at the respective congresses.

25. The Great Betrayal: World War I

World War I was the explosion of imperialist antagonisms among the great capitalist powers that had been building up for over a generation. The war was as natural to capitalism as the making of profits or any other manifestation of the capitalist system. The trigger for the war was pulled by the assassination of the Austrian Archduke Francis Ferdinand in Sarajevo, Serbia, on June 28, 1914, by a fanatical Serbian nationalist; but so intense was the accumulated general imperialist tension that almost any political clash might have served as well to precipitate the war. It was the great war prophesied a generation before by Engels, when he said that “fifteen or twenty million armed men would slaughter one another,” and it was the one feared through the ensuing decades by the Second International.

Of course, all the governments involved took a hypocritical moralistic position, claiming that they were fighting in national self-defense; but the crass reality was that the war was nothing more or less than a sordid imperialist struggle among the powers for colonies, markets, raw materials, and strategic positions. The fact that 10,000,000 soldiers had to die in the war, 20,000,000 be crippled, and countless millions more be pauperized (there were left 5,000,000 widows, 10,000,000 orphans, and property damages were \$380 billion)¹ meant only a matter of statistics to the cold-blooded capitalists who pulled the levers in the great human slaughter, the most terrible the world had ever known.

It was an imperialist war for the re-division of the world. The drive of the great states for such a re-division was triply emphasized by the fact that the various powers were developing industrially at widely differing speeds, which tended constantly to upset the economic and political balance among them. This was the operation of the basic law of the uneven development of capitalism, worked out by Lenin (Chapter 18). Thus, whereas, “In 1860 England produced over half of the world’s coal and pig-iron, and about half of the world’s cotton goods. By 1913 her share in world production of each of these commodities had fallen to 22 percent, 13 percent, and 23 percent respectively. Vast new industries had grown up to rival Britain in other countries, particularly Germany and the U.S.A.”² Perlo says that, “Between 1899 and 1913 steel production in the United States and Germany increased threefold,

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while British steel production increased by little more than 50 percent, and British iron production declined. The former industrial leader of the world fell far behind its rivals. By 1913 the United States was easily the leading industrial power.”³

The murderous war was the capitalist method of changing the world political relations of the states in accordance with their varying economic relations. All the powers were war-guilty: the two great war federations – the Triple Alliance of Germany, Austria-Hungary, Bulgaria, and Turkey; and the Triple Entente, eventually of Great Britain, Russia, France, Italy, the United States, Japan, etc. – had been consciously preparing the war for years.

“Germany prepared for the imperialist war with the design of taking away colonies from Great Britain and France, and the Ukraine, Poland, and the Baltic provinces from Russia.... Tsarist Russia strove for the partition of Turkey and dreamed of seizing Constantinople and the Straits leading from the Black Sea to the Mediterranean (the Dardanelles).” It also planned to seize Galicia, a part of Austria-Hungary. “Great Britain strove by means of war to smash its dangerous competitor – Germany – whose goods before the war were steadily driving British goods out of the world markets.” It also wanted to seize Mesopotamia and Palestine from Turkey to get a firm foothold in Egypt. “The French capitalists strove to take away from Germany the Saar Basin and Alsace-Lorraine, two rich coal and iron regions, the latter of which Germany had seized from France in the war of 1870-71.”⁴ And in the background stood the greatest of all imperialist powers, the United States, exploiting the war generally to march ahead to its capitalist objective of world mastery.

The war began on July 28, 1914, with an Austrian attack upon Serbia. Russia mobilized, and Germany declared war upon her on August 1. France joined the war on August 3, and Great Britain one day later. The other powers kept on entering the war in the ensuing months and years. The United States cagily stayed out, profitably selling munitions to the war-making “Allies,” but finally fearing that its Entente “friends” were about to be defeated, it cynically joined the war on April 6, 1917, also under the pretext that it was fighting in national defense.

THE GREAT BETRAYAL

The outbreak of the war confronted the Second International

THE GREAT BETRAYAL

with the supreme responsibility of taking a stand for peace. The interests of the workers imperatively demanded this and the International had repeatedly declared in its congresses – especially in Stuttgart, Copenhagen, and Basle – that the Socialist parties would not only agitate against the war, but would vote against furnishing men and money for it, and most important of all, would “utilize the economic and political crisis caused by the war to rouse the peoples and thereby to hasten the abolition of capitalist class rule.” But when it came to the crucial test the bulk of the Second International parties completely ignored all these solemn pledges and flagrantly betrayed their sacred duty to the working class by treacherously tailing along after their national bourgeoisie, shouting the “defense of the fatherland” war slogans of the imperialists and herding their respective peoples into the imperialist slaughter. In only two European countries – Russia and Serbia – where Bolshevik influence was predominant, did Socialist parties of the original belligerent countries stand firm against the war. This great failure was the most terrible debacle ever sustained by the world’s working class in its entire history.

The fundamental cause of this grave disaster was “social chauvinism;” that is, an adherence to the bourgeois nationalism of the respective capitalist classes, a treasonous attempted identification of the interests of the working class with those of the war-making imperialists. The main social bases for this betrayal in the various parties were among the better-paid skilled workers, the extensive bodies of bureaucratic labor officials of all sorts, and the large numbers of opportunist petty-bourgeois intellectuals who had come largely to dominate the respective parties.

The failure to fight against the war, in fact, its acceptance, was the general culmination of the strong opportunist tendencies which had been developing in the Second International ever since its inception, and of which we have signalized, in passing, many manifestations. Lenin says, “The objective conditions at the end of the 19th century were such that they strengthened opportunism, turning the use of legal bourgeois opportunities into servile worship of legalism, creating a thin layer of bureaucracy and aristocracy in the working class, attracting to the ranks of the Social-Democratic parties many petty-bourgeois ‘fellow travellers.’ The war hastened this development; it turned opportunism into social chauvinism; it changed the alliance of the opportunists with the

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bourgeoisie from a secret to an open one.”⁵ In the crisis, the thin veneer of internationalism in the opportunist-controlled Second International dissolved into a swamp of bourgeois nationalism.

The Social-Democratic leaders were not surprised and stampered by the sudden outburst of the war, as has been said. On the contrary, as Farwig makes clear, for years they had discussed in their conventions the approach of a general war and they had clearly signaled it as an imperialist war, in which the workers could have no interest! This was the theory; the practice was that the opportunist leadership of the party and the unions, with the latter in the lead, completely discarded their Marxist pretensions and supported the war in the spirit of bourgeois nationalists.⁶

HOW THE BETRAYAL OCCURRED

On July 29 the International Socialist Bureau met in session in Brussels. It decided to advance the tenth congress date, scheduled for August 23 in Vienna, to August 9. Obviously, the thing to have done was to summon at once a congress in a neutral country, so that a united international policy for the workers could be worked out. But this was prevented by the weakness of the international center and by the failure of the major parties to call for such a congress. Bourgeois nationalism was actively at work. Some mass protest meetings were held in Brussels and other cities – Jaurès, who spoke at one, was assassinated in Paris by militarists on July 31.⁷ Conferences were also held between French and German delegates, but nothing came of them. No real attempt was made on a general scale to line up the International’s forces against the war.

On August 3 the great debacle came when the German Social-Democratic leaders voted in the caucus of the Reichstag’s group by 78 to 14 to support the war. Significantly, the Legien trade union leaders, as the real controllers of the party, on August 2 anticipated and predetermined the party’s decision by working out a social peace, no-strike agreement with the employers.⁸ The party’s decision was presented next day to the Reichstag, where the party’s 110 representatives voted unanimously in favor of the war credits. Liebknecht and Luxemburg were among the handful who voted against the credits in the party caucus, and Kautsky had voted to abstain; but they all agreed to submit to party discipline and to unit rule in the Reichstag. The party pro-war statement,

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read by Haase, a centrist, raised the bogey of Russian invasion, accepted the slogan of the defense of the fatherland, and declared that "in the hour of danger we shall not desert the fatherland."⁹

The Socialist parties in Austria, France, England, Belgium, and other European belligerent countries, except Russia and Serbia,* took similar action to the German party. But the Bulgarian "narrow Socialists" voted against the war. The parties of Canada, Australia, and New Zealand also voted against the war. The trade unions, including the French syndicalists, who had so militantly proposed an anti-war general strike, but excepting the Industrial Workers of the World in the United States, the Russians, the Italians and a few others, followed the pro-war lead of the Socialists. Soon Guesde and Vaillant entered the French Cabinet, and Vandervelde became part of the Belgian government. Kropotkin joined the social patriots by supporting the tsar's government in the war.

In the neutral countries of Scandinavia, Switzerland, Italy, the United States, etc., the parties generally stood for a position of neutrality. When, later on, however, Italy and the United States joined the war, their Socialist parties split, with the decisive sections voting against the war. The Second International had collapsed, only the parties of the neutral countries still making a show of keeping it going.

Right-wing Social-Democracy was at basic fault for the great debacle. But within this general framework, the Social-Democratic Party of Germany bore the heaviest responsibility. It was the leading party of the Second International and the labor world looked to it for guidance. If it had made a real show of resistance to the war, undoubtedly the bulk of the International would have followed its example. But when it displayed its bourgeois nationalism and voted for the war credits, it at the same time hopelessly smashed the international front of the world labor movement. The party that had produced Karl Marx and Frederick Engels, now fallen into the hands of such adventurers as

* Although the Mensheviks in the Duma refused to vote for the war appropriations, the line of their leaders and party, including that of Plekhanov, Axelrod, Martov, etc., was for the support of the Allies in the war.

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Kautsky, Ebert, Legien, Noske, Scheidemann, Singer, Auer, David, et al., disgraced itself and shamelessly betrayed the trust placed in it by the world's most advanced workers.

THE DEFENSE OF THE FATHERLAND

The Social-Democratic parties, in supporting the war, did so under the bourgeois slogan of the defense of the fatherland. In order to cover up this treason with a pretense of Marxism, they tried to lay a theoretical basis for their war policy. They took the position that it was a national war, that the interests of their people were vitally at stake, and that, therefore, they were fully justified in supporting the war. They undertook to concretize this position by asserting that their respective countries, with armies battering against their borders, had no alternative but to defend themselves. This general line was put forward blatantly by the right-wing elements in terms hardly to be distinguished from those of the capitalists themselves; whereas, the centrists, the Kautsky tendency, cunningly attempted to disguise their war support by symbols of apparent war opposition.

The long-time revisionist Vollmar declared, "At the present time the whole German people is prompted by a single unconquerable will, namely to protect the Fatherland, its independence, and its cultural organization against the enemies that surround it, and not to rest until the latter are conquered."¹⁰ Philip Scheidemann, speaking in the name of practically the entire body of German social chauvinists, put the central blame upon tsarist Russia. He said: "The chief guilt for the present war rests upon Russia. At the very time when the tsar was exchanging dispatches with the German Kaiser, apparently working for peace, he allowed the mobilization to go on secretly, not only against Austria, but also against Germany.... We in Germany have the duty to protect ourselves. We have the task of protecting the country of the most developed Social-Democracy against servitude to Russia.... We Social-Democrats have not ceased to be Germans because we have joined the Socialist International."¹¹ On the other hand, the French, British, Belgian, American, and other social chauvinists blamed Germany as the threat to their nations.

The German centrists, true to their role, worked out more slick arguments, designed to trap into the war the more advanced and revolutionary workers. Kautsky, while taking the basic social

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chauvinist position that it was a defensive war to protect the fatherland, did so under the guise of a pseudo opposition to the war. His line was not to vote against the war credits, but to abstain from voting. Curiously, the notorious revisionist, Bernstein, joined the Kautsky camp. Kautsky typically managed the theoretical impossibility of proving the war to be both imperialist and national. He argued on both sides of the question. Thus, in one breath, after stating that the small countries were fighting for their existence, he said, "The situation is different with the great solidly-based national countries. *Their independence is certainly not threatened, but apparently their integrity is not threatened either.*" After thus averring that it was not a defensive war for the big powers, in the same article, he shifts to the opposite side of the argument and calls upon the workers to support their respective governments, saying: "But from this follows also the further duty of the Social-Democracy of every country to regard the war exclusively as a defensive war, to set up as its goal only protection from the enemy, not his 'punishment' or diminishment."¹²

Kautsky lent his great prestige as an "orthodox" Marxist to the shabby project of "proving" that the International could have taken no course other than the one it did. The world situation, said he, was too complex for unified proletarian action against the war. In the face of the urgent need for national defense, working class internationalism necessarily had to collapse. He stated: "So the present war shows the limits of the power of the International. We deceived ourselves if we expected that it might assure a harmonious attitude of the whole Socialist proletariat of the world during the world war. Such a position was possible only in a few specially simple cases. The world war split the Socialists into various camps, and especially into various national camps. The International is unable to prevent that. That is to say, it is no effective tool in war. It is essentially an instrument of peace."¹³

The general result was that the right and the center joined in prosecuting the war in "defense of the fatherland." On this basis, the Socialist parties in the several countries, repudiating the deepest lessons of solidarity taught them by Marx and Engels, called upon the workers of their respective countries to fire into each other at the behest of the world imperialists who had organized the wholesale slaughter.

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THE WAR AS AN IMPERIALIST WAR

In retrospect, it is now perfectly clear to all except political fools and charlatans that World War I, both as a whole and in its national segments, was a cold-blooded imperialist war, the basic purpose of which was a redivision of the world for the benefit of the great capitalist powers. It is the height of cynicism to maintain that the workers of the world had any national or class interests in the war.

At the time, the Bolsheviks, especially Lenin and other left-wingers, clearly demonstrated the imperialist character of the war. They proved to the hilt that it was an unjust, aggressive, reactionary war. This insistence upon the imperialist nature of the struggle was the basic line that differentiated the left from the rightists and centrists, whose fundamental position was that it was, for their respective countries, a national, and therefore, a just war. The basically different tactics of the two groups flowed from these fundamentally contradictory analyses.

Lenin, who for years had been pointing out the imperialist nature of the approaching struggle, made the war issue perfectly clear in his theses on the war of September 5, 1914. In this document he says: "The European and World War bears the sharp marks of a bourgeois-imperialist and dynastic war. A struggle for markets, for freedom to loot foreign countries, a tendency to put an end to the revolutionary movement of the proletariat and democracy within the separate countries, a tendency to fool, to disunite, to slaughter the proletariat of all countries by inflaming the wage slaves of one nation against the wage slaves of the other for the benefit of the bourgeoisie – this is the only real meaning and significance of the war.... The conduct of the leaders of the German Social-Democratic party, the strongest and the most influential party belonging to the Second International... which voted for the military appropriations and which repeated the bourgeois chauvinist phrases of the Prussian Junkers and the bourgeoisie, is a direct betrayal of socialism.... The same condemnation is deserved by the conduct of the leaders of the Belgian and French Social-Democratic parties, who have betrayed socialism by entering bourgeois cabinets.... The betrayal of socialism by a majority of the leaders of the Second International... signifies an ideological and political collapse of that International."¹⁴ Lenin especially

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denounced the treachery of the Kautskyians.

The social chauvinists of all stripes and of all countries, trying to paint the great conflict as a national, just war, undertook to justify it by reference to the policies of Marx and Engels with regard to the Franco-Prussian war of 1870-71 and other national wars of the 19th century. To these slanders, Lenin replied:

“All these references are an abominable distortion of Marx’ and Engels’ views, made in favor of the bourgeoisie and the opportunists, just as the writings of the Anarchists, Guillaume & Co., distort the views of Marx and Engels for the justification of anarchism. The war of 1870-1871 was historically progressive on Germany’s side up to the defeat of Napoleon III, because both he and the tsar had long oppressed Germany, keeping it in a state of feudal decentralization. As soon as the war turned into a plunder of France (annexation of Alsace and Lorraine), Marx and Engels decisively condemned the Germans. Even at the beginning of the war of 1870-71 Marx and Engels approved of Bebel’s and Liebknecht’s refusal to vote for military appropriations; they advised the Social-Democrats not to merge with the bourgeoisie, but to defend the independent class interests of the proletariat. To apply the characterization of the Franco-Prussian war, which was of a bourgeois progressive nature and fought for national liberty, to the present imperialist war, is to mock history. The same is even more true about the war of 1854-1855 and all other wars of the 19th century, i.e., a time *when there was no modern imperialism, no ripe objective conditions for socialism, no mass socialist parties in all the belligerent countries*, i.e., when there were none of those conditions from which the Basle Manifesto deduced the tactics of a ‘proletarian revolution’ in the case of a war’s arising among the great nations. Whoever refers at present to Marx’ attitude towards the wars of a period when the bourgeoisie was *progressive*, forgetting Marx’ words that ‘the workers have no fatherland,’ words which refer to a *period when the bourgeoisie is reactionary and has outlived itself*, to the period of Socialist revolutions, is shamelessly distorting Marx and substituting a bourgeois for a Socialist standpoint.”¹⁵

THE VICIOUS CIRCLE OF THE SECOND INTERNATIONAL

When the war got under way the parties of the Second International found themselves caught in a murderous vicious circle.

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The Germans, Austrians, Turks, and Bulgarians fought, presumably on the defensive against being overrun and destroyed by the Russians and the western powers. By the same token, the French, British, Russians, etc., supposedly fought to preserve their national independence from the super-aggressive Germans. The bourgeois logic of the situation, which was the logic followed by the heads of the Second International, was an all-around fight, as it was, to the finish.

The treason of the German Social-Democracy got the Socialist parties and the proletariat into this dreadful dilemma by joining the war on the basis of a defense against the "menace of Russian barbarism." This excuse was a monstrous lie; for if the German party had been loyal to the anti-war policies of the Stuttgart-Copenhagen-Basle resolution, the effect of this would have been, not the subjugation of Germany by Russia, but the earlier precipitation of the Russian Revolution, and probably also, of the German Revolution.

Lenin's line, incorporated in the Basle resolution, by countering the war with a bold anti-war stand, would have saved the various parties from getting into the lethal vicious circle that developed as a result of the social chauvinist policy that was followed. It also offered the way out of the impasse, once the vicious circle had been established. If the British and French parties, even then, had applied the line of the resolutions adopted at successive world congresses, the general result would not have been the loss of their independence at the hands of Germany as their social patriotic leaders averred, but the stimulation of revolutions in Germany and Russia, and possibly also in their own countries.

The Russian Bolshevik party itself, under the direct leadership of Lenin, showed the world proletariat the way out of the vicious "defense" circle, by smashing tsarist-capitalist rule in their own country. This, in turn, was a powerful precipitant of the German revolution, which followed not long afterward. For the workers, Lenin's policy, which brought about an almost bloodless revolution in Russia, was the only possible answer to the terrible human destruction. It was the greatest of all peace missions.

The ultimate imperialist winner in the great human slaughter was American imperialism. It fattened and grew strong on the blood of the mutual massacre, while its European imperialist rivals did each other irreparable war damage. Nevertheless, the his-

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torical victor in the war was the international proletariat. Notwithstanding all their great losses, human and otherwise, the workers of the world, with the Russian working class striking the central blow in the great Russian Revolution of November 1917, delivered a shattering attack against world capitalism; one from which that system has never recovered, nor can ever recover.

26. Role of the Second International (1889-1914)

From that fateful August 4, 1914, when the German Social-Democracy voted the war budget for the Kaiser's government, the Second International has been dead so far as constructive services to the workers are concerned. That act, an utter betrayal of the whole tradition, program, and perspective of Marxism, marked the final passage of the organization, firmly dominated by an opportunist leadership, into the service of the world imperialists. It was at the same time the signal for the creation of a new International, an historical imperative that Lenin was quick to understand.

The Second International began as a Marxist organization, but its leadership became corrupted by the reactionary influences generated by the rise of world imperialism. Stalin says, "The Second International did not want to combat opportunism; it wanted to live in peace with opportunism, and allowed it to gain a firm foothold. Pursuing a conciliatory policy toward opportunism, the Second International itself became opportunist."¹

Since World War I the Second International has remained a counter-revolutionary force, a stumbling block in the path of the world's workers marching on to socialism. The great betrayal meant not only that the Second International as such was not going to fight against imperialist war, but also that it had turned its back upon socialism. For the terms of the Lenin-inspired resolution of Stuttgart-Copenhagen-Basle provided precisely that the fight against the war should be based upon a struggle to abolish capitalism and to establish socialism. During the next years the Second International was to make very manifest the counter-revolutionary character which it had unmasked when it endorsed World War I.

Lenin says: "The collapse of the Second International is the collapse of opportunism which was growing on the soil of a specific (the so-called 'peaceful') historic epoch now passed, and which practically dominated the International in the last years. The opportunists had long been preparing this collapse by rejecting the socialist revolution and substituting for it bourgeois reformism; by repudiating the class struggle with its inevitable transformation into civil war at certain moments, and by preaching class

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collaboration; by preaching bourgeois chauvinism under the name of patriotism and defense of the fatherland and ignoring or repudiating the fundamental truth of socialism early expressed in *The Communist Manifesto*, namely, that the workers have no fatherland; by confining themselves in their struggle against militarism to a sentimental, philistine point of view instead of recognizing the necessity of a revolutionary war of the proletariat of all countries against the bourgeoisie of all countries; by turning the necessary utilization of bourgeois parliamentarism and bourgeois legality into a fetish of this legality and into forgetfulness of the duty to have illegal forms of organization and agitation in times of crises.”²

EARLY CONSTRUCTIVE WORK OF THE INTERNATIONAL

The Second International grew and flourished during what was principally the period of the growth and expansion of world imperialism. The period marked the great extension of capitalism, but also an accumulation of sharpening capitalist antagonisms in foreign policy and the beginning of its decline as a world system. During this period, the role of the bourgeoisie was transformed from progressive to reactionary. Capitalism, which had been a spur to social development, had become by 1914 a fetter upon its further development.

Stalin says, “The period of the domination of the Second International was mainly the period of the formation and instruction of the proletarian armies in an environment of more or less peaceful development.”³ It was, prior to 1914, a time of relatively few wars and revolutions, of a comparatively stable capitalist system. Consequently, the International devoted itself mainly to organizational and educational work; to the building of Socialist parties, trade unions, and cooperatives, in a general atmosphere (save in Russia, and, to a lesser extent, also in the United States) of a relatively temperate class struggle. The exclusive concern of its “practical” right-wing leaders was *Kleinarbeit* – day-to-day routine work.

All over the capitalist world the workers labored under miserable conditions of poverty and oppression. The tremendous increase in productivity brought about by machinery and improved capitalist techniques during the previous decades had meant very little in the betterment of the workers’ living standards. The main

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benefits flowed into the coffers of those who owned the industries and the national resources. The workers labored under barbaric conditions in the industries; they had little or no financial protection against unemployment, sickness, and old age, and they lacked many elementary political rights, including (for women, and often for men) the right to vote. The opportunist leaders of Social-Democracy concentrated upon these immediate evils, but refused to attack the capitalist system which gave birth to them. This was the failure that eventually led to the undoing of the Second International.

The International, however, had many achievements to its credit in the daily struggle. As we have summarized in Chapter 24, it built a tremendous economic and political organization. Lenin says, "The Second International did its full share of the preparatory work in the preliminary organization of the proletarian masses during the long 'peaceful' epoch, of most cruel capitalist slavery and most rapid progress in the last third of the nineteenth and the beginning of the twentieth century."⁴ The Second International also secured many concessions from the employers and the governments with respect to wages, hours of work, social insurance, factory legislation, and the right of men and women workers to vote. These achievements were, however, considerably facilitated in the major imperialist countries by tendencies of the big employers to make certain concessions to the labor aristocracy in order to weaken the solidarity and revolutionary spirit of the working class as a whole. The increasing pressures of the growing labor movement also compelled the ruling classes to add certain liberal modifications to their policies of violent suppression of labor unrest. The rulers combined the carrot with the club, in the sense of Bismarck's social insurance schemes. Examples of this trend were, as Lorwin remarks, the "neo-liberalism" of Lloyd George and Asquith in Great Britain, and the "Progressivism" of Theodore Roosevelt and the "New Freedom" of Woodrow Wilson in the United States.

The Second International also definitely broadened out the scope of the organized world labor movement. The influence of the First International had hardly extended beyond Western Europe, but that of the Second International spread all over Europe and much of America. The great colonial and semi-colonial countries, however – India, China, the Middle East, Africa, and most

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of Latin America – remained pretty much of a closed book to the Second International. For real leadership these people had to await the advent of the Third International, which was to be the first genuine world organization of the proletariat.

THE PRICE OF OPPORTUNISM

The achievements of the Second International, however, were made at a terrible cost, namely, the abandonment of the principles of Marxism. In the winning of immediate objectives, the leadership ignored the ultimate goal of socialism. During the period of the First International the scientific analysis and program of Marxism were built up, but during the period of the Second International all this was torn down and in its place there was substituted a petty-bourgeois opportunist revolutionism that had nothing in common with Marxism. The world's workers had to pay a deadly price for this political degeneration by the complete collapse of the Second International at the very moment of its greatest test – just when the workers had their most supreme need of Marxist leadership and organization.

It is a fact, of course, that during the period of the Second International Lenin led a profound renaissance of Marxism. Not only did he resurrect the great principles of Marx and Engels which the pseudo socialists at the head of the Second International thought they had succeeded in burying forever, but he also developed Marxism to greater heights than ever, to correspond with the workers' needs in the new, imperialist stage of the capitalist system. But Lenin could do this only in the face of powerful opposition from the dominant opportunist leadership and program in the International. Lenin was a hated stranger in the official circles of the Second International.

The basic cause of the collapse of the Second International was that, dominated by opportunist labor bureaucrats and petty-bourgeois intellectuals, it succumbed to the corruptions and illusions bred of the period of the rapid growth and expansion of world imperialism. Its leadership, throwing aside every Marxian principle, read out of the current "prosperity" and relative "stability" of the capitalist system, the counter-revolutionary conclusion that the existing regime was growing over into socialism, or rather into their petty-bourgeois conception of socialism. The rottenness of their whole outlook was exposed when the capitalist system

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passed into a new period of great wars and revolutions, the beginning of its era of decay and decline.

The First International died nobly in battle against capitalism and left behind it a glorious tradition. But the Second International was betrayed to disaster by a corrupt leadership which in the crisis callously threw aside every pledge it had ever made to the workers, every principle of Marxism that it had ever professed. The workers were strongly enough organized at the time to have made a powerful and successful fight against the war, but they were cynically betrayed into the hands of the enemy by their leaders. Therefore, the banner of world socialism had to and did pass from the unworthy hands of the Second International leadership into those of a new and superior organization, the Third, or Communist, International.

27. The Zimmerwald Movement (1915-1917)

The opportunist betrayal on the war split the Second International both organizationally and ideologically. There were several general groups of parties: those of the two belligerent camps, Central Powers and Allies, which were at dagger's point; and the parties of the neutral countries; and the Russian party, which fitted into neither of the other categories.

The ideological division between right, left, and center, always a factor in the Second International, was greatly accentuated by the war, especially as the struggle dragged on and the opposition to it began to take more definite shape. The three tendencies eventually were to crystallize into three definite international organizations – the resurrected right-wing Second International, the centrist Two-and-a-Half International, and the Communist Third International. The line of the right wing was class peace and all-out support of the imperialist war; the center sought a bourgeois peace, while the left, acting in the spirit of the Stuttgart-Copenhagen-Basle resolutions, sought to transform the mass anti-war spirit into a revolutionary fight for socialism.

THE BEGINNINGS OF THE THIRD INTERNATIONAL

The earliest roots of the Third International reach back to the foundation of the Bolshevik group in Russia. The manifold writings of Lenin during the pre-war period were the foundations, along with those of Marx, of its revolutionary ideology. The struggles of the Russian proletariat in the great revolutions of 1905 and 1917 belong properly to its tradition. The sprouting left wing in the pre-war Second International, so sedulously cultivated by Lenin, was its primary international manifestation. But this revolutionary tendency did not truly become an international movement until after the first world war and the Russian Revolution, and particularly after the betrayal of these historic struggles by the opportunist Social-Democratic leaders.

From the very outset Lenin understood that the great war treason by the leaders of the Second International meant the

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death of that body as the world organization of the proletariat, and thus made imperative the establishment of a new international. Lenin, who lived in exile in Galicia to be nearer to Russia when the war broke out, managed to make his way to Switzerland, where he arrived on September 5. Under his leadership a group of Bolsheviks gathered and began the publication of a journal, the *Sotsial Demokrat*. After preparing a preliminary thesis on September 6, Lenin wrote a manifesto on the war which was issued by the Central Committee on November 1, 1914.

This manifesto laid down the main line along which the Bolsheviks eventually carried through the Russian Revolution and the establishment of the Communist International. The manifesto characterized the war as imperialist and declared that "the leaders of the International committed treachery with regard to socialism when they voted for military appropriations, when they repeated the chauvinist ('patriotic') slogans of the bourgeoisie of their own countries, when they justified and defended the war, when they entered the bourgeois cabinets of the belligerent countries." It declared that "the opportunists have set at naught the decisions of the Stuttgart, Copenhagen, and Basle congresses." It included in its condemnation the Anarcho-syndicalist tendency, which it called "a natural 'supplement' of opportunism."

The manifesto called for a United States of Europe on the basis of the overthrow of the German, Austrian, and Russian monarchies (a slogan later withdrawn as incorrect). The party statement declared that "in all the other advanced countries... the war has placed on the order of the day the slogan of a socialist revolution." The transformation of the contemporary imperialist war into a civil war, continued the manifesto, is the only correct slogan, pointed out by the experience of the Commune, outlined in the Basle (1912) resolution, and derived from all the conditions of an imperialist war between highly developed bourgeois countries. It declared that the Second International had collapsed and it called for the formation of a new international.¹

In Russia the bold stand of the Bolsheviks against the war called down immediate persecution. The Bolshevik Duma members were jailed, as were several Central Committee members; *Pravda* was suppressed and many party groups were broken up. But the party forces were soon re-organized and the fight against the war was carried on both inside Russia and from the new Cen-

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tral Committee headquarters in Switzerland.

SOCIALIST ANTI-WAR CONFERENCES

Under the terrific slaughter and general hardships of the war, mass anti-war sentiment began to grow and to express itself, especially after the first few months of patriotic fervor had worn off. Opposition movements sprang up here and there. In Germany, in December 1914, of the 14 members who had voted against the war credits in the leading party caucus, only one stood up, Karl Liebknecht, who bravely spoke out in the Reichstag "amidst the howling of the patriotic pack."² His courageous voice was a symbol of the rising anti-war movement throughout the world.

During this period a number of Socialist international anti-war conferences took place. In January 1915 there was a meeting of the Socialists of the neutral countries in Copenhagen, and in February also a conference of the Socialist parties of the Entente countries in London. The Socialists of Germany, Austria, and Hungary also met, in Vienna on June 18 of the same year. In September 1914 the American Socialist Party had proposed a general Socialist conference, but nothing came of it.

The Bolsheviks paid close attention to these several conferences. They sent delegates to both the London and Copenhagen gatherings. But these bodies decisively rejected Lenin's revolutionary line on the war. They would go no further than pacifist appeals to the respective governments to establish peace – a hopeless project.

The first significant war-time conference of anti-war forces was held by the women, in Berne, March 28, 1915. The conference was led by Clara Zetkin, secretary of the International Socialist Women's Bureau of the Second International. It was the first conference to include representatives of all the major belligerent countries. The Bolsheviks gave the conference strong backing, the Russian delegation including N. K. Krupskaya (Lenin's wife), Inessa Armand, Zinaida Lelina, and Olga Ravich. The congress, however, rejected the Bolshevik resolution. The resolution adopted, while condemning capitalism and speaking out for socialism, confined itself to general anti-war agitation.³

The International Socialist Youth also held a conference in Berne, April 5, 1915. Here again, the left provided the real backing for the conference. But the delegates were not ready to adopt Len-

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in's program, the Russian resolution being rejected. The conference resolution followed much the line of the preceding women's conference. The gathering set up the International Bureau of Socialist Youth, which published a paper *Freie Jugend*, for which Lenin wrote.

THE FIRST ZIMMERWALD CONFERENCE

Meanwhile the Italian Socialist Party, which had taken a stand against the war, grew weary of trying to interest the major parties in a general anti-war conference, and called one on its own responsibility. After a preliminary conference in Berne, July 11, the general conference came together at Zimmerwald, a small village near Berne, September 5-12, 1915. The Zimmerwald conference, like the previous gatherings of the women and youth, gave effective answer to the lying excuses of the right-wing Socialists, who, to prevent unified action against the war, were arguing that general Socialist conferences were impossible during wartime.

Present at Zimmerwald were 38 delegates from Russia, Germany, France, Poland, Rumania, Bulgaria, Italy, Holland, Switzerland, Sweden, and Norway. There were three Russian parties represented – Bolsheviks, Mensheviks, and left Socialist-Revolutionaries. Lenin and Zinoviev led the Bolshevik delegation. Trotsky represented a splinter group. There were ten German delegates, including Ledebour, Hoffman, Meyer, Bertha Thalheimer and Borchardt. Merrheim and Bouderen represented French Syndicalist unions. Three delegates of the I.L.P. and the Socialist Party of Great Britain were unable to get passports. The Socialists in the United States had similar difficulties. Liebknecht, then in the army, sent a letter; Zetkin and Luxemburg were in jail.

The conference, which indicated a strong growth of anti-war spirit, was nevertheless unclear in its analysis and objectives. It divided into three general groups. The right, the majority, was made up of most of the Germans, the French, some Italians, the Poles, and the Russian Mensheviks. The left was a group of eight, mostly from Russia, the Scandinavian countries and the Balkans, led by Lenin. Trotsky, as usual, had a middle group, of five or six.⁴

Lenin's group introduced a draft for a resolution and manifesto calling for an immediate end to the war, refusal to grant war credits, withdrawal of Socialists from the cabinets of England, France, and Belgium, and the overthrow of the capitalist govern-

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ments. The resolution was voted down by 19 to 12, and the draft manifesto was referred to the commission.⁵ Ultimately a manifesto was adopted and signed by all the delegates. This document, which contained much of the material presented by Lenin's group, condemned the war as imperialist, demanded that it be brought to an immediate end, condemned the failure of the old leadership to fight against the war, and demanded a peace without annexations. The manifesto endorsed the general line of the Stuttgart-Copenhagen-Basle resolutions, but was vague as to the way socialism was to be arrived at. It also said nothing whatever about founding a new international. The conference set up the International Socialist Committee, to be made up of one to three representatives from each country. R. Grimm of the Swiss Social-Democratic Party was elected secretary, and headquarters were established in Berne.

The left-wing delegates submitted a statement to the effect that they were not satisfied with the manifesto. "It contains no characterization of either open opportunism or opportunism covered up by radical phrases.... The manifesto contains no clear characterization of the means of combating the war." This document was signed by Lenin and other left-wing leaders.⁶ Later on, in an article Lenin, while recognizing the weaknesses of the Zimmerwald movement, stated that it constituted a step forward and upon this basis would be supported. The Zimmerwald conference was the germ of the Third International.

THE KIETHAL CONFERENCE

The second conference of the Zimmerwald movement was held in the Swiss village of Kienthal, April 24-29, 1916. In the seven months since its first conference the movement had grown considerably, on the basis of increased anti-war activities and a developing mass resentment against the war. Some 25 parties and groups were now affiliated, including the Socialist parties of Italy, Switzerland, Great Britain, Rumania, Russia, Poland, Bulgaria, Portugal, and both the S.P. and S.L.P. of the United States. The Italian and Bulgarian trade unions were affiliated, and especially active were the youth organizations.⁷

Particularly important at this time was the formation in Germany, in January 1916, of the Spartakusbund, or International group, by the left wing. This development was significant because

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of the key role of Germany in the war and because of the great size and prestige of the German Socialist movement. The program of the Spartakusbund was written by Rosa Luxemburg. This program, later submitted to the Kienthal conference, while it called for "a new Workers' International," was not specific on revolutionary action to end the war.

The Kienthal, or Second Zimmerwald conference, was made up of 44 delegates. Lenin, Zinoviev, and Inessa Armand were present from the Russian Bolsheviks, Martov and Axelrod from the Mensheviks, and three delegates from the Socialist-Revolutionary Party. Germany had seven delegates, Italy seven, France four, Switzerland four, one came from the Socialist Youth International, and a sprinkling from various other parties.

The draft resolution of the Bolshevik group proposed that the call to the workers should be, "Lay down your weapons. You should turn them only against the common foe – the capitalist governments." This was rejected by the centrist and right majority of the conference. Instead, the resolution proposed by the Zimmerwald International Socialist Committee was adopted. While this one was a distinct advance over that of Zimmerwald and called for a fight for socialism, it went no further, in practical proposals than to demand a vigorous and united fight for an immediate armistice and for "peace without annexations." The fight on the question of a new international occurred over the matter of relations to be maintained towards the International Socialist Bureau (leading body of the Second International). The I.S.B. was roundly criticized, but the conference refused to break off negotiations with it altogether.

The Zimmerwald Left, mainly the Bolsheviks, voted with reservations for these limited resolutions. Their general estimate of the conference was later thus summed up: "Like the Zimmerwald conference, the Kienthal conference did not accept the basic principles of the Bolshevik policy, namely, the conversion of the imperialist war into a civil war, the defeat of one's own imperialist government in the war and the formation of the Third International. Nevertheless, the Kienthal conference helped to crystallize the internationalist elements of whom the Communist Third International was subsequently formed."⁸

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THE IRISH REBELLION OF 1916

In the great revolutionary struggle that was brewing during World War I one of the most important elements was the growing revolutionary stand of various oppressed nations in Europe. These eventually were to play a big part later in tearing to pieces the Russian, German, Austrian, and Turkish empires. The first clear signal as to what was going on in this respect was the insurrection in Ireland during Easter week of 1916. This was the latest in a long series of insurrections during Ireland's 700-year struggle against English domination and exploitation. As we have seen in Chapter 8, Karl Marx attached high importance to the Irish independence movement, not only for the sake of the oppressed Irish people themselves, but also as a weapon in the general struggle against British capitalism.

The Irish leaders, who generally condemned World War I as an imperialist war, seized upon a key moment to stress the fight for Irish liberation, when Great Britain was busily engaged in trying to wipe out its dangerous imperialist rival, Germany. The difficulty, however, was that the Irish people were not prepared for the suddenly announced rising. The rebellion began on April 24 and ended five days later. The heroic little army of rebels, only 120 strong, could not stand off the armed might of Britain. On May 12 Padraic Pearse and James Connolly, together with other leaders, were executed. Connolly was so badly injured that he had to prop himself up on a structure while he was being shot. In commenting upon this bold but futile revolt, Lenin, while showing that it represented a real mass movement and not merely an adventurous putsch, said, "The misfortune of the Irish is that they rose prematurely, when the European revolt of the proletariat had not yet matured."⁹

The outstanding leader of the rebellion was James Connolly, formerly an active worker in the I.W.W., S.L.P., and S.P. in the United States. Connolly was a brilliant Marxist, and one of his main theoretical achievements was to dovetail the struggle for socialism in Ireland with the fight for national independence. Ryan says that Lenin ranked Connolly very high and spoke "in cordial terms of his *Labor in Irish History* to Irish trade union visitors to Russia."¹⁰ The ill-fated Irish attempt of 1916 was followed by a far bigger and more effective insurrection in 1921-23.

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LENIN'S GREAT THEORETICAL STRUGGLE

Since the turn of the century, Lenin had been tireless in his brilliant efforts to establish a revolutionary political program. But the period between the outbreak of the war in August 1914 and the advent of the Russian bourgeois revolution in March 1917 was one of even more intense theoretical work and polemical struggle on his part. The basic task he was then carrying out was to teach the socialist movement and the working class in general the elementary lesson that the overthrow of capitalism and the establishment of socialism was the only constructive way out of the war, as he had written a decade before into the famous Stuttgart-Copenhagen-Basle resolutions. Thus his whole life's work was being exposed to the acid test of reality.

The immensity of Lenin's wartime task was vividly exemplified by his experiences at the Zimmerwald and Kienthal conferences. Here were the most advanced and revolutionary fighters in the International, but they were by no means ready to accept the Lenin revolutionary way out of the crisis. In both conferences Lenin's followers were in a small minority.

Lenin not only had to wage war generally against the illusions and treacheries of the right and center groups of the Socialist parties, but also against the shortcomings and immaturities of the left wing itself. In the Russian party also he had to carry on a constant fight against variations and deviations of various sorts. This was a continuation of his great theoretical work ever since the party was founded. For years he also polemicized against Trotsky over innumerable questions. At this particular time two of the most intense inner-party struggles he had to wage were against the Bukharin-Piatakov group and others over the question of the self-determination of nations and the arming of the people.

One of the most important polemics by Lenin during this period was with Rosa Luxemburg, author of the *Junius* pamphlet, written while she was in prison. Lenin undertook to eliminate her errors regarding the necessity of underground party organization in the war situation, the question of advocating a republic in Germany, and the possibility of national wars during the period of imperialism.

In his endless sharp and bitter polemics with the right and center, Lenin levelled his heaviest attacks against the renegade,

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Karl Kautsky, erstwhile Marxist theoretician. In this period, with the masses moving rapidly to the left, Lenin singled out Kautskyism as the greatest danger within labor's ranks. This was because this particular brand of opportunism, with its pretenses at Marxian orthodoxy, its glowing use of revolutionary phrases, and its conservative practice, was especially stultifying to the proletariat. It tended to kill the militancy of the working class and to betray the masses into the hands of the right-wing traitors and the ruling class.

Lenin calls Kautskyism "covered-up, cowardly, sugary, hypocritical opportunism." "Kautsky wishes to reconcile the revolutionary masses with the opportunist chiefs who have 'nothing in common' with them – but *on what basis?* On the basis of words. On the basis of 'left' words of the 'left' minority in the Reichstag! Let the minority, like Kautsky, condemn revolutionary *action* calling it adventurist, but let it feed the masses with left *words*. Then there will be peace in the party, with the Südekums, Legiens, Davids, Monitors."¹¹ The Kautsky centrists were a basic hindrance to the mass Socialist revolt against the right-wing leadership during the war; they were also the most decisive element in the defeat of the German revolution at the end of the war.

In the Spring of 1916 Lenin produced his great book, *Imperialism, the Highest Stage of Capitalism*, which we have summarized in Chapter 18. This book was one of Lenin's most decisive contributions enabling Marxism to take into consideration the specific problems for the world proletariat engendered by the development of world imperialism. In all his writings about imperialism Lenin stressed the basic difference of this stage of monopoly capitalism from the earlier period of competitive capitalism, with its relatively placid development. The imperialist era, says Lenin, is "a new epoch, comparatively more impetuous, full of abrupt changes, catastrophes, conflicts...."¹²

Lenin especially attacked Kautsky's theory of "ultra-imperialism," of a world with an organized stable capitalism (presumably moving towards socialism). Lenin summarized Kautsky's views as follows: "From the purely economic point of view it is not impossible that capitalism will yet go through another new phase, that of the extension of the policy of the cartels to foreign policy, the phase of 'ultra-imperialism,' i.e., of a super-imperialism; a union of world imperialisms and not struggles among imperial-

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isms; a phase when wars shall cease under capitalism, a phase of 'the joint exploitation of the world by an internationally combined finance capital.' ”¹³

In his introduction to Bukharin's book, *Imperialism and World Economy*, Lenin gives a crushing answer to this ultra-imperialism of Kautsky and all other advocates of "organized capitalism" (including eventually Bukharin himself), when he says: "Can one, however, deny that in the abstract a new phase of capitalism to follow imperialism, namely, a phase of ultra-imperialism, is 'thinkable?' No. In the abstract one can think of such a phase. In practice, however, he who rejects the hard tasks of today in the name of dreams about easy tasks of the future becomes an opportunist. Theoretically, it means to fail to base oneself on the developments now going on in real life, to *detach* oneself from them in the name of dreams. There is no doubt that the development is going *in the direction* of a single world trust that will swallow up all enterprises and all states without exception. But the development in this direction is proceeding under such stress, with such a tempo, with such contradictions, conflicts and convulsions – not only economic, but also political, national, etc., etc. – that before a single world trust will be reached, before the respective national finance capitals will have formed a world union of 'ultra-imperialism,' imperialism will inevitably explode, capitalism will turn into its opposite." ¹⁴

The Russian, Chinese, and other revolutions during the period of imperialism, as well as the cumulative breakdown of the world capitalist system, testify to the correctness of this basic analysis by Lenin.

28. The Russian Bourgeois Revolution (March 1917)

In January 1917 the world was startled by the development of a strong revolutionary strike movement in Russia. There were big strikes in Baku and Nizhni-Novgorod, and by January 9 one-third of Moscow's workers were on strike. On March 3 the workers of the big Putilov works in Petrograd also went out. The Bolsheviks organized big street demonstrations and by March 9, 200,000 workers were on strike. The next day the strike became general. The militant workers carried banners – “Down with the Tsar,” “Down with the War,” “We Want Bread.” On March 12 the Petrograd troops refused to fire on the people, and by evening 60,000 of them had joined with the demonstrators. The workers flung open the jails to free imprisoned revolutionaries, and they began to arrest tsarist generals and officials. All over the country similar events took place. By March 14, the revolution had won.¹

The tsar abdicated and a provisional government was set up. This consisted of a group of reactionaries headed by Rodzyanko, President of the Duma, a landlord and monarchist. A few days later, a new government was established, with Prince Lvov as Premier, Milyukov as Foreign Minister, and Kerensky as Minister of Justice. What had taken place was a bourgeois-democratic revolution. Political power had passed into the hands of the class of capitalist landowners and bourgeoisie, which as Lenin said, “for a long time has been ruling our country economically.”²

But there was also growing a direct challenge to the rule of the bourgeoisie. Even before the tsar abdicated the workers began to organize Soviets of Workers and Soldiers, on the model of the 1905 revolution. Soon nearly every town and city had its Soviet. The result, says the party *History*, following Lenin's analysis, was “a peculiar interlocking of two powers, of two dictatorships: the dictatorship of the bourgeoisie, represented by the Provisional Government, and the dictatorship of the proletariat and peasantry, represented by the Soviet of Workers' and Soldiers' Deputies. The result was a *dual power*.”³

The challenge of the Soviets to the bourgeois government was as yet, however, only potential; for these bodies, with few exceptions, were in the control of the Mensheviks and the Socialist-

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Revolutionaries, and the Soviet leaders were quite willing to leave the power in the hands of the bourgeoisie. The party *History* explains this situation largely by the fact that during the period when the Mensheviks and Socialist-Revolutionaries were busily “seizing the seats in the Soviets and building up a majority there... the majority of the leaders of the Bolshevik Party were in prison or exile (Lenin was in exile abroad and Stalin and Sverdlov in banishment in Siberia) while the Mensheviks and Socialist-Revolutionaries were freely promenading in the streets of Petrograd.”⁴

The Revolution was a tremendous justification of the political line of the Bolsheviks, as mainly hammered out by Lenin. It proved Lenin’s contention that during periods of revolution conscript armies, made up of masses of the toilers, would rally to the side of the revolutionists, and it likewise knocked on the head the false gospel of the right-wing heads of the Second International that armed popular revolts were no longer possible against modern armies. It also justified Lenin’s position that in the bourgeois revolution the proletariat was the leading force, and that in the fight against tsarism the great bulk of the peasantry could be relied upon as a revolutionary force. By the same token, it repudiated the current Menshevik-revisionist tendency to sweep aside the peasantry as a counter-revolutionary mass. Finally, it justified Lenin’s great program of countering the war with revolution.

WHY THE REVOLUTION TOOK PLACE

Behind the March revolution was the explosive force of a growing capitalism and an expanding proletariat. From 1900 to 1913 industrial production in Russia increased by 62 per cent.⁵ Although most of the basic industries – coal, iron, oil, railroads, etc. – were owned by foreign capitalists (French, English, Belgian) there was nevertheless a substantial growth of the Russian bourgeoisie and petty bourgeoisie. The working class grew even more rapidly.

Confronted by a savage semi-feudal autocracy, the Russian working class was especially class conscious and revolutionary, characteristics which were given direction and accentuated by the work of the brilliant Bolshevik leader, Lenin. The workers slaved 11 to 13 hours per day for destitution wages; they were tyrannized over in the shops; they had no right to organize industrially or

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politically, and their strikes and other protest movements were met with bloody repression. The jails were full of working-class fighters. The peasants faced an equally harsh regime; they were systematically robbed of their lands, they were taxed to death, and they were in the grip of iron-fisted usurers. And both workers and peasants, when the government saw fit, were drafted by the millions to die on the battlefields in the imperialist service of the tsar. The many nationalities making up the Russian people were also subjected to ruthless repression, and periodically, savage pogroms were directed against the Jews. The Orthodox Church was completely identified with this whole monstrous system of robbery and oppression.

After the loss of the 1905 revolution, it was not long, however, until the militant working class was again on the march. In January 1914 there were 140,000 workers on strike in Petrograd, and there were hard-fought strikes in Baku and many other centers. During the first half of 1914, despite barbarous repressive conditions, there were no less than 1,425,000 strikers throughout Russia. The movement was so vigorous that, the party *History* says, “the advance of the revolution was interrupted by the World War.”⁶

Tsar Nicholas I welcomed the war as a preventive of revolution, but it worked out quite otherwise. The terrific slaughter suffered by the Russian armies, due to incompetent political and military leadership, the graft and corruption of government officials, the starvation conditions prevailing among the population, the complete breakdown of industry and transport, the general purposelessness of the war for the people – plus good leadership from the Bolsheviks – produced the inevitable result, revolution. The Revolution of 1905 grew out of the Russo-Japanese war, and the Revolution of 1917 was precipitated by World War I.

THE REACTIONARY PROVISIONAL GOVERNMENT

The Provisional Government was reorganized in May as a coalition government, made up of Constitutional Democrats (Cadets, the main bourgeois party), Mensheviks, and Socialist-Revolutionaries (“S.R.s”). Its program was to conserve the interests of the capitalists and landlords and to balk the revolutionary demands of the workers and peasants. This was quite in harmony with the general line of the right-wing revisionists of the Second

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International.

The key to the government's policy was to keep Russia in the war. In this it had the active support of the Allied governments, who crowded Petrograd with delegations, including right-wing Socialist leaders, urging the Russian government not to make peace and to keep the Revolution from going politically to the left. On April 18 the Russian foreign minister declared arrogantly that "the whole people desire to continue the World War until a decisive victory is achieved" and he pledged the government to this effect. In order to carry out this reactionary pledge, an offensive was launched in July, which proved to be a ghastly disaster for the Russian army.

To all the demands of the workers and peasants, the Kerensky government dangled the prospect of a Constituent Assembly, which was repeatedly postponed. Correctly estimating the government, Stalin declared that "the peasants will never see the land, the workers will never get control of industry, Russia will not gain peace."⁷ Meanwhile, the government castrated and subordinated the Soviets, thus ending what Lenin had called "the dual power" situation. Political repression was begun, and the Bolsheviks were forced underground. Encouraged by the reactionary course of the government, General Kornilov, in August, organized an armed uprising aimed at restoring tsarism. Only with great difficulty, and chiefly through the activity of the Bolshevik forces, was this dangerous revolt suppressed.

THE REVOLUTIONARY PROGRAM OF THE PARTY

In Switzerland, at the time of the March revolution, Lenin at once understood that this was only the first stage of the struggle. In his *Letters from Afar*, he told the revolutionary workers that, "Sooner or later (perhaps even now, while I am writing these lines) you will inevitably be called upon again to display wonders of similar heroism in overthrowing the power of the landowners and the capitalists who are waging the imperialist war."⁸ This was the theory of "uninterrupted revolution" (see Chapter 21), as promulgated by Lenin in 1905, and as first stated by Marx in the revolution of 1848 (see Chapter 3). Trotsky's assertion that he was the first to outline the theory of the bourgeois revolution growing over into the proletarian revolution is a lie.

Lenin and a group of 20 Bolsheviks returned from Switzer-

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land to Russia on April 3, 1917, in a sealed railroad car, the Germans giving them safe passage, presumably in the naive belief that this would help the German cause. Immediately upon arriving in Petrograd, Lenin outlined his famous April theses,⁹ which blazed the path for the proletarian revolution of November.

“Lenin’s April theses laid down for the party a brilliant plan of struggle for the transition from the bourgeois democratic to the socialist revolution, from the first stage of the revolution to the second, the stage of the socialist revolution. The whole history of the party had prepared it for this great task.”¹⁰ The theses characterized the Provisional Government as a bourgeois government and its war as an imperialist war, and they called upon the workers to give no support to the government or its war program. They urged fraternization of the soldiers of both sides at the front.

For the early stages of the period of passing over to the socialist revolution, the theses called for nationalization of the land and confiscation of the landed estates, amalgamation of the banks under the control of the Soviet of Workers and Soldiers, and the setting up of worker control over the industries.

In the broadest sense, the theses proposed the advance from a bourgeois democratic republic to a Soviet republic, based upon the proletariat and the poorest strata of the peasantry. It demanded all power to the Soviets, and proposed the arming of the people to substitute for the present army. It declared that the “war cannot be ended in a truly democratic way without the greatest proletarian revolution in history.” The theses also proposed that the name of the party be changed to the *Communist Party*, as the correct expression of the program of the party, on the same basis that Marx and Engels had also called their organization, the *Communist League*. The theses also demanded the establishment of a Communist International, to replace the discredited and shattered Second International.

The party, many years later, said: “In his celebrated April Theses, Lenin made a new discovery which enriched Marxist theory – he arrived at the conclusion that the best political form of the dictatorship of the proletariat was not the parliamentary democratic republic, as had formerly been the opinion among Marxists, but a republic of Soviets. That brilliant discovery was of enormous importance for ensuring the victory of the socialist revolution in October 1917, for the triumph of Soviet rule in our

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country.”¹¹ The Central Committee, after an internal struggle in which Lenin submitted (but later withdrew) his resignation, finally endorsed Lenin’s revolutionary April Theses,¹² that is, with the exception of a few, such as Kamenev, Rykov, and Pyatakov. All through this crucial period, these elements, including also usually Zinoviev, and frequently Bukharin, were to be found in the opposition, and generally on the outer edges of the party’s Leninist policy.

A PEACEFUL ROAD TO THE REVOLUTION

In dealing with countries with autocratic governments, Lenin was ruthless in pointing out the necessity for an armed revolution. He said that in the period of imperialism, Marx’s contention that peaceful revolution was possible in Great Britain and the United States was no longer valid. But Lenin nevertheless was also quick to see the possibility opening up, during the early democratic stages of the bourgeois Kerensky regime, for a peaceful advance to socialism in Russia. And he proceeded on that basis. Kerensky, because of the strength of the revolutionary forces of the workers and peasants, was unable to use armed force effectively against them.

Lenin’s policy gave the lie to those enemies who maintained then, and still do, that Communists advocate violence on principle. The Mensheviks and the S.R.’s had control of the Congress of Soviets. The Communist Party, while advancing the slogan of “No support for the Provisional Government,” carried on a policy of peaceful agitational work. As Lenin said, the task was “to present a patient, systematic, and persistent *explanation* of the errors of their tactics, an explanation especially adapted to the practical needs of the masses. As long as we are in the minority we carry on the work of criticizing and exposing errors and at the same time, we preach the necessity of transferring the entire power of state to the Soviets of Workers’ Deputies.”

Commenting upon the policy, the party *History* states: “This meant that Lenin was not calling for a revolt against the Provisional Government, which at that moment enjoyed the confidence of the Soviets, that he was not demanding its overthrow, but that he wanted, by means of explanatory and recruiting work, to win a majority in the Soviets, to change the policy of the Soviets, and through the Soviets, to alter the composition and policy of the

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government. This was a line envisaging a peaceful development of the revolution.”¹³

With this policy, the Communist Party made rapid progress in winning over the masses in the army, navy, factory committees, and trade unions. At the Petrograd Factory Committee Conference on May 20, three-quarters of the delegates supported the Bolsheviks. In various other cities Bolshevik minorities in the Soviets were also turning into majorities. At the First All-Russian Congress of Soviets on June 3, however, the Bolsheviks were still a relatively small minority. But the decision of the government to begin the July offensive deeply disillusioned the masses and greatly speeded up the big stream of recruits into the party and also hastened the growth of its influence.

Whereupon the government, seeing that it could not defeat the Communists in free political debate, decided to crush by violence the party and the great mass movement behind it. Street demonstrations were broken up, a warrant was issued for Lenin's arrest, several members of the Central Committee were jailed, and the party's publishing plant was wrecked. Consequently, the party was forced underground. At the time of the July offensive, the Kornilov revolt, and the subordination of the Soviets, there was also a general curtailment of mass civil liberties.

By abolishing the democratic rights of the Communists and the masses, the government chose the path of civil war. It was making it clear that the only way socialism could be established in Russia, that the sole means by which the workers and peasants could win their demands of Peace, Bread, and Land, was by fighting for them arms in hand. The Communist Party realized and accepted this hard ultimatum. As the party *History* says, it “began to prepare for an uprising with the object of overthrowing the power of the bourgeoisie by force of arms and setting up the power of the Soviets.”¹⁴ The government had decided on an all-out fight. Russia began to head directly towards the November proletarian revolution.

THE STOCKHOLM (ZIMMERWALD) CONFERENCE

Meanwhile, in the ranks of world labor, the Russian Revolution of March had made a tremendous stir. It created profound enthusiasm and enormously stimulated the growing peace sentiment among the world's working masses. In Austria, late in 1916,

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Frederick Adler, son of the party leader, Victor Adler, in order to arouse peace sentiment, had shot and killed the Premier, Count Stuerghk. In Germany there were hunger riots, a split took place in the Social-Democratic Party, and the Independent Social-Democratic Party, of centrist orientation and with Dittman at its head, was formed; the whole Socialist group in the Reichstag refused to vote the war credits.¹⁵ In France anti-war syndicalists and left-wing Socialists conducted strikes in the war industries; in England, too, there were walkouts among war munitions workers; in Italy there were similar strong anti-war movements among the workers. And the American bourgeoisie was able to plunge the United States into the war on April 6, 1917, only in the face of a strong mass opposition headed by the Socialist Party – and waged by Debs, Ruthenberg, Wagenknecht, and other left-wingers.

This broad developing anti-war sentiment led to three broad Socialist peace movements during 1917. The International Socialist Bureau, which had been moved from Brussels to Stockholm, through a Dutch-Scandinavian Committee called a conference to take place in the latter city. The American Socialist Party actively participated in this movement. The Petrograd Soviet also called for a conference in the same city, and the International Socialist Committee (Zimmerwald) likewise announced a Stockholm conference. Finally, the I.S.B., the Petrograd Soviet, and the Dutch-Scandinavian Committee agreed on August 15, 1917, as the date for the conference.

The proposed Stockholm conference attracted wide support among the various Socialist parties. Among others, the German, French, British, Italian, Russian, and American parties agreed to participate. But the Allied governments, whose prospects for victory were looking up, considered the conference as a peace-move engineered by hard-pressed Germany, and they were against it. Their right-wing Social-Democratic tools therefore condemned it. Gompers in the United States was especially unbridled in his denunciation of the conference, and Havelock Wilson, head of the British Seamen's Union, declared that his union's members would refuse to carry delegates to Stockholm.

Characteristically, the United States government, which had joined the war under the hypocritical pretense that it was fighting "To make the world safe for democracy," struck the first blow against the Stockholm conference by refusing passports to the

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American Socialist delegates, Hillquit, Lee, and Berger. The British, French, and Italian governments quickly followed suit, with the result that the much-advertised conference failed to materialize.

Meanwhile, the Zimmerwalders in the I.S.C., who were sharply divided over whether or not to attend the forthcoming general conference – Lenin arguing that it should be boycotted – held their own conference in Stockholm, September 5-12. Lenin was not present. The Zimmerwald conference, because of the confusion over the proposed general conference, was poorly attended. Its actions were pretty much a re-affirmation of the theses previously adopted at Zimmerwald and Kienthal. The adopted manifesto endorsed the Russian Revolution, called for a militant mass strike and general struggle for a socialist peace, and declared that “the international proletarian mass struggle for peace signifies at the same time the rescue of the Russian revolution.”¹⁶

By this time the Zimmerwald left was sharply in opposition to the right centrist-semi-Kautskyians who were leading the movement. They had caused the removal of the centrist chairman Grimm, with the leadership falling to Angelica Balabanoff, then on the left. The left opposed the right-centrist leaders’ failure to support a revolutionary policy to end the war, their endorsement of the ill-fated right-wing Stockholm conference, their general reluctance to break with the Second International and to move toward the formation of a revolutionary Third International, and their confusion and conservatism on a whole series of other political questions. Lenin had already come to the conclusion that the new International would have to be built in the face of the resistance of such wavering elements.

29. The Russian Proletarian Revolution (November 1917)

The crucial period between July and November 1917 in Russia was one of rapid party growth and revolutionary preparation. The Provisional Government (Alexander Kerensky, Socialist-Revolutionary, became the Premier on July 20) deeply discredited itself by its continuation of the war, its obvious intention not to give the peasants the land, its curtailment of democratic liberties, and its criminal guilt in the Kornilov revolt. Daily its unfitness to rule became more obvious.

During this period there was a big growth of the people's mass organizations of all kinds, and increasingly they went over to Bolshevik leadership, especially after the Kornilov revolt. "On August 31, the day following the victory over Kornilov, the Petrograd Soviet endorsed the Bolshevik policy," and five days later the Moscow Soviet followed suit.¹ Bolshevik strength grew from day to day in the army, and peasant seizures of land were taking place in various parts of the country. The revolutionary crisis was swiftly ripening.

The party held its sixth congress secretly in Petrograd, July 26-August 3. At this time the party had 240,000 members, as against 45,000 at the time of the March revolution. By party orders, Lenin was in concealment in Finland, and Stalin made the main report. He stated that, "The peaceful period of the revolution has come to an end; the non-peaceful period, the period of clashes and outbreaks, has set in...."² The party was preparing itself for the revolutionary test lying immediately ahead.

At this congress the small Trotsky group, professing full agreement with the Bolshevik policies, was admitted to the party. Leon Trotsky (1879-1940) was born in Russia of store-keeper parents, and he became active in the revolutionary movement in 1896. For over a decade, he had kept up a guerrilla warfare against the Bolsheviks, and although he was given highly responsible work upon his eventual entry into the party, the future was to show that he was an alien element and unassimilable.

In a desperate attempt to divert and defeat the rising revolutionary spirit of the people, the Kerensky government organized, in early October, the so-called Pre-Parliament, which was to serve as an interim body until the Constituent Assembly should come

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together later on. But the Bolsheviks boycotted this counter-revolutionary organization, and eventually it was swept away in the great storm soon to burst. The masses were not going to allow themselves to be talked out of the Peace, Bread, Land, and Socialism for which they were fighting.

During his enforced stay in Finland Lenin produced another of his basic Marxist works, *State and Revolution*. This great book reaffirms the class character of the state, as laid down by Marx and later discarded by the right opportunists of the Second International. Lenin demolished the revisionist theories of the modern capitalist state as a people's state. He demonstrated, to the contrary, the use of the greatly strengthened imperialist state as a weapon against the increasingly revolutionary working class. He pointed out that this autocratic state could not be taken over by the workers for their own purposes, but had to be destroyed and the dictatorship of the proletariat substituted for it. He said, "A Marxist is one who extends the acceptance of the class struggle to the acceptance of the dictatorship of the proletariat."

Lenin elaborated upon Marx in his conception of the state, giving a detailed analysis of what the structure of the dictatorship of the proletariat would be. His book, in fact, presented a clear picture of the type of socialist regime that the Russian working class, under his leadership, was just about to start building. The revolutionary crisis interrupting his writing, Lenin never got to finish completely this elementary work. He explained it this way: "What 'interfered' was the political crisis – the eve of the October Revolution of 1917.... It is more pleasant and useful to go through the 'experience of the revolution' than to write about it."³

THE CONQUEST OF POWER

Returning from Finland on October 7, Lenin doubly impressed upon the Central Committee what he had been writing from exile, that the people were ready for revolution. He declared that, "The majority of the people are with us.... Now we have a majority in both Soviets" (Petrograd and Moscow). He stated also that for a revolutionary situation to be mature it must meet three conditions, namely, that the uprising must be based upon an advanced class, that it must coincide with the revolutionary upsurge of the people, and that the governing classes must be vacillating and in confusion – all of which conditions were presently fulfilled.

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Lenin further proceeded to outline in detail the military steps that had to be taken to insure the success of the coming insurrection.⁴

Lenin, however, met with much opposition in the Central Committee of the party. The Kamenev-Zinoviev group were in general against the uprising, and Trotsky wanted so to postpone it as to have ruined it. Finally, Lenin carried his point, and the Central Committee, on October 10, decided to move toward the armed uprising. After reviewing the favorable situation, the historic resolution says: "All this places the armed uprising on the order of the day. Considering therefore that an armed uprising is inevitable, and that the time for it is fully ripe, the Central Committee instructs all party organizations to be guided accordingly...."

Upon Central Committee orders, a Revolutionary Military Committee was organized in Petrograd, which became the general headquarters of the revolution. Also a Party Center was set up within the military committee, with Stalin in charge. Zinoviev and Kamenev, opposing all this, publicly denounced the uprising in the non-party press, for which Lenin called them strike-breakers and, unsuccessfully, demanded their expulsion.⁵

On November 6 Lenin arrived at the Smolny Institute and assumed direct charge of the insurrection, which was directed against the armed assault that was already under way from the Kerensky forces. On November 7 Red Guards and revolutionary troops occupied the railway stations, post-office, telegraph office, the Ministries, and the State Bank. The Pre-Parliament was dissolved. That night the members of the Provisional Government were arrested at the Winter Palace,⁶ and the revolution was an accomplished fact. After a four days' fight in Moscow and a few skirmishes elsewhere, the various cities and towns followed Petrograd's revolutionary example.⁷

The Second All-Russian Congress of Soviets went into session November 7, late at night, when the revolutionary uprising had already succeeded. The Bolsheviks were in an overwhelming majority. The Mensheviks, Bundists, and right Socialist-Revolutionaries walked out. The congress gave them a parting blast, and officially proclaimed that all power had passed to the Soviets. It also set up a Soviet government, with Lenin as Chairman of the Council of People's Commissars. This became the governing body for Russia's 160,000,000 people. At this time, the party had some 300,000 members and, through the Soviets and trade unions, many millions

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more of close sympathizers and supporters.

The workers and peasants, in fighting alliance, under the leadership of the Communist Party, had struck down bloody tsarism and capitalism. They therewith broke international imperialism at its weakest link and dealt the world capitalist system a vital blow, one from which it has never recovered. "The victory of the great October Socialist Revolution marked the triumph of the Leninist theory of proletarian revolution. By overthrowing the rule of the capitalists and landlords, by overthrowing the rule of the imperialists and establishing the dictatorship of the proletariat, our party carried out the program that was adopted at the Second Congress of the R.S.-D.L.P."⁸

Many elements of sound Leninist policy combined to make the great victory possible, but at the heart of it all was Lenin's achievement of revolutionary unity between the proletariat and the peasantry. Contrary to the gospel-like belief of the Mensheviks and other revisionists and fundamentally in line with Lenin's teachings, the overwhelming majority of all categories of the peasantry had combined with the workers in overthrowing tsarism in the March Revolution. Blazing the way in Marxian theory and strategy, also in the November Revolution Lenin and the great Communist Party had succeeded in enlisting the vast mass of the poor and middle peasantry, along with the workers, to overthrow the Kerensky capitalist government. Now it remained for Lenin and the party to achieve an even greater political "miracle," by leading this great mass of small land-owners, supposedly immune to socialism, eventually to begin the building of socialism, under the general guidance of the working class.

THE SOVIET GOVERNMENT IN ACTION

With characteristic energy, speed, and thoroughness, the Communists, once at the helm of the Russian ship of state, promptly began to put their long-developing program into effect. The Bolsheviks, for years denounced as sectarians and utopian visionaries by the right-wing leaders of the Second International, were showing themselves to be men and women of most decisive action. With successive blows they shattered the old government apparatus and put the new regime into operation. On the day after the seizure of power, on November 8, the Congress of Soviets passed the *Decree for Peace*, calling upon the belligerent powers

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to establish an immediate armistice. The same night, the Congress also adopted the *Decree on Land*, “abolishing landlord ownership, without compensation,” and turning the lands of the landlords, the tsar’s family, and the monasteries, some 400,000,000 acres, over to the peasants. Meanwhile, the workers, through their shop committees, were busily taking over the industries. In January 1918, the Third All-Russian Congress of Soviets nationalized all factories, mines, transport systems, etc. Within four days of taking power, the universal eight-hour day was established and a system of social insurance set up.

Great Britain, France, and the United States refused to agree to the armistice proposed by the Soviet government, so the latter started separate peace negotiations with Germany. These began on December 3, 1917, at Brest-Litovsk. The Germans laid down hard conditions, with the result that the delegation head, Trotsky, supported by Zinoviev, Radek, and others, broke off the negotiations. The Germans thereupon resumed their march into Russia, taking over whole stretches of territory. The Russian armies, shattered in the war, were in no position to make effective resistance. Lenin insisted that the harsh German peace terms be accepted, which was done. The revolution had to have a breathing space, he said, or it would perish. After a bitter struggle against Trotsky and other “leftists” in the party, Lenin carried his point. His peace maneuver showed his brilliant strategic genius; it very probably saved the revolution. The bourgeois war-makers and their Social-Democrats all over the world let out a howl of rage at the Bolsheviks’ “betrayal” of their sacred (imperialist) war cause.

The Soviet decree giving the land to the peasants was also a Leninist master-stroke. It won the great body of the peasants firmly to the side of the revolution, without which support the Soviet regime could not have survived in the desperately hard years ahead. Party “leftists,” in tune with the right leaders of the Second International, declared that in strengthening land proprietorship among the peasants, the Bolsheviks were building up an impregnable barrier against socialism. But Lenin was certain that the great masses of the poorer peasants could eventually be won for socialism, and so it turned out in fact. He declared that in this period of building socialism the richer peasants had to be fought, the middle peasants neutralized, and the broad masses of poor peasants cultivated as allies – which was a revolutionary Marxian

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innovation in policy towards the peasantry, and one upon which the success of the revolution depended.

Another stroke of decisive importance was, at the very outset, to establish political equality and the right of self-determination for all the peoples making up Russia. This built further solid foundations beneath the new government by winning to it the backing of the hitherto bitterly oppressed lesser nationalities. Finland, Esthonia, Latvia and Lithuania, receiving counter-revolutionary aid of Germany and Britain, however, unwisely decided to exercise the conceded right of separation and to go it alone. Thus, another Bolshevik "heresy," self-determination, turned out to be a major buttress for the weak and struggling socialist regime.

What to do about the Constituent Assembly, slated to be opened on January 18, 1918, also presented a major problem, especially as the majority of the delegates was made up of Socialist-Revolutionaries and Mensheviks. Lenin, as usual, proceeded straight to the heart of the question and provided the fundamental remedy. He pointed out that the Soviets, not the Constituent Assembly, were the ruling body, as a result of the revolution. He said, "We see in the rivalry of the Constituent Assembly and the Soviets the historical dispute between the two revolutions, the bourgeois revolution and the socialist revolution. The elections to the Constituent Assembly [based on electoral lists made before the November revolution] are an echo of the first bourgeois revolution in February [March], but certainly not of the people's, the socialist revolution."⁹ Rosenberg agrees with Lenin's general conclusions, stating that, "If Lenin had ordered the holding of new elections, there can be no doubt that the Soviet government would have obtained an overwhelming majority at the polls."¹⁰ Hence, when the Constituent Assembly voted down a resolution calling for the recognition of the Soviet government as the state power, it was officially dissolved, on January 26, 1918.

The swift development of all these revolutionary policies by the Communist Party and the Soviet government was not accomplished without serious inner-party struggles – against Trotsky, Zinoviev, Radek, Bukharin, Kamenev, Piatakoff, and many others. Lenin had to fight for his policies all along, and one of his staunchest supporters was Stalin. To the outside world of labor often the Leninist revolutionary policies also seemed new and strange. Left-wingers living in the bourgeois world could not un-

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derstand many of them. Even such a politically well-developed left leader as Rosa Luxemburg wrote a pamphlet in which she sharply criticized the new regime for its "mistakes," including the giving of the land to the peasants, the establishment of the right of national self-determination, the dissolution of the Constituent Assembly, the restriction of civil rights of counterrevolutionary parties, etc.¹¹

THE DEFENSE OF THE REVOLUTION

World capitalism, no less than domestic Russian reaction, saw in the Russian socialist revolution a mortal enemy. Consequently, from the end of 1917 until the beginning of 1921, the Soviet government had to fight for its life, in a bitter civil war against Russian counterrevolution and also against armed imperialist intervention. The people, war-weary, hunger-ridden, with their industries paralyzed, and their armed forces largely destroyed in the war, by a super-heroic effort pulled themselves together and, under the leadership of the Communist Party, defeated the most powerful counter-revolutionary armies. They shattered the forces of Generals Yudenich, Kornilov, Denikin, Krasnov, Semenov, Kolchak, Wrangel, and many other "white guards," and they also beat back the armies of Great Britain, Japan, France, the United States, Poland, Rumania and the Czech irregulars. At one time the great bulk of the country was in the hands of the enemy, the government was cut off from its principal sources of food, fuel, and raw materials, and in Moscow and Petrograd the workers were getting a ration of only one-eighth of a pound of bread every other day.¹² Nevertheless, with unparalleled courage, the people built their Red Army, and by the end of 1920 had driven all their enemies from Soviet soil.

The bitter armed assault by the organized forces of reaction obviously made the defense of the struggling Soviet regime of the greatest importance to the world labor movement. The I.S.C. (Zimmerwald) issued several statements, calling upon the workers to come to the support of the embattled Soviet Union. In January 1918 great strikes, largely inspired by the influence of the Russian revolution, broke out in Austria and Germany. Less powerful movements also took place in Great Britain. And even in far off Seattle and Philadelphia longshoremen refused to load cargoes destined for interventionist forces in Soviet Russia.

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The mass sentiment in support of the Russian revolution also definitely affected Allied troops fighting against the Soviet government. At the Versailles treaty negotiations in Paris Lloyd George, upon being asked why Britain did not make a more energetic fight in Soviet Russia, declared that if he now proposed to send a thousand British troops to Russia for that purpose the troops would mutiny, and also that if a military enterprise were started against the Bolsheviks, that would make England Bolshevik and there would be a Soviet in London.¹³ An actual mutiny did take place among American troops in North Russia, of Company I of the 339 U.S. Infantry, on March 30, 1919.¹⁴ As a result, all the American troops in the area had to be withdrawn shortly thereafter.

The right wing Social-Democratic leaders, however, assumed a very hostile attitude. They were reformers, patchers-up of capitalism, so naturally they took a stand against the first socialist republic. Like the Russian Mensheviks, they opposed it from the start. Characteristically, at the Berne conference in February 1919, called to pull the disrupted Second International together again, they condemned Soviet Russia. And prior to this, Karl Kautsky wrote a booklet during 1918, *The Dictatorship of the Proletariat*, in which he systematically attacked the Soviet regime. He particularly dissented from the whole conception and practice of the dictatorship of the proletariat. This man, who could readily find excuses for the imperialist slaughter of millions in World War I, was outraged at the suppressive measures taken by the new government against the vicious counterrevolution. His booklet gave the main line of anti-Soviet attack for the less cunning right revisionists.

In reply, Lenin immediately wrote his book, *The Proletarian Revolution and Renegade Kautsky*. He defended the dictatorship on principle, as well as the general policies of the Bolsheviks throughout the revolution. He justified the overthrow of the Provisional government, and also the liquidation of the Constituent Assembly, on the grounds that the Bolsheviks had behind them a clear majority of the people. He supported the repression of the former ruling classes because of the urgent political necessity to stamp out the armed counter-revolution. This book, in a sense, was a continuation of his *State and Revolution*, analyzing after the events the revolution which this famous work had outlined beforehand.

30. The Soviet System

The October Revolution, as distinct from all other revolutions, said Stalin, overthrew all exploiters and transferred power to the most revolutionary class of the working people, the proletariat. Under its leadership the old system of exploitation was destroyed and a new, socialist system was established in which exploitation and oppression have no place. The great October Socialist Revolution “denotes a radical turn in the... history of mankind... from the old capitalist world to the new socialist world.”¹ The new government, at first called the Russian Soviet Socialist Federated Republic, was later named the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics.

The Soviet Constitution establishes that, “All power in the U.S.S.R. belongs to the working people of town and country as represented by the Soviets of Working People’s Deputies,” and also that “the land, its mineral wealth, waters, forests, mills, factories, mines, rail, water and air transport, banks, communications, large state-organized agricultural enterprises [state-farms, machine and tractor stations, and the like], as well as municipal enterprises and the bulk of the dwelling houses in the cities and industrial localities, are state property, that is, belong to the whole people.” Exploitation of man by man is specifically prohibited, and “Work in the U.S.S.R. is a duty and a matter of honor for every able-bodied citizen, in accordance with the principle, ‘He who does not work, neither shall he eat.’ The working motto in the Soviet Union is the socialist one of – ‘From each according to his ability; to each according to his work.’”² Socialism is the first stage of communism, of which the basic motto is, “From each according to his ability; to each according to his need.”³

The Russian Revolution was political, economic, and social. It profoundly reorganized every major institution in Russia, including the Orthodox Church, which was de-politicized. There was no blueprint to work from, only the broad outlines of the new society having been worked out before the revolution. Consequently, under the brilliant leadership of Lenin, an immense economic and political pioneering and experimentation on socialist institution building had to be carried out – which saved an enormous amount of work and struggle for later revolutions elsewhere. Here only the barest outlines can be given of the status of the Soviet regime at its inception, and also of the general character of its ori-

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entation in later years.

Since the seizure of power by the workers, Soviet society, highly flexible and progressive, has passed through three general stages. The first was the period of "War Communism," from 1918 to early in 1921, the years of the civil and interventionist wars.⁴ With industry and agriculture collapsed and disintegrated, and with the regime fighting for its life against a host of internal and external enemies, this was a time of the most rigid government controls, of a universal ration system, and of the gravest hardships for the people. The second period, that of the "New Economic Policy" (N.E.P.), beginning in 1921, was one in which, to help stimulate production under the given conditions, an open market was established for the peasants and certain small manufacturing and private trading was allowed. Foreign trade and the "commanding heights of industry," however, remained in the hands of the government. The third period, culminating in the complete victory of socialism, with the vast bulk of all production carried on by state industry and collective farming, got well under way about 1927⁵ and has continued with growing strength until the present time. Now the U.S.S.R. is at the verge of beginning to introduce the higher stage of classless society, communism.⁶

From the very beginning the capitalists of the world, with the ardent help of the right Social-Democrats, have carried on an unprecedented campaign to misrepresent and vilify every angle of Soviet life. These allied elements – the masters and their agents – realized at the outset that capitalism, in its fight for life, must try to keep the workers of the world from learning the truth about what was actually happening in the first Socialist Republic. Thenceforth, their tireless efforts to smear and belittle the U.S.S.R. and to build an ideological barrier against it, have grown into a huge and well-paying literary industry. And unfortunately they have been largely successful in their lying endeavors. In many capitalist countries, notably the United States, the masses of the people know little or nothing of what is actually transpiring among the Soviet people.

On the other hand, the advanced proletarian forces of the world from the outset rallied effectively in defense of the Soviet Union. They realized that the future of world democracy and peace were tied up with the fate of the U.S.S.R. The attitude assumed towards the Soviet Union is the supreme measure of prole-

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tarian internationalism.

THE POLITICAL STRUCTURE

“The Union of Soviet Socialist Republics is a socialist state of workers and peasants.”⁷ This is the dictatorship of the proletariat, or rule of the workers. It means that the leading class in the Soviet government is the working class. In the beginning this proletarian class leadership was expressly stated in the Constitution, adopted on July 1, 1918, by allowing the workers one representative in the National Congress of Soviets for each 25,000 persons, and the peasants only one for each 125,000; but in the 1936 Constitution this unequal ratio was eliminated. At the present time, the U.S.S.R., made up of three friendly “classes” – workers, peasants, and intelligentsia – with harmonious economic and political interests, is well on the way towards a classless society.

The leader of the people and of the government is the Communist Party. The party is the vanguard of the proletariat. It is made up of the best developed, most devoted, energetic, and tireless elements, primarily of the working class, but also including peasants and intellectuals. By its clear-headedness and indomitable fighting spirit, the party gives the lead and sets the example for the whole nation. It has its basic branches in every institution – government, army, industries, farms, trade unions, schools, and all others. The party is flesh and blood of the people and it fires and stimulates the whole mass. The magnificent Soviet Communist Party of today, unparalleled for political effectiveness in the history of the world, is the fruition of the brilliant work of party-building begun by Lenin many years before the revolution.⁸

From the time of Marx’s earliest writings, Communists have always endorsed the principle of an eventual stateless society, that is, the “withering away” of the state after the proletarian revolution. This could not take place after the November Revolution in Russia, however, nor has it done so even yet, for the sound and sufficient reason that, because of the hostile capitalist encirclement, the Soviet had an imperative need to maintain a strong state apparatus, including powerful armed forces, in order to beat back invading counterrevolutionary forces, from both at home and abroad. Only when the capitalist encirclement is liquidated can the “withering away of the state” begin. The Soviet state, which remains the dictatorship of the proletariat, is fundamental-

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ly different from the capitalist state. Its edge is outward. Inside the country there is no use of military power, since there are no classes to repress, the remnants of the exploiting classes having long since been liquidated as class forces. The efforts of the Soviet government are directed towards cultivating the interests and the welfare of the great mass of the people, instead of those of a comparative handful of exploiters. Hence, from the outset, the Soviet state has largely taken on the nature of a scientific “administration of things,” something that no capitalist state can possibly do.

Democracy in the Soviet Union is on an altogether higher level than in any capitalist country, and it has been so since the great revolution. This fact is demonstrated by the basic democratic realities of the ownership of all the industries and national resources by the people, the full political equality existing among the many nationalities making up the Soviet state, the complete equality of woman with man in every sphere of life, the punishment of anti-Semitism and other racial and national chauvinism as a crime, the universalization of higher education, the establishment of such basic freedoms as the right to work and the right to leisure, the direct participation of the mass organizations of the people – trade unions, cooperatives, and others – in the government of the country, and the generally high level of the civil rights of the people, the Constitution of 1936 being far and away the most democratic in the world. The foundations of this whole governmental structure are the thousands of local Soviets, organizations which combine the executive, legislative, and judicial branches of government in a single organization under the direct control of the people.

In analyzing the Soviet governmental and democratic system, Sidney and Beatrice Webb of England, despite a background of many years of opportunist Fabianism, said in 1936: “In this pattern [of work] individual dictatorship has no place. Personal decisions are distrusted and elaborately guarded against... As for the government, “Our inference is that it has been, in fact, the very opposite of a dictatorship. It has been and it still is, government by a whole series of committees.... Our own conclusion is that, if by autocracy or dictatorship is meant government without prior discussion or debate, either by public opinion or in private session, the government of the U.S.S.R. is, in that sense, actually less of an autocracy or a dictatorship than many a parliamentary cabinet.”⁹

During the November Revolution, the Cadet, Menshevik, and

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right Socialist-Revolutionary parties, in their defense of the Kerensky government, took an openly counter-revolutionary stand, and as a consequence they were eventually outlawed. The Soviet government, at its foundation, was based upon an alliance between the Communist Party and the Left Socialist-Revolutionary Party. There were also in existence numerous other political parties and groups of various Anarchist, syndicalist, and other tendencies. John Reed mentions no less than nineteen different groupings as participating in the November 30, 1917 Soviet elections in Petrograd.¹⁰ The Bolshevik-Left S.R. coalition, an uneasy partnership at best, lasted only until mid-1918, when the S.R.'s got out of the government. Among their other violent dissents, they were opposed to the Brest-Litovsk peace and wanted the war against Germany to continue; to this end they went so far as to kill Mirbach, the German Ambassador to Moscow. They also developed an assassination policy towards Bolshevik leaders – on August 30, 1918, Dora Kaplan, S.R., shot and dangerously wounded Lenin in Moscow.

From then on the tendency was toward the one-party system. In a fully developed socialist country, inasmuch as all the people's interests are fundamentally harmonious, there is a proper place for only one political party, the Communist Party. In the People's Democracies, which are early forms of the proletarian dictatorship, there are, however, several parties, with the Communist Party in the leading role. The existence of many political parties in capitalist countries, each primarily representing some particular class or sub-class, merely signifies that the class struggle is raging, with all the parties and groups struggling for their particular class advantages at the expense of the others.

THE ECONOMIC FOUNDATION

Following the November Revolution there was for a short time a strong tendency to manage the broken-down industries through workers' shop committees. This was a syndicalist trend and it was obviously unfit to build and to operate modern industry. The first real advance towards creating a scientific socialist industrial management, to replace the bourgeois engineers and technicians who had fled, was the formation of the Supreme Economic Council in December 1917. Already in 1918 Lenin initiated the primary steps toward large-scale industrial planned produc-

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tion. Real economic planning, however, did not get well under way until late in 1920, as the civil war was ending. In 1921 Lenin put out his famous slogan, "Electrification plus Soviet Power equals Communism." The Gosplan, or state national planning agency, was established in April 1921; but for a few years its work was confined chiefly to planning within individual industries – metal, textiles, transport, etc. It was not until 1928, in the famous first Five-Year Plan, that a general production plan for all industries in all localities went into effect. After this, Soviet production leaped ahead, establishing records of achievement far surpassing those ever accomplished by capitalism even in its best periods of growth. By 1933 the Soviet Union had been converted from an agrarian into an industrial country, and its great industrial advance was just beginning.

For the first ten years of the Soviet regime, agricultural production was carried on upon the basis of the peasants operating their own individual tracts of land which, however, belonged basically to the whole people. There were in existence a few model collective and state farms; but it was not until 1929-30, during the first Five-Year Plan, that socialist farm organization really got under way. In the main, this took the form of collective farms (agricultural cooperatives). This development could take place at this particular time because of the current great upsurge of industrial growth, which meant that large-scale mechanization of agriculture had begun. "On May 1, 1930, collectivization in the principal grain-growing regions embraced 40-50 percent of the peasant households, as against 2-3 percent in the spring of 1928." By the end of 1931 over 80 percent of the peasant farms had combined into 200,000 collective farms and 4,000 state farms. By 1934, there were 281,000 tractors and 32,000 harvester combines at work in the Soviet countryside.¹¹ This deep-going agricultural revolution, which amazed the hitherto skeptical capitalist world, was one of the very greatest of Soviet accomplishments. The agricultural revolution eliminated the rich farmers (kulaks) as a class, even as the socialization of industry had wiped out the big capitalists as an economic and political factor.

The first two Five-Year Plans called for a capital investment of some 200 billion rubles (\$40 billion), all of which had to be raised by the war-ravaged Soviet people. To get together such an enormous mass of capital necessitated a considerable tightening of the belts of

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the workers and peasants. Nevertheless, drastic improvements took place in mass living and working standards. Under the first Five-Year Plan unemployment was completely wiped out, there being no place in a socialist planned economy for periodic economic crises and wholesale joblessness, such as curse the capitalist system. This is basically because Soviet production is not carried on for private profit, like capitalist production, but for social use.

THE TRADE UNIONS IN THE SOVIET REGIME

Trade unions in a socialist country obviously must play a very different role than they do in a capitalist country. Their function is determined by the fact that the workers control the government and there are no capitalist exploiters to fight. This gives the workers, who are the leading class in the dictatorship of the proletariat, a direct sense of responsibility for the conditions in industry and for the success of the regime in general, something they cannot have in profit-ridden capitalist countries.

Like all other Soviet institutions, the trade unions of today are the result of much experimentation and pioneering work. In the beginning, with no clear ideas prevailing as to just how the trade unions were to operate under socialism, there was a division between the shop committees and the national unions, many believing the latter institutions to be superfluous. But soon the unions came to be based upon the shop committees as their foundation units in industry.

From the earliest stages the unions began to take on pioneer functions and forms corresponding to the new workers' society of which they were a basic part. These new tasks came to include such vital matters as the establishment of labor discipline in industry, direct participation in industrial management, the systematic increase and improvement of production, the education and technical training of great masses of new workers, the elaboration and enforcement of factory legislation, the direct management of the immense system of state social insurance, and, on occasion, even the taking up of arms to repel the imperialist interventionists. And through all this, of course, the unions have had the direct supervision over the workers' economic interests by the elaboration and enforcement of wage scales, hours of work, and general working conditions, formulated in collective agreements with the government. The unions, while naturally working

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in close collaboration with the workers' government, retain an independent status.

In capitalist countries, where the workers have to fight the employers and the government, the strike is a most vital weapon, but obviously it is unimportant in the Soviet Union, which has no exploiters and has a workers' government. In the early days of the revolution, in the formative period, there were, however, numerous strikes, many of them started by counter-revolutionary elements who wanted to cripple the Soviet regime. In 1920 there were 43 recorded strikes. But soon even the less advanced workers came to realize the folly of striking against their own government; hence the strike, although still legal, fell into abeyance and is now a great rarity. The establishment of labor conditions in the U.S.S.R. is not a matter of bitter class struggle, but of friendly negotiation and scientific economic planning.

The presence of piece-work systems in the U.S.S.R. strikes visiting trade unionists as strange, seeing that they have to fight so resolutely against piece-work in the capitalist countries. But the matter is simple enough, bearing in mind the elementary factor that there are no exploiters in the Soviet Union to rob the workers of their increased production. The All-Union Central Committee of Trade Unions, in 1932, thus explained the situation: "The piece-work system makes every worker materially interested in increasing the productivity of labor and raising his own qualifications. We must lay all emphasis on the fact that the piece-work system in our country is radically different from the piece-work system in the capitalist countries. There the piece-work system is a means of exploitation. Here, where the state is exercising the maximum degree of care in the protection of labor, and where we have a working day lasting seven hours, the piecework system accelerates the tempo of socialist construction, increases the productivity of labor, and guarantees the improvement of the material and general living conditions of the workers."¹²

Different rates of wage scales prevail in Soviet industry. This is in line with the socialist principle, "to each according to his work." It is part of the elaborate system of incentives in effect for Soviet workers. A basic factor of this situation is that with every kind of education and promotion wide open to the workers, the advance to the better-paid, more skilled, and more responsible positions rests freely within the choice of every worker himself.

31. The German and Hungarian Revolutions (1918-1919)

With its enormous human slaughter and property destruction, World War I resulted in the breaking up of four great empires – the Russian, German, Austro-Hungarian, and Turkish (Ottoman). It was climaxed also by the overthrow of four feudal autocrats – the Russian Tsar, the German Kaiser, the Austrian Emperor, and the Turkish Sultan – and of their royal systems with them. Demolished, too, was the capitalist system in Russia, and it would also have been destroyed throughout Eastern and Central Europe had it not been for the profound treachery of the right-wing Social-Democrats.

This vast revolutionary upheaval followed the general lines long foreseen and advanced by Lenin. Far more than anyone else, he was the ideological leader of the tremendous post-war anti-feudal, anti-capitalist, anti-imperialist, pro-socialist movement. The lead for the entire struggle was given by the Russian people with the Communist Party at their head. Lenin's influence in this far-reaching revolution was to be seen clearly under three general heads.

First, the whole broad struggle was in accordance with Lenin's long-advocated policy of transforming the imperialist war into a revolutionary struggle against the reactionary governments responsible for the terrible butchery. The time-table of the various phases of the great revolution was not the same in all countries, nor was the political content of the revolution everywhere identical; but the fundamental homogeneity of the entire movement was unmistakable and it was also undeniably Leninist.

Second, in the break-up of the four great empires a strong national revolutionary force manifested itself. In the struggle, under varying conditions, a whole series of new nations were crystallized into "independent" entities, among them: Finland, Poland, Czechoslovakia, Yugoslavia, Esthonia, Latvia, and Lithuania. This development, too, was quite in accord with the program of the Russian Communist Party and Lenin's teachings. For many years, long before President Wilson even dreamed of his "14 points," Lenin had ardently advocated the principle of self-determination of nations, in the face of the strongest opposition of right Social-

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Democrats and even of many left-wingers, but in close harmony with the wishes of the respective peoples.

Third, in the great revolutionary upheaval in the four empires, there was also a powerful anti-capitalist socialist element, which, of course, was unmistakably Leninist. It was the growing over of the bourgeois revolution into the proletarian revolution. It came to fullest expression in Russia, the political leader of the entire movement, and only Social-Democratic treachery prevented socialism from prevailing in most if not the entire area involved.

These three basic facts show that in the revolutionary aftermath of World War I, Lenin and the Communist Party struck the real note of progress for world society. This development was fully in line with the historic role of Communism, which furnishes the constructive world leadership as international capitalism rots and decays. This great reality was also to be demonstrated again and again in the tremendous world upheavals that were to take place between the end of World War I and the present time.

SOVIETS IN GERMANY

As the war dragged along interminably, in a vast welter of human slaughter and suffering, the workers in Germany, as elsewhere in Europe, became increasingly rebellious and developed more and more of an anti-war spirit. Broad strike movements in Germany, early in 1918, involved as many as 1,000,000 workers, a strong shop stewards' movement grew up in Berlin and elsewhere, powerful open protest meetings swept the country against the harsh terms of the Brest-Litovsk treaty, numerous bread riots took place, and there were increasing reports of insubordination among the troops. By the early Fall of 1918 the mass prestige of the Kaiser's government, as a result of its generally reactionary character and its declining military fortunes, began to approach the zero mark. And the tremendous example of the nearby victorious Russian Revolution was an inspiring force of great magnitude in awakening the German working class to action.

During the war years, under the influence of treason by the right wing, the Social-Democratic Party had split into three segments – left, center, and right. The revolutionary left, led by Luxemburg, Liebknecht, Mehring, Zetkin, Jogisches, Pieck, and others, with relatively only a small organization, crystallized during the war, early in 1916, into the Internationals, or the

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Spartakusbund.* The Communist Party was not formed until December 1918 largely of Spartakus forces. The vacillating center, led by Kautsky, Haase, Ledebour, Barth, Dittmann, *et al.*, men of revolutionary words and conservative deeds, crystallized their large mass following in December 1915, first around the Social-Democratic Workers' Community, and, shortly afterward, into a new organization (with which the Spartakusbund early affiliated), the Independent Social-Democratic Party of Germany, formed in April 1917. The rights, outstanding among whom were Ebert, Noske, Scheidemann, Legien, Weis, and company, blatant revisionists, held most of the party press, organization, and membership under the original party name and apparatus. They also largely controlled the trade unions, which had been reduced to some 2,000,000 members, mostly skilled workers, but which, by 1918, were growing furiously, quadrupling this number by 1920.

The spark that touched off the German revolution was the successful mutiny of the sailors of the grand fleet in Kiel on November 5, 1918, who refused to "die gloriously" with the fleet so that the British could not get the ships. Like wildfire, the revolt spread throughout Germany. The influence of the Russian Revolution immediately made itself manifest, as the rebellious workers, soldiers, and sailors set up Soviets all over the country, in the main cities and in the chief centers of the armed forces. These councils, patterned after the early Russian Soviets, had the support of the great body of the workers and soldiers. On November 7, a Soviet took political power in Bavaria, with Kurt Eisner at its head. On November 9, the national government, with not a kick left in it, collapsed and the Kaiser fled to Holland. The revolution was virtually bloodless.

THE REVOLUTION BETRAYED

At this time, with the imperial regime demoralized, the German working class, given united leadership, would and could readily have driven through with the proletarian socialist revolution. But this was the last thing that the dominant right Social-Democratic leadership wanted. These people did not believe in

* From Spartacus, the popular Thracian leader of the great slave revolt against Rome, 73-71 B.C.

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nor want socialism; like their kind everywhere, they were essentially liberals, who only strove to patch up capitalism a bit here and there. Their whole line was to cooperate with the employers to smash the revolution. Their attitude was that all means were justified to prevent the victory of socialism in Germany. Their chief leader, Ebert, expressed their general position when he said, "I hate the revolution as I hate sin."¹

How far from the minds of the revisionist Social-Democratic leaders was the idea of establishing socialism in Germany, was demonstrated by a big capital-labor conference held at the time. This unprecedented conference, in which all capital was represented by the multi-millionaire, Hugo Stinnes, and all labor by the real boss of the Social-Democratic Party, the trade union leader, Karl Legien, took place in Berlin during November 8-15, even as the machine guns were rattling in the streets of the city. Basing themselves on the counterrevolutionary presumption that the capitalist system was going to continue as before and that there would be no extensive socialization of industry, the conference proceeded to work out an elaborate collective agreement, recognizing the trade unions, establishing the eight-hour day, setting up workshop committees, etc. While the political leaders of the party were making demagogic speeches to the workers, telling them how they were going to lead Germany to socialism, the real party leaders, behind the scenes, were thus cynically "settling" the revolution, that is, peddling it away for relatively minor economic concessions.² The aim of the whole maneuver was to split away the trade union movement, mostly of the skilled labor aristocracy, from the revolutionary masses, and thus to defeat the struggle as a whole.

The Workers' and Soldiers' Council of Berlin on November 10, declared that "The old Germany is no more.... The Workers' and Soldiers' Councils (Soviets) are now the bearers of political sovereignty."³ This corresponded to the earlier workers' program in Russia, "All power to the Soviets." The Council called for a general strike. The program further demanded the rapid nationalization of industry and the general democratization of the country. Although the Berlin Soviets were controlled by the revisionists and opportunists, this, in words at least, was basically the policy of the Communists. It refuted the argument of the renegade Borkenau and others that there was no revolutionary spirit among the

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workers.⁴ Lenin was profoundly correct in analyzing the German situation as revolutionary, and so the bourgeois ideologists also understood it.

The right Social-Democrats, fearing like death the revolutionary spirit of the workers and the possibility of a dictatorship of the proletariat in Germany, set as their first counter-revolutionary goal to devitalize and destroy the new-fledged Soviets. In close cooperation with the capitalists, "to save Germany from Bolshevism," they started out by establishing a care-taker government headed by Frederick Ebert (1871-1925), a former saddler and an extreme revisionist, who in 1913, upon the death of Bebel, became the leader of the party. Ebert promptly cancelled the general strike that had been called by the Berlin Soviet. The next step of the rights was to set up a provisional government a few days later, composed of three right wingers – Ebert, Scheidemann, and Landsberg – and three Independents – Haase, Dittman, and Barth. Although the revisionists obviously were fully decided to go no further than establishing a bourgeois democratic republic, nevertheless the Independents, while pretending to favor all power to the workers' councils, joined hands with the right wing in what could only be a governmental attempt to stamp out the revolution. This was fatal. It was such unprincipled maneuvers as this that caused Lenin to characterize the centrists as the most dangerous of all the enemies of the revolution.

On December 16 the national Congress of Workers' and Soldiers' Councils met in Berlin. The rights, largely due to their strong control of the party organizations, trade unions, and cooperatives, had three-fourths of the delegates, and the Independents most of the rest. The congress, therefore, supported the Provisional government, and voted for holding the National Assembly and against establishing Soviet power. This situation corresponded with the big Menshevik and Socialist-Revolutionary majorities and followers in the Russian Soviets in their early stages.

The counter-revolution, not relying upon its dubious majority in the workers' councils, sought an opportunity to drown the revolution in blood and found it in January 1919. The government suddenly removed Emil Eichhorn, the military commander of Berlin, an Independent. This provoked an armed struggle by the Spartacists and left Independents, who rallied to the support of Eichhorn; a general strike spread throughout the country. Noske,

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Social-Democratic minister of defense, mobilized the former Kaiser's officers and other reactionary military elements and threw them against the fighting workers. For two weeks the streets of Berlin and other cities ran red with blood, but in the end the rebellion was crushed. It was a deadly blow to the newly-formed Communist Party. On April 13, 1919, the workers in Bavaria set up a Soviet Republic, but after 18 days of existence it fell.

It was in this general struggle that Rosa Luxemburg and Karl Liebknecht, who had recently been released from jail, were savagely murdered. They had been re-arrested on January 15, in Berlin, and while presumably being taken to prison, were cold-bloodedly shot down. The assassination was deliberately planned by the authorities, but the government denied all responsibility for it. No effort was made to apprehend the murderers, who were well known. Thus perished two of the noblest fighters ever produced by the world revolutionary movement.*

THE BOURGEOISIE RESUMES FULL CHARGE

After this blood-bath, which caused the Independents to resign from the government, the rights pushed on to their counter-revolutionary National Assembly. They held the elections on January 21, right in the depressing aftermath of the defeated revolutionary struggle. Not surprisingly, therefore, the parties of the right carried the elections by a considerable margin. The revisionist Social-Democrats got 39.3 per cent of the total vote cast and the Independents 7.68 per cent, with the Communists not participating in the elections.

The bourgeois Weimar republic was set up during the next weeks. The capitalists, however, realizing the revolutionary mood of the workers and to mislead and confuse them, put right-wing Social-Democrats at the head of the new government – Ebert, Scheidemann, and Noske – whom they knew they could trust fully to defend the capitalist system against revolutionary working class attacks. The Assembly leaders also, as soothing syrup for the workers, drew up a radical program of socialization of industry, improvement of wages, housing, education, and support of workers' councils, etc., a program which they had not the slightest in-

* Leo Jogiches, the husband of Rosa Luxemburg, was also killed.

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tention of putting into effect, and they never did. They cynically gave the Soviets an advisory capacity towards the new government.

This, in general, was a perfect outcome for the capitalists. They had regained control of the government apparatus and had placed at the head of it right Social-Democratic reactionaries who would take on the task of shooting down the revolution. These same Social-Democrats were also at hand to assume the heavy responsibility of signing the infamous Versailles Treaty, an act which was to be a millstone around their necks a decade later when they had to face rising fascism.

Despite the disastrous January events, the German workers during the next four years made several revolutionary attempts to end German capitalism, which we shall deal with in passing. But these all failed, in each case being shot down by the forces of reaction, organized and led by the right-wing Social-Democrats. In its supreme hour of need, German capitalism found effective protection from the "socialists" of the right. It was precisely such a course that the Mensheviks and Socialist-Revolutionaries in Russia had also had in mind, but the Bolsheviks were strong enough to smash their counter-revolutionary efforts and to lead the revolution to victory.

The loss of the German revolution prevented most if not all of Europe from going socialist after the first World War. This would have been a crushing blow to world capitalism and would have changed the world situation. Upon the heads of the right Social-Democrats, therefore, rests the criminal responsibility for the rise of world fascism, for the slaughter of World War II, and for all the other social disasters that have followed from the prolongation of the life of the obsolete world capitalist system. And the end of these sacrifices and disasters is not yet.

Various other factors contributed to the defeat of the German revolution. The German bourgeoisie was stronger than that in Russia and better able to fight. The workers were more afflicted with bourgeois illusions (especially about Wilson's 14 points) than were the Russians; nevertheless, with proper leadership, they could have carried through the revolution. Together with these fundamental reasons for the revolution's failure was the weakness, both ideologically and organizationally, of the Spartakusbund, later the Communist Party. The party was not

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strong enough to mobilize and lead the German working class in the face of the many difficulties of the time. The Berlin uprising was a disastrous error, and so were “leftist” refusals to stay in the old unions and to participate in political elections. But underlying all this, and the most decisive reason for the defeat of the revolution, was its outrageous betrayal by the right Social-Democrats, with the round-the-corner assistance of the centrists, “the men of revolutionary phrases and conservative deeds.”

THE HUNGARIAN REVOLUTION

The Austro-Hungarian empire was blown to pieces in the great revolutionary upheaval that followed World War I. All that was finally left of it is the present-day tiny Austrian Republic, with only a small fraction of the broad territory once encompassed by the Empire. The general revolution was mainly of a national liberation character, the major oppressed peoples – Poles, Czechs, Slovenes, Serbians, Montenegrins, Croats, and Hungarians – breaking away from the Empire and setting up bourgeois republics of their own. In Austria itself the numerically strong Socialist Party, led by Victor Adler, Karl Renner, and Otto Bauer, made a weak show of militancy, waging broad strikes and trying for a majority in the bourgeois parliament during the May 1919 elections. The conservative parties won the most seats from the country as a whole, with the Social-Democrats securing a two-thirds majority in Vienna.

In Hungary, however, the upheaval did not halt at the bourgeois stage, but definitely tended to continue over into the socialist revolution. On October 31, 1918, the old regime collapsed under mass pressure and Count Karolyi, a bourgeois democrat, was made head of the provisional government. He later became President, on November 16, when the Republic was set up. Karolyi's government, however, was unable to make any headway, in the face of the chaotic political and economic situation. On March 21, 1919, it had to yield to a predominantly Communist government, committed to the establishment of the dictatorship of the proletariat. The leading party in the new government was the Socialist Party of Hungary, an amalgamation of Social-Democrats and Communists.

The real head of the new government was its foreign minister, Bela Kun, a Communist. Other active figures in the government

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were Eugene Varga, the famous economist, and Matthias Rakosi, the future head of the People's Democratic Republic of Hungary 25 years later. The new Soviet government failed because of the extreme objective difficulties it had to face and also because of serious political errors made by its leaders. Under direct military pressure from the Allied powers, the government was forced out of office, and in August 1919 the republic was overthrown.

During the short life of the Hungarian Soviet regime the leaders of the government made many costly mistakes in policy. The most important was the failure, despite the great lesson of Soviet Russia, to give the land to the peasants and thus to draw them into the revolutionary struggle. Also, ignoring Lenin's brilliant strategy at Brest-Litovsk, they failed to exploit the opportunity to establish peace with the Allies, even at a serious cost. They also made an ill-based and hasty nationalization of industry and trade, which the weak government was unable to follow up. And more basic still, they made the grave error, criticized sharply by Lenin, of amalgamating into one party with the Social-Democrats, revisionists and all.

Together with these disastrous errors of leadership as negative forces were also the detrimental effects of the betrayal of the revolution in Germany by the right Social-Democrats, which injured the struggle all over Central Europe, the specific refusal of the Austrian Socialists to have their party come to the aid of the Hungarians, and the general weakness of the Hungarian labor movement, the inexperience of the Communist leadership, and the ruthlessness of the Allied powers in stamping out Hungarian communism by armed force. In view of all these negative conditions, the Hungarian proletarian revolution, at best, was a forlorn hope.

32. Formation of the Third International (1919)

When the Third, Communist, International was formed in March 1919, in Moscow, the capitalist world was in a state of exhaustion and disarray. World War I and the Russian Revolution had dealt the system terrific blows, from which it was, and still is, unable to recover. These great events marked the beginning of the general crisis of capitalism, the period of its decline and decay, the epoch of imperialist world wars and proletarian revolutions.

The general crisis of capitalism represents the extreme sharpening of all the internal and external contradictions of the capitalist system: the struggle between the workers and capitalists over the workers' products, the conflict among the various capitalist groupings, the contradiction in interest between the capitalists and the city middle class and the peasantry, the wars among the capitalist states and against the colonial and semi-colonial peoples, and the growing split between the capitalist and socialist worlds. All these conflicts and antagonisms have their roots back in the earliest stages of capitalism, but in the period of imperialism they mature and reach the point of great explosions which systematically undermine the capitalist structure and begin to destroy the whole capitalist system itself.

When the Communist International ("Comintern" or C.I.) was born, the capitalists were trying to pull their international system together again, after the tremendous blows it had suffered in the World War and the great Revolution in Russia, which were major expressions of the fatal general capitalist crisis. The capitalist statesmen were framing the Versailles Treaty, which was signed in June 1919 by the Allies and Germany. This was a bandit treaty, based on the capitalist principle, "To the victors belong the spoils." The treaty stripped Germany of her colonies abroad and much of her European territory; it also loaded her down with enormous war reparations. The treaty thus cultivated the soil for World War II.

To enforce their violent imperialist redivision of the world, the victorious powers set up the League of Nations. Great Britain and France bossed this body from the inside; while the United States, to retain its freedom of action, never joined the League,

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but began to maneuver from the outside for world domination. From the outset, the Communists condemned the Versailles Treaty, Lenin blasting it as more brutal and reactionary than the Brest-Litovsk treaty of the Prussian Junkers.¹ The Social-Democrats, on both sides of the war line, while grumbling somewhat at the harshness of the treaty, generally adopted a policy of fulfillment of its terms.

THE RESURRECTION OF THE SECOND INTERNATIONAL

Under the general head of pulling the forces of capitalism together again after the great blows of the World War and the Russian Revolution, the corpse of the Second International was disinterred and galvanized into life at a general Socialist conference held in Berne, in February 1919. In its post-war role, the Second International was to be even more blatantly than ever a pro-capitalist organization, setting for itself the ultra-reactionary task, in close cooperation with the employers, of beating back the advancing proletarian revolution.

Present at Berne were 102 delegates from 26 countries. Notably absent, for revolutionary reasons, were the left parties from Russia, Italy, Switzerland, Bulgaria, Rumania, Serbia, Finland, Latvia, and Poland, and also the Youth International and the International Women's Secretariat. The Belgian Party, ultra-chauvinist, refused to sit in the conference with "enemy" parties,² and the A.F. of L. declined an invitation for the same general bourgeois reason.

Like the capitalist statesmen at the Versailles conference, the "Socialist statesmen" in Berne quarreled bitterly among themselves over the question of war guilt. This was the first and main matter on the agenda, consuming two days of discussion. Nobody blamed the traitorous Social-Democratic leaders, as should have been done; but instead, the defeated Germans were singled out, just as the bosses did at Paris. They were ultimately "forgiven," however, on the grounds that by overthrowing the Kaiser's regime, "the German Social-Democrats have now proclaimed in deeds their resolute determination to devote all their strength to rebuilding the world shattered by the war and to fight in the League of Nations for socialism."³ This was a lie, for neither then nor afterwards had the German leaders any idea of fighting for socialism. The German Kautskyans were especially active in

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white-washing the right-wingers of their war guilt, and also of the murder of Luxemburg and Liebknecht.

Formally, the gathering laid over until a future meeting the basic evaluation of the Russian Revolution, but, as Dutt says, "the general feeling of the conference was clearly condemnatory."⁴ The revisionist resolution, by Branting, leading Swedish Social-Democrat, which was adopted, repudiated in principle the dictatorship of the proletariat, and declared in substance for bourgeois democracy.⁵ This was the official beginning of a decade long anti-Soviet propaganda campaign which eventually was to equal or outdo anything produced by the capitalists themselves.

For the rest, the Berne conference went on record for the League of Nations, for an international labor charter of the League, and for the right of self-determination of nations. This right, however, was not to include the peoples of the colonial areas, who were left to "be "protected by the League of Nations" and their development furthered in such a manner as to fit them to become members of the League – a thoroughgoing imperialist proposal. The right wing was in full control of the conference throughout. It set up a permanent commission of two members for each party, with an executive of three revisionists – Branting, Henderson, and Huysmans – to prepare for another conference.

THE CALL FOR THE THIRD INTERNATIONAL

On January 24, 1919, as the Paris Peace Conference was meeting, and just prior to the holding of the Berne Socialist Conference, the representatives of eight Marxist parties, at a meeting in Moscow, including the parties of Russia, Poland, Hungary, Germany, Austria, Lettland, Finland, the Balkan Revolutionary Socialist Federation, plus one unofficial delegate (Reinstein) of the American Socialist Labor Party, sent out a call in the name of the Russian Communist Party for a world congress to establish a Third, or Communist, International. The invitation was sent to 39 left parties, labor unions, and other groups throughout the world.

The congress call, amounting to a basic program of principles and action, and drawn up "in agreement with the program of the Spartakus Union in Germany and of the Communist Party (Bolshevik) in Russia," contained fifteen points. These called for the revolutionary seizure of power, the establishment of the dictatorship of the proletariat, the disarming of the bourgeoisie and the

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arming of the proletariat, the suppression of private property in the means of production and their transfer to the proletarian state, the Marxist characterization of the role of the right-wing and centrist groups, and the establishment of a new world organization to be called the Communist International.⁶

This historic call was issued at a most crucial time. The workers and peasants in Russia, with the Soviet government in power, were fighting a desperate struggle for political survival against a murderous domestic counter-revolution and armed intervention by the imperialist Allies, victors in the world war. That terrible war had just come to an end. The revolutionary wave was surging in Germany, Austria, Hungary, Italy, and the Balkans; in England, France, and other Continental countries also, vast mass strikes were developing, and even in the United States, which had suffered least from the war's hardships, reverberations of the great post-war revolutionary crisis were to be felt in the unprecedented strike movement of 1919-22. The world capitalist system, after its monstrous World War I crime against humanity, was shaking under the pressure of the aroused proletarian masses of the western world.

The Communist International, about to be born, was the fruition of a long leftward mass development, dating back to Marx and Engels. It had as its more immediate background the foundation of the Bolshevik group in the Russian party in 1903, the long pre-war struggle in that country and in the Second International against the Menshevik revisionists and the Kautskyian centrists, the bitter fight against the war in the left Zimmerwald movement, the great victories of the Russian Revolution, and the current revolutionary struggles in Germany and other countries. The outstanding leader of this entire revolutionary development, both in theory and practice, was the great Lenin. The revolutionary International, for which he had fought so long and vigorously, was coming into being.

THE MOSCOW CONGRESS

The founding congress of the Communist International took place March 2-6, 1919. Nineteen parties and groups were represented, several other delegates being arrested on the way by hostile governments. The published list of the delegations and their voting strength was as follows: Armenia (C.P.) 1, Austria (C.P.) 3,

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Esthonia (C.P.) 1, Finland (C.P.) 3, Germany (C.P.) 5, Hungary (C.P.) 3, Lettland (C.P.) 1, Lithuania (C.P.) 1, Poland (C.P.) 3, Russia (C.P.) 5, Ukraine (C.P.) 3, Norway (Social-Democratic Labor Party) 3, Sweden (Left Socialist Party) 3, Balkan Revolutionary Socialist Federation 3, German Colonies in Russia (C.P.) 1, Oriental Nationalities in Russia 1, Left Zimmerwaldians 5, Switzerland (Social-Democratic Party, unofficial) 3, and United States (Socialist Labor Party, unofficial) 5. There were also individual observers from Holland, Yugoslavia, Korea, Persia, Switzerland, Turkestan, Turkey, United States, Azerbaijan, Bulgaria, China, Czechoslovakia, France, Georgia, and Great Britain.⁷

The agenda of the congress was: (1) Presentation of reports; (2) Program of the Communist International; (3) Bourgeois democracy and dictatorship of the proletariat; (4) Attitude towards the Socialist parties and the Berne conference; (5) The international situation and the policy of the Allies; (6) Election of committees and organization.

Lenin opened the meeting with the following brief remarks:

“At the request of the Central Committee of the Russian Communist Party, I am opening the First International Communist Congress. First of all I shall ask all those present to honor the memory of the best representatives of the Third International, Karl Liebknecht and Rosa Luxemburg, by standing [all stand up].

“Comrades! Our meeting has a great world historical importance. It shows the collapse of all the illusions of bourgeois democracy. For not only in Russia, but even in the more developed capitalist countries of Europe, as, for example, Germany, civil war has become a fact.

“The bourgeoisie is experiencing wild fear before the growing revolutionary movement of the proletariat. It becomes clear, if we take into account that the course of events since the imperialist war is inevitably facilitating the revolutionary movement of the proletariat, that the international world revolution is beginning and increasing in all countries.

“The people recognize the greatness and importance of the struggle which is being fought out at the present time. It is only necessary to find that practical form which will allow the proletariat to realize its rule. This form is the Soviet system with the dictatorship of the proletariat. The dictatorship of the proletariat! – till now these words were Latin for the masses. Thanks to the spread

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of the Soviet system throughout the world, this Latin has now been translated into every modern language. The practical form of dictatorship has been found by the working masses. It has become comprehensible to wide masses of workers, thanks to the Soviet power in Russia, thanks to the Spartacists in Germany and to similar organizations in other countries, as, for example, the Shop Stewards' Committees in England. This all shows that the revolutionary form of the proletarian dictatorship has been found, that the proletariat is now in a position to make use of its rule in practice.

“Comrades! I think that after the events in Russia, after the January struggle in Germany, it is especially important to note that in other countries the latest form of the movement of the proletariat is coming to life and becoming dominant. Today for example, I read in a certain anti-Socialist newspaper a telegraphic communication to the effect that the British Government has invited the Birmingham Soviet of Workers' Deputies and expressed its readiness to recognize the Soviet as an economic organization. The Soviet system has not only been victorious in backward Russia but even in the most developed country in Europe – in Germany, and also in the oldest capitalist country – in England. Let the bourgeoisie continue to rage, let it still murder thousands of workers – the victory will be ours, the victory of the world Communist Revolution is certain.”⁸

THE PROGRAM OF THE CONGRESS

The new world organization was definitely a continuation of the old First International, of treasured memory. In fact, it even officially carried over the name. Article 2 of the Comintern statutes reads: “The new International Workingmen's Association assumes the title of ‘Communist International.’”

The Congress produced two major political documents. The first, which was to serve as the program of the Comintern until its sixth congress in 1928, was written primarily by Lenin, and the second was Lenin's general theses on the question of the dictatorship of the proletariat.

The programmatic resolution, based upon the fundamental premises of Marx and Engels, went generally along the lines of the writings of Lenin during the past fifteen years – of his anti-revisionism and his analysis of the imperialist war, his condemna-

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tion of the treachery of the right and centrist Social-Democrats, and especially his great works, *Imperialism, the Highest Stage of Capitalism*, and *State and Revolution*.⁹

“The new era has begun!” says the manifesto. “The era of the downfall of capitalism – its internal disintegration. The epoch of the proletarian communist revolution; increasing revolutionary ferment in other lands; uprisings in the colonies; utter incapacity of the ruling classes to control the fate of peoples any longer – that is the picture of world conditions today.” The program foresaw the way ahead through the conquest of political power by the proletariat, the establishment of the dictatorship of the proletariat through Soviets, the expropriation of the bourgeoisie and the socialization of production, and the advance to “a classless communist commonwealth.” “The revolutionary era compels the proletariat to make use of the means of battle which will concentrate its entire energies, namely, mass action, with its logical resultant, direct conflict with the governmental machinery in open combat. All other methods, such as revolutionary use of bourgeois parliamentarism, will be of only secondary significance.... Proletarians of all countries! In this war against imperialist barbarity, against monarchy, against the privileged classes, the bourgeois state and bourgeois property; against all forms and varieties of social and national oppression – Unite!”

Lenin’s theses on the dictatorship of the proletariat are a thoroughgoing statement of theory and practice. Lenin crucifies those bourgeois elements and Social-Democrats who assert that capitalist democracy is real democracy and counters to it the genuine democracy of the Soviets. He also smashes into those hypocritical bourgeois forces who, themselves come to political power through violent revolution and class dictatorship, profess to be horrified at the proletarian dictatorship. “History,” says Lenin, “teaches us that not a single oppressed class has ever come to power, or ever could come to power, without living through a period of dictatorship, that is of the conquest of political power.” But this Soviet dictatorship, different from all others, is being exercised for the benefit of the great masses of the people and not for the welfare of a small minority of exploiters.

The chief national labor movements in the First International were those of England and France, and in the Second International that of Germany; but now the Russians were leading the

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Third International. Lenin, at the congress, concerned himself with how and why it was that a backward country like Russia could lead the world labor movement, as was being emphasized by the Russian Revolution and by the leading role of the Russian Communist Party in the new International. This was because of the great impact of the Russian bourgeois revolution, growing over into a proletarian revolution. Engels, and also Kautsky (in his Marxist days), had long ago foreseen this possibility. The advance-guard role of the Soviet Union was to continue over into our own times, when the U.S.S.R., now become a great industrialized socialist country, stands as the leader of the world democratic, peace-loving, socialist camp, along with its new great partner, People's China.

THE FORMATION OF THE THIRD INTERNATIONAL

The congress proceeded to establish organizationally the new International. A preliminary step in this direction was to liquidate the old left Zimmerwald movement, which was done formally. The resolution pointed out that, "The Zimmerwald Union or coalition has outlived its purpose. All that was really revolutionary in it goes over to the Communist International." On the other hand, "those elements of the center, as the Berne conference shows, now join the social patriots in fighting against the revolutionary proletariat."¹⁰

There was some discussion as to whether or not to proceed immediately to the formation of the Communist International. Eberlein, the delegate of the German Communist Party, voted to delay the matter. This showed a lingering failure in German left-wing circles (as well as in others) to understand clearly that the revisionists, by their support of the World War and by their open hostility to the Russian Revolution, had profoundly split the world labor movement. Lenin was insistent that the International be formed at the present meeting, and this was done.

Only provisional steps were taken for the organizational structure of the new International, it being decided to leave the working out of a definite constitution to the next full congress. As an interim arrangement, however, an Executive Committee of one member from each party was selected, and this in turn chose a Bureau of five. The Bureau consisted of Rakovsky, Lenin, Zinoviev, Trotsky, and Platten. The Executive was made up of repre-

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representatives of the parties of Russia, Germany, German-Austria, and Switzerland, Sweden and the Balkan Federation, the American S.L.P. not being included. Gregory Zinoviev was chosen President and Angelica Balabanoff secretary. Thus was born the Communist International, which in the oncoming years was to play such an enormous part in the stormy world.

33. Revolutionary Perspective: Second Congress (1920)

The second congress of the Comintern was held in Moscow, July 17-August 7, 1920. Between this time and the holding of the first congress, in March 1919, the wave of revolution had risen in middle and eastern Europe. Despite the Noske-led government terror, the German workers were again on the march, having beaten back the dangerous Kapp-Putsch (see Chapter 35). Two weeks after the first C.I. congress the Hungarian Soviet Republic was born, and the Red Army of Soviet Russia was rapidly clearing the Socialist Republic of all its armed foes, which now included the Polish army. The world bourgeoisie was full of fright at the revolutionary prospect, and Colonel House told President Wilson: "Bolshevism is gaining ground everywhere. Hungary has just succumbed. We are sitting upon an open powder magazine and some day a spark may ignite it."¹

The establishment of the Communist International in the midst of this revolutionary situation struck the world labor movement with a great impact. The rank-and-file of the Marxist movement everywhere was deeply stirred, and many parties began to gravitate towards the revolutionary International. More and more, Lenin was looked to as the great leader of world labor. Among those parties endorsing or declaring for the Comintern between March 1919 and March 1920, in the order of their actions, were the Socialist parties of Italy, Norway, Bulgaria, Greece, Sweden, Hungary (C.P.), Holland, Switzerland, United States, Great Britain, Spain, France, and the general labor federations of Spain and Italy.² Occasionally splits took place in these parties and unions as they moved to the left. When the second C.I. congress assembled in the Fall of 1920 there were represented 42 sections from 35 countries.³

Indeed, there was a sort of stampede into the Comintern. Not only genuine revolutionary fighters, but many dubious opportunistic elements, riding the leftward movement of the masses, also declared for C.I. affiliation. Lenin said it had "become the fashion" among the centrist opportunists to join the Comintern.

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FORMATION OF THE YOUNG COMMUNIST INTERNATIONAL

An important step in the gathering of the new revolutionary forces between the two congresses was the organization of the Young Communist International in November 1919. The congress of 29 delegates took place in Berlin under illegal conditions, with 14 countries represented. The program worked out followed the general line of the Communist International, but with the central stress upon youth demands regarding living and working conditions, militarism, and education. Although the Y.C.I. was formally an independent body, it maintained close relationships with the C.I., the two organizations exchanging representatives to their respective executives.⁴ The leader of the Youth International was Willi Munzenberg, one of the many opportunists who wormed their way into the Communist movement during this period.

The Marxist youth movement, in the shape of sports' clubs and fraternal societies, first began to spring up in various West European countries during the 1890's. The leaders of the Second International at first paid little attention, but finally in 1907, at the Stuttgart congress, the youth managed to set up an international secretariat (see Chapter 24), which met regularly from then on. By 1914 it had 15 organizations and 170,000 members. Karl Liebknecht was one of the founders of this youth movement.

When World War I began most of the official youth leaders – De Man, Dannenberg, Frank, etc. – followed the line of the Second International leadership, by supporting the war.⁵ Youth masses, however, very quickly began to react against this course and to pull their forces together to fight against the war. The Berne Youth conference in April 1915, (see Chapter 27) was one of the very earliest organized movements against the war. International Youth Day was held on October 3, 1915. The line of the conference anti-war resolution, however, was pacifist. The Russian youth, with the Lenin policy, urged the transformation of the imperialist war into a civil war, but this policy was rejected. After Berne the International Secretariat published *The International of Youth*, for which Lenin wrote.

Throughout the war and the great revolutionary struggles that followed it, the youth were to be found working actively on every front. In the German and Hungarian revolutions they were among the best fighters and they had many martyrs. But especially in

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Soviet Russia the youth, the Komsomols, played a most vital role. They fought all through the civil war, and they were also ever at hand in the tremendous work of reconstructing the nation's war-shattered economy. By early 1920 the Soviet Y.C.L. had 400,000 members.⁶ From the outset, the Communist policy was to build the youth organization into a broad mass movement, not a skeleton framework such as it had been during the pre-war period of the Second International. In 1921 the Sports International was formed. Lenin devoted the closest attention to youth work.⁷

THE PROGRAM OF THE SECOND CONGRESS

Lenin made the main report at the second Comintern congress. In a brilliant analysis of the post-war situation he outlined the fundamental tasks of the Communist International. He portrayed the chaos prevailing among the capitalist powers following the war, with the imperialist countries, especially the United States, trying to re-establish and to extend their controls. Estimating the situation as a whole, he said, "The bourgeois system all over the world is experiencing a great revolutionary crisis. And the revolutionary parties must now 'prove' by their practical deeds that they are sufficiently intelligent and organized, have sufficient contacts with the exploited masses, are sufficiently determined and skillful to utilize this crisis for a successful and victorious revolution."⁸ Lenin was then addressing himself principally, of course, to the workers of Europe, but had Germany and a few other countries in Central Europe overthrown capitalism, this undoubtedly would have created a revolutionary situation on a world basis.

In his report Lenin singled out the greatest barrier standing in the way of a broad proletarian revolution in Europe, the opportunist Social-Democracy. "Practice," said he, "has shown that the active people in the working class movement who adhere to the opportunist trend are better defenders of the bourgeoisie, than the bourgeoisie itself. Without their leadership of the workers, the bourgeoisie could not have remained in power. This is not only proved by the history of the Kerensky regime in Russia; it is also proved by the democratic republic in Germany, headed by its Social-Democratic government; it is proved by Albert Thomas' attitude towards his [French] bourgeois government. It is proved by the analogous experience in Great Britain and the United States."⁹

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Following the general line of Lenin's report, the congress worked out a whole series of practical political and organizational measures, designed to equip the Comintern and its affiliated parties to cope with the broad revolutionary situation with which they were confronted. Among the questions handled were: a thorough-going analysis in all major aspects of the dictatorship of the proletariat, the question of when and how to build Soviets, important tactical problems regarding the question of parliamentarism and political action, the relation of the proletariat to the peasantry before, during, and after the revolutions, the attitude of Communists toward the trade unions and factory committees, theses on the youth and women, the national and colonial questions, the treacherous role of the Social-Democracy, conditions of membership for the Communist Party, and the revolutionary role of the party of Lenin.¹⁰

Several of the documents of this congress, which was held in the formative period of the Comintern, rank among the great writings produced by the world Marxist movement. Especially to be noted in this respect are, the "Theses on the National and Colonial Question," "Conditions of Admission to the Communist International," and Lenin's "*Left-Wing Communism, an Infantile Disorder*." The second congress was one of the greatest of all those held by the Comintern.

"LEFT-WING" COMMUNISM

The famous booklet, "*Left-Wing Communism*," to consider it first, was written by Lenin in April 1920, some three months before the second congress. It was composed to combat the errors of the ultra-leftists throughout the Comintern. Lenin considered the right danger far and away the most serious, but in order to preserve the party's strength and integrity, he also fought against those phrasemongers of the "left" who made a point of being more "revolutionary" than the Bolsheviks. For in the long run both right and "left" opportunism led to paralyzing the struggle of the proletariat. Lenin's document played an important role at the second congress of the C.I., and also ever since throughout the entire International. It is one of the classics of Marxism-Leninism.

The "left" sectarian is one who tries to take short-cuts to the revolution, who seeks to by-pass the elementary problems of mo-

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bilizing and leading the proletariat. Lenin points out many “leftist” weaknesses, including a rejection of participation in parliaments and in political elections, a refusal to remain members of conservative trade unions, a rigid, inflexible attitude towards political problems and organizations generally, illegalism in principle and a failure to utilize all legal opportunities for party work, etc.

Prior to the Russian Revolution, there were many elements of the “left” deviation in the labor movement, as expressed by the anti-politicalism of French, Italian, and Spanish Anarcho-syndicalism, the dual unionism of the American I.W.W., the “no immediate demands” stand of the Socialist Labor Party in the United States, and the general non-participation attitude of the Anarchists towards elementary mass movements of the working class. During the period of the First International, this “leftism” was the dominant deviation, in the form of Bakuninism. The development of the Russian Revolution and the growth of a revolutionary situation in Europe after the war greatly intensified such “leftist” moods. All the parties were more or less affected by them, including the Russian party. In the United States, for example, during the nearly two years of their underground existence the two Communist Parties had no immediate demands whatever in their programs; the British Communist movement was likewise saturated with “leftism,” and there were serious splits in several other parties over “leftist” policies – the Bordiga group in Italy, the Communist Labor Party in Germany, the “lefts” in Holland, etc., all of whom were represented at the second congress.

Lenin, who was a great master of firmness of principle and flexibility of tactics, crashed into this whole structure of revolutionary phrasemongery. In his booklet he demonstrated the necessity for making use of the bourgeois parliaments as a forum to reach the masses; he showed, among many examples, how the “no-compromise” leftists – Trotsky, Bukharin, and others – had almost wrecked the new Soviet Republic by taking an inflexible, so-called “revolutionary” stand at Brest-Litovsk and refusing to sign the harsh treaty. In criticizing sharply the British Communist sectarians, Lenin stated that their political policy in elections should be one of cooperation with the Labor Party. This was a definite outline of the broad united front program which was later to become the main tactical line of the Communist International.

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Lenin attacked vigorously the conception, whether held within or without the Communist parties, that Bolshevism was solely Russian in character. He demonstrated its fundamental internationalism. The road to socialism is essentially the same in all countries, though it varies in important particulars.

Lenin especially excoriated those “leftists” who refused to work inside the conservative mass trade unions and insisted on creating new and “perfect” dual unions, such as the I.W.W. in the United States had been doing for 15 years past, to the infinite harm of the labor movement. Lenin said: “There can be no doubt that people like Gompers, Henderson, Jouhaux, and Legien are very grateful to ‘left’ revolutionaries who, like the German opposition-on-principle (heaven preserve us from such ‘principles’), or like some of the revolutionaries in the American Industrial Workers of the World, advocate leaving the reactionary trade unions and refusing to work in them.”¹¹ The general effect of such dualist policies was to leave the mass trade unions undisturbed in the hands of their reactionary leaders.

As Lenin foresaw, the crassest forms of this general “leftist” deviation – the policies of “no-compromise,” no immediate demands, no electoral political action, no participation in conservative trade unions, etc. – were soon liquidated, and chiefly on the basis of his great booklet. Down to this day, however, subtle forms of “left” sectarianism – generally a failure to participate vigorously in every phase of the great mass class struggle – remain a serious handicap of many, if not all, of the Communist parties in the capitalist world, and they must constantly be fought.

THE “TWENTY-ONE POINTS”

The 21 “Conditions of Admission to the Communist International,”¹² another great document of the second congress, were written to keep out of the Comintern those centrists who were flocking to it at this time. Among other such centrist groups were the Independent Labor Party of Great Britain, the Italian Socialist Party, the Left Social-Democratic Party of Sweden – all of which had representatives present. Such elements were, as Lenin pointed out, the gravest danger to the revolutionary movement, as the workers had learned to their bitter cost in Germany and Hungary. The Conditions of Admission precipitated the long-needed clear differentiation between the left and the center. It was one thing to

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cooperate, in given circumstances, with the center; it was something else to have centrists incorporated into revolutionary parties in leading positions.

The 21 points, written by Lenin, laid down the essentials of the Leninist *party of the new type*. Very briefly summarized, they proposed: complete party control of the party press and the carrying on of energetic propaganda; the removal of reformists from key party posts; maintenance of the party apparatus under all conditions; the carrying on of Communist work among the peasantry; renunciation of "social patriotism" and reformism, denunciation of the imperialism of one's own country, work in conservative trade unions and in cooperatives; the need to fight against the Amsterdam trade union International; strict party control over parliamentary fractions; democratic centralization in organization, and periodic re-registration of party members; defense of the Soviet Union from imperialist attack; the drafting of a Communist Party program, with acceptance and enforcement of all C.I. resolutions and decisions, with the parties to be re-named "Communist"; publication by the party press of C.I. material. Furthermore, the parties are to consider and act upon the 21 conditions, leading committees are to be re-organized on the new basis, and those leaders are to be expelled who refuse to accept the 21 conditions. Centrist opportunists, such as Turati, Mogdigliani, Kautsky, Hillquit, Longuet, and MacDonald, were specifically excluded in the text of the "conditions."

In defending the "21 points," Lenin was especially insistent in pointing out, in view of the waverers and opportunists present, that Bolshevism was not something purely Russian, as they had been alleging but that, taking into consideration specific national conditions, it was of universal application. The attempt to outlaw Bolshevism as being solely Russian and inapplicable elsewhere, was one of the most stubborn opportunistic objectives that had to be fought in the early days of the Communist International.

The "21 points," which were primarily a blow against the center and the right, "laid down the working principles of the Communist movement, both on a national and international scale, in the intense revolutionary situation then existing.... The 'points' were guides, not inflexible rules. In the practice of the various Communist parties they were widely varied." The two American Communist parties, for example, never formally endorsed the "21

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points.”¹³

Immediately before and after the second world congress, there was a wide discussion of affiliation to the Comintern, particularly regarding the 21 points, by the several parties then on the borders of the International. In June 1920 the Independent Labor Party of Great Britain voted against affiliation. In October of the same year the Independent Social-Democratic Party of Germany, at its convention in Halle, voted 236 to 156 for affiliation. The German right elements refused to abide by this decision and made a split, with the greater part of the membership, some 300,000 members, amalgamating into the re-organized Communist Party. The French Socialist Party in December, at its Tours convention, voted by 3,208 to 1,220 for affiliation, but again the right wing split off and re-formed a new Socialist Party. Early in 1921 the Czechoslovakian Social-Democratic Party accepted the 21 points and voted to affiliate to the Comintern. In Italy the Socialist Party also voted to affiliate to the Comintern, but Serrati and other centrist leaders refused to expel the reformist officials. After the disastrous betrayal of the workers in the great Italian strikes of this period, the party split in January 1921 and the Communist Party was born. The American Socialist Party, in 1920, voted to affiliate to the Comintern, but its application was rejected. The Socialist Labor Party, which was “much disillusioned by the 21 points decided in 1922 not to affiliate.”¹⁴

At this time, the Comintern had its principal forces in Russia, Germany, Italy, and France. It also had special regional committees for work in Western Europe, the Near and Far East, and Latin America. The official Comintern journal was *The Communist International*, printed in several languages.¹⁵

34. The Comintern and the Colonial World

The highest political point in the second congress of the Communist International was Lenin's resolution on the national and colonial questions.¹ This was a thrust, powerfully delivered, right into one of the most vital organs of capitalism – the colonial system. It was the first time that the world's labor movement, since its inception, had paid major attention to the fate of the gigantic masses of the colonial peoples.

In his speech² and resolution, Lenin points out that nations are of two kinds, oppressing and oppressed, and that “about 70 percent of the population of the world belongs to the oppressed nations.... One of the main sources from which European capitalism draws its chief strength is to be found in the colonial possessions and dependencies. Without the control of the vast fields of exploitation in the colonies, the capitalist powers of Europe cannot maintain their existence even for a short time.... But for the extensive colonial possessions acquired for the sale of her surplus products, and as a source of raw materials for her ever-growing industries, the capitalistic structure of England would have been crushed under its own weight long ago. By enslaving the hundreds of millions of inhabitants of Asia and Africa, English imperialism succeeds so far in keeping the British proletariat under the domination of the bourgeoisie.... Super-profit gained in the colonies is the mainstay of modern capitalism....” Lenin especially stressed how part of this super-profit is used to corrupt the labor aristocracy and to keep it tied to a policy of support of imperialism.

Lenin explains that the imperialist powers, to weaken and confuse the resistance of the dependent peoples, often allow these countries a hollow show of independence. This trickery, initiated by England, has since come to be the central means by which the United States has created its far-flung world empire, made up of countries of only formal political independence. The puppet states of Latin America are classical examples of this type of pseudo national independence. It was in this famous resolution that Lenin characterized the American Negro people as a subject nation, along with the Irish and other peoples of the colonies.

The working class as a whole in the oppressing countries has a basic interest in the overthrow of imperialism as a condition for the abolition of capitalism altogether. “The breaking up of the co-

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lonial empire, together with the proletarian revolution in the home country, will overthrow the capitalist system in Europe,” says the resolution. Hence, the imperative need for coordination between the working class in the imperialist countries and the oppressed peoples of the colonies and semi-colonies, which it is the great task of the Comintern to bring about. The key to the struggle of the oppressed peoples is the leading role of the working class.

The Second Congress program points out that there are two trends in the colonial movements, reformist and national revolutionary. It urges that the Communist parties in the colonies and in the home countries give active support to the genuine national democratic-liberation movements of the dependent peoples. These will not be Communist movements in the early stages, and care must be used not to stamp them as such. The perspective laid out for them, in this period of revolutionary crisis in Europe, is that “the masses in the backward countries may reach communism, not through capitalistic development, but led by the class-conscious proletariat of the advanced capitalist countries.” Lenin said, “with the help of the proletariat of the more advanced countries the backward nations can arrive at and pass over to the Soviet system and through certain stages of development on to communism, skipping over the capitalist stage of development.” This is now happening in People’s China. Stalin especially devoted himself to the national and colonial question.

KARL MARX AND THE OPPRESSED PEOPLES

The First International, especially its two great leaders, Marx and Engels, perceived the political importance of the fight of the oppressed peoples for national independence. The active phases of this struggle at that time, in the competitive period of capitalism, mostly concerned the subjugated peoples on the European continent. This is why the First International leaders paid such close attention to events in Italy, Poland, and Ireland – the chief centers of national struggle during the period of the First International, 1864-1876. The struggle of the Italian people for liberation from Austrian oppression in 1859 stirred the whole labor movement, and characteristically it was directly in relation to the protest in 1863 against the suppression of the recent Polish insurrection that there came the immediate impulse for the organization

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of the International. Especially, the First International associated itself with the freedom demands of the oppressed Irish people. In this struggle Marx laid down the theoretical basis for present-day national liberation struggles (see Chapter 2). The big thing Marx did in this historic struggle was to point out how vital the exploitation of the Irish people was in strengthening British capitalism, and how urgent therefore was the interest of the British working class to support the fight of the Irish people for freedom. The direct participation of Marx and Engels in the heroic fight of the American Negro people for emancipation in the Civil War, dealt with in the early chapters of this book, was also a striking example of the leadership of the First International on national liberation struggles.

Marx also concerned himself much with what was going on among the peoples of the Far East. He pointed out that one of the sources of strength of European capital after 1848 was its expansion into Asia. Marx saw the real meaning of the Taiping rebellion, in the 1850-60 period, as a beginning of the Chinese revolution. This great popular movement, which was directed not only against domestic feudal reaction, but also against the European capitalist invaders of China, was finally defeated by armies led by the notorious English bandit general, "Chinese" Gordon.³ Regarding the significance of this elementary Chinese revolutionary movement, Marx made this remarkable prediction: "The Chinese revolution will throw the spark into the overloaded mine of the present industrial system and cause the explosion of the long prepared general crisis which, spreading abroad, will be closely followed by political revolutions on the continent. It would be a curious spectacle that of China sending disorder into the Western World while the Western Powers, by English, French, and American war-steamers are conveying 'order' to Shanghai, Nanking, and at the mouths of the Grand Canal."⁴

Marx was also keenly alert to the revolutionary beginnings then taking place in India. He wrote very extensively about that country, making a brilliant analysis of the developing revolutionary movement, as Dutt points out at length.⁵ Among his many Indian writings, Marx wrote a long series of articles in the *New York Tribune* during the 1850's. He paid special attention to the Great Indian Mutiny of 1857. His *Capital* has various references to the vast importance to world capitalism of its penetration of

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Asia and other colonial areas. Engels in 1882 also had the perspective of revolution in India, Persia, Egypt, and other colonial countries.

Marx said that Britain had “a double mission in India; one destructive, the other regenerating – the annihilation of the old Asiatic society, and the laying of the material foundations of Western society in Asia.” Among the revolutionary elements Marx listed political unity, the “native” army, the free press, the establishment of private property in land, the creation of an educated Indian class, and regular and rapid communication with Europe. Marx made it very clear, however, that the most the English would do for India would be to create such a material basis for their revolution; the Indians would have to free themselves.

He explained: “All the English bourgeoisie may be forced to do will neither emancipate nor materially mend the social condition of the mass of the people, depending not only on the development of the productive power, but of their appropriation by the people. But what they will not fail to do is to lay down the material premises for both. Has the bourgeoisie ever done more? Has it ever effected a progress without dragging individuals and people through blood and dirt, through misery and degradation? The Indians will not reap the fruits of the new elements of society scattered among them by the British bourgeoisie till in Great Britain itself the now ruling classes shall have been supplanted by the industrial proletariat, or till the Hindoos themselves have grown strong enough to throw off the English yoke altogether.”⁶

SOCIAL-DEMOCRATIC IMPERIALISM

Marx and Engels transmitted to oncoming generations of workers many great revolutionary principles as the heritage from the First International, but the opportunist leaders of the Second International proceeded to bury them and to try to make the workers forget they ever existed. Among these Marxist principles were those relating to the development of revolutionary national liberation movements. The First International opened the gateway to this great field of struggle; the Second International closed it again.

The 38 years between the dissolution of the First International and the outbreak of World War I – the period when the Second International was growing and flourishing – was also the time of

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the growth and expansion of world imperialism. The era of the First International was one of competitive capitalism; the era of the Second International was that of monopoly capitalism and imperialism. The heyday of the Second International was the time when capitalism was rapidly expanding into all corners of the earth, when the big monopolies became established in the major capitalist countries; when the leading powers finished dividing up the world as their colonial preserves, and when the great national liberation struggles of the vast subjugated peoples of the Far East began to get well under way. It was the era of imperialism.

The dominant parties and leaders of the Second International never took up the struggle against imperialism, neither with regard to the oppressed peoples in Europe nor those in the great colonial and semi-colonial areas of Asia, Africa, and Latin America. This was not a matter of mere neglect, but of deep political significance. It arose from the basic fact that the dominant revisionists in the Second International were themselves imperialists and they sought to tie their respective labor movements to the chariots of the capitalist imperialists.

Occasionally, the individual parties, or even the congresses of the Second International, would adopt resolutions of sympathy, or even of support, for oppressed peoples, but in the main they bestirred themselves very little about such matters. The indisputable fact is that during the period of the Second International the leaders of the English, American, French, German, Belgian, and Dutch Social-Democratic parties and trade unions, with few exceptions, supported the imperialist policies of their respective capitalist classes. This was because these leaders realized, or sensed, that the skilled labor aristocracy, upon whom they based their organizational and political leadership, definitely benefited financially from the super-profits wrung from the colonial peoples, as Lenin pointed out upon many occasions.

At the second C.I. congress Lenin said: "The Second International also discussed the colonial question. The Basle Manifesto also spoke of it quite plainly. The parties of the Second International promised to behave in a revolutionary way, but we see no real revolutionary work and help for the exploited and oppressed peoples in their revolts against the oppressors from the parties of the Second International, nor, I believe, from the majority of the parties which have left the Second International and wish to join

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the Third International.”⁷

For several years prior to World War I, Lenin sought diligently to win the Second International for a policy of self-determination with the right of secession for the oppressed peoples of Europe and of the great colonial areas of the world. But prior to the great war the Second International leaders never supported such a policy of self-determination even for the Irish, Polish, Czechs, and other developed peoples, much less for the “backward” peoples of the colonies. Stalin says: “When they spoke of the right of self-determination, the moving spirits of the Second International as a rule never even hinted at the right to political secession – the right of self-determination was at best interpreted to mean the right to autonomy in general... It was entirely unbecoming for ‘decent socialists’ to speak seriously of the emancipation of the colonies, which were ‘necessary’ for the ‘preservation’ of ‘civilization’.”⁸ The Social-Democrats especially did nothing to help their own colonial peoples. They built only scattering fragments of Social-Democratic parties here and there among them, and they gave no leadership to their ever-widening struggles. Instead, by the devious methods characteristic of right Social-Democrats, they justified imperialist oppression and exploitation. They even boldly developed theories of “socialist colonialism.” And they “gave the last full measure of their devotion” to imperialism by following their respective capitalist classes into that most cynical of imperialist adventures, the redivision of the world in the great bloodbath of World War I.

COMMUNIST ANTI-IMPERIALISM

As the Communists, under the leadership of Lenin, resurrected and redeveloped the general body of revolutionary principles of Marx and Engels, so, also, specifically, they re-applied, in the sense of the new imperialist era, the teachings of the great pioneer theoreticians on the national and colonial questions. Lenin, the greatest of all anti-imperialists, from the outset of his activities laid heavy stress upon the question of self-determination for oppressed peoples, and Stalin, his “ablest pupil,” followed the same course.

The Russian Revolution of 1905, which bore the characteristics of an anti-imperialist struggle, greatly influenced the rapidly awakening peoples of the Middle and Far East. This direct influ-

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ence was to be seen, among other events, in the national revolutions of Persia in 1906, Turkey in 1908, China in 1911, and in the stimulation of nationalism in India.

The November Revolution of 1917 still more profoundly stirred the national aspirations of oppressed peoples all over the world. Especially when the new Soviet Republic proceeded to cancel the extra-territorial rights and political concessions forced by tsarism from China and other colonial lands, did these oppressed peoples realize that they were dealing with a powerful friend. This new attitude was reflected in the close political relationship developed between Soviet Russia and various of these countries, notably Turkey, Afghanistan, India, and China. Especially Sun Yat Sen, the leader of the Chinese bourgeois revolution, was a close friend of Lenin and Soviet Russia.

Of tremendous importance, too, in establishing the leadership of Soviet Russia among oppressed peoples was the enlightened manner in which that country dealt with the hitherto oppressed peoples within its own borders, of which there were some fifty, making up about forty percent of the entire population. Stalin, who played a key role in developing the national question, says, "The policy of tsarism, the policy of the landlords and the bourgeoisie, towards these peoples was to destroy every germ of statehood among them, to cripple their culture, restrict the use of their native tongue, hold them in a state of ignorance, and finally, as far as possible, to Russify them."⁹

In drastic contrast to this policy of brutal suppression – Lenin called tsarist Russia a prison-house of nations – the young Soviet Republic at once granted the right of self-determination, including the right of secession, to all peoples of Russia. Some, as we have seen, Finland among them, exercised this right and became independent states, but the great mass remained within Soviet Russia, where they were accorded complete equality in every respect. At first the many Soviet states lived in a loose federation, but in 1922 they were combined more closely in the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics. Not only do all live in unity and harmony, but the Soviet government, since the beginning, has systematically and with great success furthered the culture, industry, and social progress of these hitherto "backward peoples." The Soviet national policies enabled them to skip the capitalist stage of development. The general advance made by these peoples, especially

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the former nomads, is one of the outstanding political events of this century, and it has evoked the most favorable response throughout all of imperialist-ridden Asia.

The mass anti-imperialist movement in China began in May 1919, the second phase of the Chinese Revolution, in an atmosphere of close cooperation between the Soviets and the Chinese revolutionary forces. The brewing Indian liberation struggle likewise took a spurt forward during 1919-21. The Turkish Revolution of 1919-22, led by Kemal Ataturk, was also carried through directly under the influence of the Russian Revolution, and it could not possibly have succeeded without the active leadership and support given it by Soviet forces. This is a fact that the reactionary Turkish government of today would like to have the world forget. The revolutionary upheavals in Afghanistan, Korea, Egypt, Iraq, and Mongolia during the years 1919-22 took place largely from the profound stimulus given by the Russian Revolution. These and similar movements in these areas were directed mainly against British imperialism, which then dominated nearly the whole Middle and Far East.

The colonial resolution, written by Lenin and adopted by the second congress of the Comintern, was, therefore, quite in line with the whole history of Lenin's party and Soviet Russia on the question. It simply carried to still higher levels the theoretical understanding and practical program of the general question of the oppressed nations of the earth. Especially it developed the enormous importance of the colonial peoples in the world struggle against capitalism and the indispensability of a close working together between the revolutionary proletariat of the imperialist countries and the rebellious oppressed peoples of the vast colonial and semi-colonial areas of the earth. At the second congress there were delegates from India, Turkey, Persia, China, Korea, Java, and the Asian Soviet peoples. John Reed, delegate from the United States, spoke in behalf of the American Negroes.

Following this congress of the C.I., a broad political conference of colonial peoples was held in Baku, Russia, in September 1920. There were some 37 peoples represented. It was called the Congress of the Peoples of the East. Of the 1,891 delegates, 235 were Turks, 192 Persians, 157 Armenians, 100 Georgians, and there were also numerous Chinese, Indians, and others. There were three important resolutions adopted, outlining the general

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Leninist line of anti-imperialist struggle in the colonial countries. A council of 47 (of 20 nationalities) was set up and a paper issued, *The Peoples of the East*.¹⁰ The Eastern University in Moscow, established in 1921, has trained thousands of political leaders for the colonial peoples. In January 1922 the first congress of the Toilers of the Far East was held in Moscow.¹¹

Communist parties also began to grow all through this great colonial area. Dates of the foundation of most of them are: Turkey 1918; Indonesia 1920; China 1921¹²; India 1922; Japan 1922; Palestine 1923; Burma 1924; Malaya 1925; Indo-China 1930; Philippines 1931. In many of the Middle East countries Communist parties were also organized, but they lived mostly in illegal conditions. In all these situations active work was pushed in founding and building the trade unions. By the same token, at the other end of the earth, in Latin America, the Comintern also encouraged the building of Communist parties among these semi-colonial peoples.¹³ Such concentrated work as this in the colonial world was altogether unheard of in the days when the Second International was the political organization of the world's workers. It was a basic indication of the greater depth and breadth of the Comintern movement to abolish capitalism and to establish socialism throughout the world. It was positive proof that the Third International was really a world organization, working truly on the basis of Marx's great slogan, "Workingmen of all countries, Unite!"

35. Revolutionary Struggles: Third Congress (1921)

When the Communist delegates from all over the world assembled in the great throne room of the former tsar's palace in Moscow, on June 22, 1921, to hold the third congress of the Communist International, it was in a world situation of a developing capitalist offensive that was colliding with a militant working class. The employers, with the help of the treacherous Social-Democracy, had halted the great revolutionary attacks of the workers in Germany and Hungary, although not in Russia, and they were now again beginning to take a reactionary initiative in many countries.

France had been the scene of a series of great strikes of railroad workers, metal workers, and other groups in early 1919, which had resulted unfavorably for the workers.¹ In the United States, the workers were in the midst of huge defensive strike movements in many industries during 1919-22, the largest in the history of the American labor movement – a general struggle which, because of Gompersian leadership's treachery and cowardice, was to cost the unions a loss of over a million members.² Just on the eve of the third congress the workers of Great Britain, because of similar misleadership on the part of Williams, Hodges, and Thomas, had suffered a serious failure of their famous Triple Alliance, from which they had expected much.³ The Triple Alliance, made up of miners, railroaders, and general transport workers, grew out of the big strike movement of a decade before. All told, it comprised some 2,000,000 workers. The debacle in 1921 grew out of a strike of the 1,150,000 coal miners. The latter, unable to secure a settlement, called for support from their allies in the Triple Alliance. Under the great mass pressure, a general strike date was set, April 12, by the unwilling leaders. This was postponed until the 15th, "Black Friday," when it was called off altogether on vague promises of a settlement. Result, a very serious defeat for the British working class.

THE BIRTH OF ITALIAN FASCISM

Like the workers all over eastern and central Europe, the Italian working class came out of the war in a revolutionary state of

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mind. They quickly built their General Confederation of Labor to an unprecedented membership of 2,000,000. In mid-1920 the metal workers came into collision with the employers over wages, and in September, to enforce their demands for a 35 percent increase and to defeat the employers' lockout, they occupied the metal factories all over Italy – a huge sit-in strike, and with red flags flying over the plants. To protect themselves, they made guns in the seized factories.

The employers were in a panic and the Giolitti government almost in paralysis. Italy was on the brink of revolution, and a determined Communist leadership could have carried it through successfully. But at the helm of the Socialist Party, which headed the whole movement, stood rightists and centrist waverers. Although the party had taken a good stand against the war and had endorsed the 21 points following the second C.I. congress, it had refused to cleanse itself of opportunist leadership. As a result, it failed in the supreme crisis; the Serrati,* Turati, and D'Aragona leaders led it to defeat. Much on the treacherous pattern of the Legien trade union leaders in Germany in the revolutionary days of January 1919, despite the demand of the left wing to seize political power, they kept the struggle on an "economic level," peddled away the great revolutionary movement for a skimpy wage raise and for a few other trade union concessions, and turned the factories back to the capitalists.⁴

The result was a disastrous collapse, and the workers were demoralized. In the meantime, under the leadership of the former Socialist, Benito Mussolini (1883-1945), the bosses had been building up gangs of thugs to terrorize the workers. The sell-out of the strike gave these ruffians their chance to wreck the labor movement. With the active help of the employers and the connivance of the government, Mussolini, in October 1922, finally made his "March on Rome" (in a Pullman car) and took over control of the government. Despite heroic rearguard struggles, the Italian labor movement was soon crushed. Fascism was born, a major disaster for the world labor movement.⁵

In Germany early in 1921, on the eve of the third world con-

* Serrati broke with the Turati opportunists only in 1922, when the damage had been done, on the eve of Mussolini's march on Rome.

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gress, an ill-fated revolutionary struggle also took place, the so-called "March action." This came in the aftermath of the Kapp-putsch of March 13, 1920, when General von Luttwitz, with Reichswehr troops, suddenly overthrew the Weimar government and installed in power one Dr. Kapp. The workers replied with the most effective general strike in the history of Germany. After four days Kapp had to give up. This was a splendid opportunity for the workers to take control of Germany and for three weeks Communist-led masses controlled Essen, Chemnitz, and a large part of the Ruhr basin.⁶ But once more the Social-Democratic leaders refused to fight for socialism, dutifully bowing out again to the capitalists on the basis of a few paper concessions.

The strike victory over Kapp left the workers in a militant mood. This resulted in an uprising in March 1921 of several hundred thousand workers, led chiefly by the Communists and Left Independents. It was drowned in blood by the right-wing Socialist hangmen. At best it was a desperate undertaking, and it was a mistake of the party to be led into it. Paul Levi, who had become party leader after the murder of Luxemburg and Liebknecht, worsened the situation by denouncing and sabotaging the struggle, for which he was expelled from the party. The influence of the March action permeated the entire third congress of the Communist International.⁷

FORMATION OF THE TWO-AND-A-HALF INTERNATIONAL

Another important event upon the eve of the third Comintern congress was the formation, in Vienna, February 1921, of the International Working Union of Socialist Parties, with Frederick Adler as general secretary. This organization, standing politically between the Second and Third International, became popularly known, to its dismay, as the Two-and-a-Half International. Politically, it was a centrist organization.⁸

The Vienna International, true to its Kautskyian principle of words not needs, was repelled on the right by the crudely reactionary work of the leaders of the Second International, and on the left by the revolutionary action of the Third International. So it undertook to steer a middle course between. Actually, as is always the case with centrists, the Vienna International served as a cover for the right opportunism of the Second International. Its historic function, like that of its affiliated parties, was to erect a

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barrier between the radicalized workers who were moving from the controls of the Second International to the leadership of the Communist International. It was a major buttress for the capitalist system during this revolutionary period.

There were representatives of Socialist parties of 13 countries at its founding congress. Among the more important were the Independent Labor Party of Great Britain, what was left of the Independent Social-Democratic Party of Germany, the Social-Democratic Party of Switzerland, and the Russian Mensheviks. Among the leading delegates were Johnson, Shinwell, Wallhead – English; Faure, Longuet – French; Crispin, Hilferding, Ledebour, Rosenfeld – German; Martov – Russian; Graber, Grimm, Huggler, Reinhardt – Swiss; Adler, Bauer – Austrian.

The Two-and-a-Half International adopted a radical-sounding program, as was to be expected. It foresaw certain instances where armed force would have to be used by the workers to achieve political power. It also tipped its hat to the dictatorship of the proletariat and to workers', peasants' and soldiers' councils (Soviets). In its statement of principles it carefully avoided, however, a clear endorsement of the Russian Revolution, and the Comintern 21 points were poison to it. In the nature of the situation, this type of radical program was necessary in order to catch the ear of the revolutionary-minded workers of Europe. How little real substance there was to it, however, was to be demonstrated a couple of years later when the Two-and-a-Half International amalgamated with (read, surrendered to) the Second International.

PROGRAM OF THE THIRD C.I. WORLD CONGRESS

The third congress of the Comintern, while drawing a revolutionary perspective, recognized that there had been some slackening in the post-war revolutionary upsurge. There could be no other general conclusion drawn from the defeats experienced by the workers since 1919 in Germany, Austria, Hungary, Italy, France, Czechoslovakia, and England. In general there had been a tremendous revolutionary upheaval, in which the Russian workers had won one-sixth of the world, "but," say the theses, "this powerful revolutionary wave did not succeed in sweeping away international capitalism, nor even the capitalist order of Europe itself.... The first period of the post-war revolutionary movement... is largely ended."⁹ At the congress, Lenin thus summed up the situa-

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tion: "The development of the revolution which we predicted makes progress. But the progress is not the straight line we expected.... What is essential now is a fundamental preparation of the revolution and a profound study of its concrete development in the principal capitalist countries."¹⁰

This did not mean, however, that the capitalists had succeeded in stabilizing their system. On the contrary, the war and the postwar revolutionary struggles had introduced even more chaos and internal contradictions into that system. One of the chief things that had happened in the war was a tremendous strengthening of the United States, and to a lesser extent Japan, at the expense of the older capitalist lands. "Capitalist Europe has completely lost its dominating position in the world economy."¹¹ The theses pointed out that already preparations were beginning and lineups taking shape for an eventual new war among the powers – a clear-sighted Marxist forecast that was to receive dreadful confirmation two decades later in World War II.

The congress stated very clearly that with the aid of the Social-Democrats the capitalists had not only succeeded, for the time being, in saving their system in most of Europe, but had developed a counteroffensive against the working class. This analysis, too, was to be only too clearly proven in the oncoming years with the growth of fascism. Already this monstrous snake had raised its head in Italy, but the full implications of this development were not yet clear, as the fascists so far had been unable to seize power.

The broad conclusion of the congress from its general analysis was to tighten the ranks all along the line and to prepare for severe fighting ahead. The main slogan was, *To The Masses!* With this in mind, much attention was given to many questions of organization and mass work – to party structure and practice, to work in the trade unions, in the cooperatives, and among the women and youth. Close examination and self-criticism was made of recent revolutionary struggles, especially the March action in Germany and the occupation of the factories in Italy.

The congress paid much attention to the necessity of developing mass struggles around immediate, partial economic and political demands. It warned against the error of considering such demands as in themselves reformist. The congress also laid the basis for united-front action with other workers' organizations in

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such struggles, a concept that was to have profound consequences in ensuing Communist policy.

The Soviet Republic, which represented the supreme achievement and fortress of the world's working class, could report splendid progress in stamping out, by the end of 1920, the main organized armed forces of the counter-revolution. On the eve of the congress, however, it had to deal with a desperate, Anarchist-organized revolt at the Baltic naval fort of Kronstadt. The general line of the Soviet government in establishing the New Economic Policy was endorsed. At the conclusion of seven years of imperialist and civil war, Soviet Russia was economically prostrate. Its industry and agriculture, weak and backward at best, were about wrecked from the ravages of war, economic blockade, and counter-revolutionary disorganization. And just as the country was about to enter into the period of reconstruction, it was hit by another great disaster, a terrible famine in the Volga area. These tragedies were, in the period following the congress, to lead to a great workers' international campaign to provide relief to the stricken areas. Nor were the capitalist countries, headed by Mr. Herbert Hoover with his American Relief Administration, slow to use food as a means to try to overthrow the embattled Soviet Republic.

SOME ORGANIZATIONAL QUESTIONS

The major Communist parties at the third congress, with their approximate membership figures, were: Russian 700,000, Czechoslovak 300,000, German 300,000, and French 100,000. Smaller parties existed in nearly all other important countries. The congress aimed at the strengthening of all the parties in the sense of Lenin's "party of the new type" (see chapter 20) in preparation for the next revolutionary offensive by the workers.

The First International established a tradition of an organized international leadership, with a definite program and a measure of workable revolutionary discipline. The Second International broke this down, however, as it did so many other of the revolutionary features of Marxism, and substituted instead the post-office system of international leadership, with each party developing pretty much its own line. The Third International re-established and emphasized the Marxist concept of a disciplined international movement, based on a common general political

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program and a definite leadership.

The Comintern proceeded upon the basis of democratic centralism. Its leadership was democratically constituted, its Executive Committee (ECCI), which met frequently between congresses, being representatively made up. Charges that the C.I. was packed with Soviet delegates who arbitrarily ran it, are typical anti-Communist slanders, the Russian party at this time having but six representatives in an Executive of 31 members. The Russian party was the leading party in the Comintern; this leadership, however, was not due to mechanical controls, but to its enormous prestige as the successful leader of the great Russian Revolution.

The characteristic of Comintern procedure was to have a full and free discussion on an issue and then seriously to enforce the decision. This enforcement, however, was fundamentally voluntary; understanding and full acceptance of the decision being based upon the existence of parties fully grounded in the principles of Marxism-Leninism. In all the parties, including the Russian, there were occasional minorities which, while often disagreeing with certain aspects of the line of the party, nevertheless were required to carry it out. Characteristically, at the third congress there were various dissident groups present – among them the sectarian K.A.P.D. Communist group from Germany, the right opportunist Levi group, also from Germany, and the centrist Lazari-Maffi elements, supporters of the fatal Serrati line in Italy. The ideological fight in the congress was on two fronts, against both the centrist and left sectarian tendencies.

WORK AMONG WOMEN

At the third C.I. congress there took place the Second International Women's Conference (the first having occurred at the second C.I. congress the previous year). This gathering was held on the basis of definite theses. The Second International, as we have pointed out earlier, carried on a certain amount of work among women, but there never was any real breadth and drive to it. Both Marx and Engels were scientific pioneers on the question of woman's status, and Bebel, during the 1880's wrote his famous book, *Woman and Socialism*, which ran through fifty editions.¹² But a corresponding energy on the question was not shown by the respective Social-Democratic parties. This was true also to some degree of the First International. As late as the formulation of the

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Gotha Program in Germany in 1875, Bebel's proposition to include as a plank the franchise for women was defeated by 62-55, one of those who voted against it being Wilhelm Liebknecht.¹³ By this time, the question of women's suffrage had been actively advocated in the United States for 30 years, the great Negro leader, Frederick Douglass, having been one of its chief advocates at the famous congress on women's rights at Seneca Falls, N.Y., in 1848.

The Second International parties did not actively support the right of women to vote until the adoption of Kautsky's Erfurt program in 1891. Even after that, despite the vigorous efforts of Clara Zetkin and others, the Second International remained relatively inert on the woman question. And it is a fact that even in later years, as the Second International parties got into power in various capitalist countries, they in no wise distinguished themselves by radically improving the industrial, political, or social position of womankind.

In contrast to this sluggish attitude, the left has always championed women's rights – industrial, political, legal, social – Lenin's writings being permeated with the question. Characteristically, the establishment of the Soviet Republic immediately led to profound improvement in woman's position in the industries, in the professions, and in political life. Every door was flung wide open to women, on the basis of complete equality in every respect. Today in the U.S.S.R., of the 1,500,000 members of all local Soviets, 500,000 are women, and in the Supreme Soviet, with 1,339 members, 280 are women.¹⁴ There are 60,000 women scientists. Women are leaders in every walk of Soviet life. The later revolutions in People's China and the European People's Democracies continued the same deep concern about the freedom and well-being of women.

Therefore, in the first congress of the C.I., the woman question already was given consideration; at the second congress a women's conference was held, and at the third congress of the Comintern, a thesis on the question was presented to the women's conference, under the direct attention of Lenin. This document put the winning of the women as decisive for the victory of the revolution. While raising special demands for women, it denied that there was a specific woman question as such and identified the basic interests of women with those of the proletariat. It developed a general program for work among women in Soviet

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countries, in capitalist lands, and in the great colonial areas. The program covered the entire scope of women's interests in every field.

The women's work of the Comintern was led by that veteran revolutionary fighter, Clara Zetkin.¹⁵ She headed the International Women's Secretariat, with its center in Moscow. Regional organizations were set up, and the respective parties formed corresponding women's commissions. Wherever the proletariat was in struggle, there the women Communists were to be found in the first line.

The third C.I. congress also paid attention to the cooperative movement, producing a program for activity in this field. The theses condemned current bourgeois and Social-Democratic illusions as to the political neutrality of the cooperatives, and also Utopian notions (with a century of confusion behind them) to the effect that the extension of the cooperative movement means the gradual development of socialism. The C.I. program called for the integration of the cooperatives with the political and trade union sections of the working-class forces. The congress set up a Cooperative Department and gave a lead to the affiliated parties to do likewise. In substance, the congress re-endorsed the position of Marx in the *Inaugural Address* of the First International that while the cooperatives were a valuable weapon of the working-class struggle, they could not of themselves bring the workers to emancipation.

36. The Red International of Labor Unions (1921)

The basic split in the ranks of the working class caused by the treasonous support of World War I by the right-wing and centrist leaders of the Second International not only affected the workers' political parties, but also their trade unions. Every aspect of the labor movement was disrupted by the great debacle of opportunist Social-Democracy. An ultimate result of this labor split was the formation of the Red International of Labor Unions (R.I.L.U.), known as the Profintern, at a congress in Moscow, beginning on July 3, 1921.

THE I.F.T.U. IN WAR AND PEACE

The International Federation of Trade Unions, which was organized in skeleton form in 1913 out of the previous International Secretariat of National Trade Union Centers with Karl Legien as secretary and with headquarters in Berlin, was shattered by the action of the Socialist leaders in the war. The wily Legien, however, arguing that the war was not caused by the workers, managed for a time to keep up a correspondence with the various international centers; but this irked the ultra-chauvinist French leader Leon Jouhaux (1879-1954), and the arrangement collapsed. Consequently, by May 1915, there were three international trade union centers – in Berlin, Amsterdam, and Paris.¹

During the war the unions in many countries grew very rapidly. This was primarily because the tremendous demand for labor power put the workers in a favorable bargaining position, and also because the employers, striving to keep the trade unions lined up in support of the war, were not in an advantageous position to block successfully the growth of labor organization. In the stormy period following the war, which in several countries reached the point of revolutionary struggle, the trade unions grew even faster. Lorwin estimates that the total world trade union membership expanded from some 15,000,000 in 1913 to 45,000,000 in 1920.² Thus, the membership of the unions in the various leading countries during this period went up roughly as follows: Germany 2,250,000 to 8,000,000; Great Britain, 4,500,000 to 6,500,000; United States, 2,500,000 to 4,000,000; France, 500,000 to

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2,000,000; Italy, 400,000 to 2,000,000; and Soviet Russia, from 1,500 (in early 1917)³ to 4,500,000.

The need of the workers for international trade union organization was imperative, and once the war was over steps were promptly taken in that direction by the forces of both right and left. In July 1919 a trade union conference of right and centrist forces was held in Amsterdam, with union representatives from fourteen countries in attendance. The International Federation of Trade Unions was reconstituted, with a stated membership of 23,662,000. But this time, instead of Karl Legien at the head, the I.F.T.U. had a secretariat of E. Fimmen and J. Oudegeest (of Belgium and Holland), with W. A. Appleton (England) president, and Leon Jouhaux (France) and Samuel Gompers, vice-presidents.⁴ The “enemy” trade unions of Germany and its war allies were allowed to affiliate, but they were completely squeezed out of the top leadership. The Russian trade unions refused to participate in the Amsterdam congress.

Meanwhile, the Social-Democratic trade union leaders were maneuvering, with Gompers in the lead, to make themselves part of the imperialistic League of Nations, then being born at Versailles. Gompers, an official member of the U.S. government delegation, was made chairman of the Peace Conference’s Commission on International Labor Legislation, in January 1919. As a result, the so-called Labor Convention was adopted, based on the A.F. of L.’s labor program of reconstruction.⁵ This program had called for the establishment of a world “labor parliament;” but instead, the League Convention provided for the International Labor Organization (I.L.O.) – a body formed of representatives of governments, employers, and workers. Based on class collaboration and the permanency of capitalism, the I.L.O. was made an official part of the League. Thenceforth, through the years, it proceeded to meddle in the class struggle all over the world, to the detriment of the workers. It exists to this day, having been absorbed as part of the machinery of the United Nations, the sole left-over of the old League. The U.S.S.R. and the Soviet trade unions, although affiliated to the I.L.O. since 1935, only recently became active in that body.

Shortly after the Versailles Peace Treaty was signed, the I.F.T.U. was re-established at the union congress at Amsterdam (hence its name, the Amsterdam International). There was bitter

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criticism among the delegates against the high-handed manner in which Gompers, who was present at the congress, had peddled away the interests of the workers at Versailles. The European Social-Democrats were particularly shocked at Gompers' openly pro-capitalist language and his lack of the radical demagoguery such as they themselves practiced. The dispute wound up by the congress, in the presence of Gompers, adopting a resolution condemning the League's Labor Convention. Legien even accused Gompers of being a bosses' agent. The congress decided, however, to participate in the I.L.O.⁶

The I.L.O. first met in Washington in October 1919. Its principal action was to endorse legislation for the general eight-hour day. This was hailed by labor conservatives as a great victory. Actually, however, the eight-hour day had been largely won in the major countries during the war and immediately afterward. To endorse it, therefore, as a specific demand by the I.L.O., was a small price for the employers to pay as one of their concessions to damp down the then revolutionary spirit of large sections of the European proletariat.

FOUNDATION OF THE R.I.L.U.

While the right wing of the labor movement was taking steps to re-establish the International Federation of Trade Unions, the left wing was no less active in regrouping its trade union forces. Lenin, with his penetrating mind, early understood that the great split caused by the war-treason of the revisionists and their counter-revolutionary attitude, was bound also to involve the world trade union movement. Already at the Conference of Russian trade unions held in June 1917 the need was recognized to form a new trade union international, and a scheduled world trade union congress in Petrograd for this purpose would have taken place had it not been for the imperialist war of intervention that was launched against Soviet Russia, disrupting all communications.⁷

At first the Communist International, like the First and Second Internationals before it, accepted the affiliation of labor unions, but this practice was almost immediately discarded as impractical under the circumstances. On July 15, 1920, as a result of conferences with revolutionary trade unionists of various European countries, the International Council of Trade and Industrial Unions was organized in Moscow. Its stated purpose was to act as

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a “militant international committee for the reorganization of the trade union movement.” Upon the call of this committee there was assembled in Moscow on July 3, 1921, the congress of 220 trade union delegates from all over the world which established the Red International of Labor Unions. The R.I.L.U. congress took place during the concluding days of the third congress of the Comintern, and just as the civil war in Soviet Russia had been brought to a victorious conclusion.

The report of the International Council of its work during the past ten months listed the affiliations to the new labor body as follows: Russia, 6,500,000; Germany, 2,500,000; Italy, 3,000,000; France, 500,000; England, 500,000; America, 500,000; Spain, 800,000; Australia, 600,000; Poland, 250,000 – or some 17,000,000 in all. There were three types of affiliates: directly affiliated unions, sympathizing unions, and minority movements in unaffiliated unions. Among the well-known trade unionists present from the capitalist world were Mann (England), Heckert (Germany), Rosmer (France), Haywood and Foster (United States), and Zapatocky (Czechoslovakia). A. Losovsky, outstanding Russian Communist veteran and trade unionist, also with an extensive experience in the French labor movement, was elected general secretary.

The above membership figures for the capitalist countries were only approximate, the R.I.L.U. forces in these lands being almost exclusively left groupings within the old unions. In Czechoslovakia they amounted to perhaps one half of the total trade union movement, and in France and Germany somewhat less. In England the National Minority Movement, the R.I.L.U. section in that country, on various of its issues commanded the support of half or more of the entire trade union membership. And even in the United States and Canada, during the stormy period of 1921-23, the Trade Union Educational League was able to secure endorsement from about fifty percent of the labor movement for its three major issues of amalgamation of the craft unions into industrial unions, the labor party, and recognition of Soviet Russia.⁸ The manifesto issued by the R.I.L.U. founding congress stated that “Two fifths of the organized workers of the world have already joined the Red International of Labor Unions.”⁹

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THE PROGRAM OF THE R.I.L.U.

The program of the Red International of Labor Unions, or Profintern, as it was often called, as contained in its constitution, proposed to organize the world's workers for the overthrow of capitalism and the establishment of the dictatorship of the proletariat. It supported policies of class struggle and opposed class collaboration. It took a stand against the International Labor Office and the International Federation of Trade Unions.¹⁰

In its fight to revolutionize the programs, methods, and leadership of the trade union movement, the R.I.L.U. always kept to the fore the imperative necessity, at the same time, to guard and strengthen the workers' unity in their organizations and the class struggle. To this end, while accepting the affiliation of the unions and trade union centers, the Profintern was strictly opposed to splitting labor organizations. It stood resolutely by the Leninist principle of revolutionary workers remaining within conservatively-led mass trade unions. The congress declared, "The policy of breaking off from the unions by the revolutionary elements plays into the hands of the counterrevolutionary bureaucracy and must be resolutely and categorically rejected."¹¹

The revisionist leaders of the Amsterdam International replied, however, to the R.I.L.U. unity policy with one of expulsion. They did not hesitate to split the labor movement, having betrayed it in so many other ways. That is, to retain control of the labor organizations, they proceeded systematically to expel, singly or en masse, large numbers of militant workers who dared to oppose their general class collaborationist line of policy. In the ensuing years this expulsion program took on a mass character and it spread to practically all countries. The expulsion policy forced major union splits in several countries, including the needle trades and other unions in the United States and Canada.

One of the most serious of these trade union splits took place in France. As remarked earlier, the membership of the C.G.T. during the war period had shot up to 2,000,000; but because of ruinous reformist policies in the great strikes of 1920, it soon tumbled again to about 600,000. As a result of this debacle there was great discontent in the C.G.T. At the congress in Orleans in October 1920 a motion was made to affiliate the organization to the R.I.L.U., then in preliminary process of formation. This motion

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was defeated by 1,485 to 685. But the Communists and other lefts persisted in their propaganda, gradually winning one national union after another. The Jouhaux administration, as was usual with reformists in this period, replied to these successes of the left wing by expelling whole sections of their organizations. This led inevitably to a general split, which took place in December 1921, and to the formation, in June 1922, of the C.G.T. Unitaire. The C.G.T.U. was headed by Monmousseau, Semard, Rosmer, and Monatte.¹² The French labor movement was thus split almost evenly between the two national organizations.

SHAPING THE R.I.L.U. PROGRAM

At the R.I.L.U. congress, in the development of the program and tactics of the new international labor center, there were only two serious disputes. One of these was over the question of left-wingers working within the old and conservative trade unions. There were several "leftist" groups at the congress – from the American I.W.W., the French and Spanish Anarcho-syndicalists, the German K.A.P.D., etc. – and they firmly supported the sectarian idea of the left-wing elements withdrawing from the old unions and establishing independent revolutionary organizations, with policies, structures, and leadership designed to their own liking. This was one of the major expressions of "left" sectarianism that Lenin had waged war against in the second Comintern congress.

Dual revolutionary unionism was something of a new ideological deviation in Europe, save in Anarcho-syndicalist circles; but it had a long history in the case of the American I.W.W., S.P., and S.L.P. For fifteen years these organizations had encouraged the policy of pulling militant elements out of the mass A.F. of L. unions, to the great detriment of the latter. The "leftists" at the R.I.L.U. congress made a fight for their line, but the delegates overwhelmingly supported the Leninist trade union principle of left-wingers remaining inside the ranks of the organized trade unions and there fighting for their class struggle program.

The second dispute at the R.I.L.U. congress, more basic in character, involved pretty much the same Anarcho-syndicalist elements. It had to do with the question of trade union political action, concretely, with the organized relations that were being suggested between the R.I.L.U. and the Comintern. The proposi-

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tion was that the two bodies should exchange representatives in their respective executive committees. The Anarcho-syndicalists, who were drastically opposed to political action in general, made a big fight against establishing any organized connections whatever between the R.I.L.U. and the C.I. This stand was a modern reflection of the historic fight between the Marxists and the political ancestors of the present-day Anarcho-syndicalists, the Bakuninists, in the congresses of the First International.

Much bitterness was lent to the dispute because of the fact that the Anarchists had led the bloody revolt at the great Kronstadt naval base in the Baltic a couple of months earlier. "The mutineers gained possession of a first class fortress, the fleet, and a vast quantity of arms and ammunition."¹³ Their slogan was, "Soviets without Communists," and the whole capitalist world openly wished them success. But the government put down the dangerous counter-revolutionary revolt. The great fortress was quickly retaken, and for the only time in history steel battle-ships were captured by foot soldiers crossing the ice in the harbor.

Even during the R.I.L.U. congress anti-Soviet Anarchists were conducting armed operations against the Soviet government under the bandit Makhno in the Ukraine. The American Anarchists, Goldman and Berkman, avowed anti-Soviet elements, were present unofficially at the congress, busying themselves trying to line up delegates for the Anarcho-syndicalist cause.

The congress voted in great majority in support of political action and for a close working together of the R.I.L.U. with the Comintern. A year later this mutual representation between the two internationals was abandoned. The Anarcho-syndicalists at the 1921 congress were obviously very disgruntled at the congress decision, but they did not split at the time. In December 1922, however, the Anarcho-syndicalist groupings of Spain, France, Holland, the United States, and a few other centers got together in Berlin and formed an international of their own. They named it the International Working Men's Association. It had very few members and it played but a negligible part in world labor affairs.

THE NEW REVOLUTIONARY UNIONISM

The development of the Leninist type of unionism, expressed by the R.I.L.U., raised the whole labor movement to new and higher levels of efficiency than had been attained in the time of

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the dominance of the Second International. The trade unions were infused with a better fighting spirit, and they were given a clearer leadership perspective, as against the paralyzing class collaborationism and semi-bourgeois outlook cultivated by the reformists. They were also infused with a stronger sense of class unity and political solidarity, in contrast to the narrow craft unionism and the "neutralist" ideas characteristic of reformist unionism. For the first time, in the R.I.L.U., the unions began seriously to consider questions of strike strategy and tactics, including the use of the general strike, from a scientific standpoint.¹⁴ In the same spirit, the R.I.L.U. was instrumental in the formation of such broad united-front organizations as the International Labor Defense and the International Workers Aid, to support every aspect of trade union struggle and to defend labor militants of all tendencies in their fight against legal persecution.

The R.I.L.U. laid new foundations for trade unions in the workshops, with its new-type shop committees and factory councils. These bodies, which drew in all the workers in a given plant, both the unorganized and the members of all unions, gave added strength and unity to the workers. The shop committees, according to the maturity of the situation, ranged in the exercise of varying degrees of control, up to the actual taking over of plants. This type of organization came to play an enormous role all over Europe, and it became the foundation of national trade unions. The second congress of the R.I.L.U. declared, "the creation of factory committees is the most important policy and most important weapon of the revolutionary class struggle."¹⁵

An important feature of Communist unionism, too, was the building of Communist groups or fractions in conservative-led unions. It was an effective method, but as it provoked needless opposition, it was eventually generally abandoned. Shop papers and groups were continued, and so, too, was the system of building broad united-front opposition groups, which, however, was more in line with trade union tradition.

The R.I.L.U. was animated by a high spirit of internationalism. Whereas the I.F.T.U. congresses contented themselves with passing a few resolutions of a general character, the Profintern congresses took up in detail the problems confronted by its unions in the respective countries. This helped to break down tendencies towards provincialism and national narrowness.

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The R.I.L.U. industrial unions were, for the first time, also real mass-class organizations in their composition. Characteristically, the reformist unions had nearly everywhere concentrated principally upon organizing the more skilled workers. This was why, in most countries, they remained relatively small. The enormous increase in union membership that took place during and immediately after World War I, and also during the decades since then, has been due primarily to the world-wide growth of left-wing, predominantly Communist, influence, with its central stress upon the organization of the hitherto neglected or ignored mass categories of the unskilled, women, and young workers.

Characteristic in this respect was the stand of the fourth Comintern congress regarding the organization of American Negro workers. It declared, "The Communist International will use every instrument within its control to compel the trade unions to admit Negro workers to membership or, where the nominal right to join exists, to agitate for a special campaign to draw them into the unions; failing in this, it will organize the Negroes into unions of their own and specially apply the united-front tactic to compel admission."¹⁶

The R.I.L.U. also added a new dimension to the labor movement in that from the outset it carried trade unionism into the colonial and semi-colonial countries, something that had been practically unheard of in the days of the predominance of the Second International. The establishment of the national labor movements in the Asian countries – India (1920), China (1922), and in various other eastern countries in the same period – was achieved under the powerful influence of the Russian Revolution, and usually directly under Communist leadership. Katayama reported that in Japan the general labor federation was formed in 1901 under police influence; but that during the post-World War I revolutionary upheaval the left-wing workers took charge of the federation and built it into a real union center.¹⁷ By the same token, it was the R.I.L.U. that organized the first general labor movement in Latin America in 1928, the *Confederacion Sindical Latino Americano* (C.S.L.A.), forerunner of the Latin American Confederation of Labor (C.T.A.L.) of 1936.¹⁸ In the trade union field the R.I.L.U. was the embodiment of Lenin's great strategic principle of united-front cooperation between the workers of the imperialist countries and the peoples of the colonial lands.

37. The United Front: Fourth Congress (1922)

The fourth congress of the Communist International was held, like all the congresses of the Comintern, in Moscow. It took place November 7-December 3, 1922, with some 350 delegates present from 52 countries, representing a reported membership of 1,920,549.¹ Many of the parties – Brazil, Bulgaria, Esthonia, Hungary, India, Japan, Poland, and several others – because of domestic reaction, were in illegality, hence membership figures for them were uncertain. The central issue of this congress was the united workers' front. It was the last congress attended by the great Lenin, who on May 26, 1922, had a stroke, which was soon to cause his death.

LENIN AND LABOR UNITY

In the true spirit of Marxist understanding and responsibility, Lenin at all times had an all-pervading sense of the imperative need for proletarian solidarity. His entire work was directed towards this great end – the development of a working class ideologically and organizationally united, upon the basis of a socialist outlook. In all his strategy and tactics and in his program-building, Lenin always kept this elementary objective to the fore.

The deep split in the labor movement caused by the war betrayal of the right and center Socialists and by their open or disguised hostility to the Russian Revolution, posed before the world's workers a tremendous problem of finding the way to a practical labor unity in their shattered ranks. Such unity was indispensable, the only basis upon which the working class could hope to make further progress or even to hold the ground it had already won, in the face of the increasingly violent attacks from the capitalists. To attain labor unity worried the right-wingers but little, however. They were not out to destroy capitalism; hence with their slogans, "The enemy is on the left," they were quite willing to keep the labor movement split, if thereby they could defeat the Communists. In the very nature of the situation, therefore, the unity of labor could be established only by the left forces and in the face of right Social-Democratic opposition.

As soon as he realized that the original post-war revolutionary

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offensive of the workers of middle Europe was being checked, Lenin outlined and proposed the policy of the united labor front. He understood very well that organic political unity with the revisionist betrayers of labor was unthinkable, but he also knew that on the basis of the common desires and pressures of the great masses of the working class, and despite the reactionary leadership, a vital amount of practical cooperation could be built up among the workers for limited objectives in both the industrial and political fields. In carrying through such united-front activities, however, Lenin laid it down as an indispensable condition that the Communist parties must retain their full right of political criticism; otherwise the working class could not be protected from the ingrown treachery of the opportunist Socialist leaders.

Lenin began to stress the united-front policy before, and especially during, the third Comintern congress of June 1921. At the Executive Committee meetings of December 1921 and February 1922, the policy was further carefully formulated and put before the world labor movement for consideration.² As worked out at the December meeting, the theses pointed out the intensifying attack of reaction against the workers and the urgent need of united action of all of labor's forces to repel it. The document declared also that "the workers as a whole are being moved by an unprecedented attraction for unity." The theses called upon the Communists in Germany, France, Czechoslovakia, England, Italy, Sweden, the United States, etc., to take the initiative in approaching the Social-Democrats with concrete proposals for united-front actions. The theses stated, too, that "In issuing the watchword of the united working class front and permitting agreements of separate sections of the Communist International with parties and groups of the Second, Two-and-a-Half, and Amsterdam Internationals, the Communist International cannot naturally refuse to contract similar agreements on the international scale." Then the theses listed previous proposals made to these bodies for united action, on Russian famine relief, against the white terror in Spain and Yugoslavia, and, currently, in connection with the fresh danger of imperialist war.³

The various national Communist parties at once took up the fight for the united front. The key German party forwarded to the two German Social-Democratic parties an open letter, proposing united action to meet the workers' most pressing wage problems,

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and also making proposals for a common fight for a “united working class government.” In France, Italy, Czechoslovakia, and elsewhere similar approaches were made to the Social-Democrats. But there was no little clarification work necessary also within the Communist parties themselves regarding the new policy. There were “left” sectarians who were against the united front in principle, some who declared it could work on the industrial field but not on the political, others who conceived of the policy as actually amalgamating the Communist party with the Social-Democratic parties, and still others who thought they saw a contradiction between the famous 21 points, which drew a line against joint political organization with right Social-Democrats, and the new united-front policy, which proposed cooperation for limited objectives.

The coming forward by the Comintern with this united-front policy was the only conceivable way at the time of cultivating the greatest possible degree of united labor action. It was another example of the world labor leadership that had been shown by the Communists since 1914 (in fact since the Stuttgart congress of 1907), a leadership which was to be repeated constantly throughout the years, down to the present time.

THE BERLIN CONFERENCE OF THE THREE INTERNATIONALS

Meanwhile, the leaders of the Two-and-a-Half International, also feeling the workers’ “irresistible impulse towards unity” signaled by the Communists, proposed a conference of the three internationals to consider joint action. The Comintern agreed at once, but the Second International did so reluctantly. The conference sat in Berlin during April 2-5, 1922, with 47 delegates, representing the three political executives. The C.I. delegates were Radek, Zetkin, and Frossard, while the Second and Two-and-a-Half International delegations were headed respectively by Emile Vandervelde and Frederick Adler. The sessions were opened by Adler.

Clara Zetkin presented the Comintern proposals. These, of course, did not suggest an impossible organic political unity, but instead, how to strengthen labor’s fight on current issues. The plans included united action “against the capitalist offensive; the fight against reaction; preparation for the struggle against a new imperialist war; assistance to the Soviet Republic, whose econom-

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ic development was at that time seriously threatened by a famine in the Volga area; the question of the Versailles Treaty, and the reconstruction of the devastated areas.”⁴

Speaking for the Second International, Vandervelde immediately took exception to the C.I., proposals for opposition to the Versailles Treaty and also brought to the fore a whole series of proposals affecting the inner life of Russia.⁵ He demanded that the C.I. and the Soviet government “renounce cell-building tactics,” quit their criticism of the leaders of the Second International, appoint a commission to examine into the status of Soviet Georgia, put the current trial of the Socialist-Revolutionaries in Moscow (for sabotage, assassination, and insurrection) virtually under control of the joint international Socialist movement, and grant free political activities in Russia for the various Socialist parties. Mr. Vandervelde, in sum, only wanted to tear loose the rich Republic of Georgia from Soviet Russia and also to liquidate the dictatorship of the proletariat. The delegates of the Two-and-a-Half International (the two organizations were then in process of amalgamation) agreed with Vandervelde.

The Comintern delegates did all possible, and more, in an attempt to bring a workable agreement out of the conference. They agreed upon the appointment of a commission to investigate the status of Georgia, that there would be no death penalties in the S.R. trial, and that the Social-Democratic internationals would be permitted to organize the S.R. defense. This was definitely infringing upon the sovereign rights of Soviet Russia. Afterward, Lenin, the initiator of the united-front tactic, in an article entitled, “We Have Paid Too Much,” while accepting the agreement inasmuch as it had been signed, sharply criticized the Comintern delegation for its too great concessions.⁶

After much acrimonious disputation, the general conference issued a joint statement of the Executives, to the effect that a commission of nine would be set up to prepare for a later broad world congress of workers’ organizations, that the Georgian question would be examined, that note was taken of the agreements regarding the S.R. trial, that a united stand would be made against the capitalist offensive, that proletarian united fronts would be established in every country, and that support would be given to the famine-plagued Russian Revolution. On this basis the conference adjourned.

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All this looked pretty fair on paper, but the Social-Democrats had no idea whatever of pursuing a united-front program. They had simply gone through the motions of unity, enough to throw dust in the eyes of the masses of workers who were increasingly demanding united action. Even the renegade Borkenau, in dealing with their attitude, is constrained to remark: "After the conference of the Three Internationals, the official leadership of the Socialists remained deaf to all appeals for cooperation."⁷ In fact, their line thenceforth, as before, was one of active opposition to the united-front policy.

On May 23, in pursuance to the decisions of the general conference, the commission of nine met in Berlin. But the attempts of the Comintern delegates to get action along the line of the conference manifesto, met with a blank wall of resistance. Therefore, the meeting broke up, having accomplished nothing. Shortly afterward, the Comintern delegation officially resigned from the already defunct commission. Thus, the international Social-Democratic leaders sabotaged the first broad united-front effort, but far from the policy being permanently scuttled and sunk, as these misleaders hoped, it was slated to play a very great role in the future life of the world labor movement.

THE FOURTH WORLD COMINTERN CONGRESS

Six months after the breakdown of the big try for a world united-front of all branches of the labor movement, the fourth C.I. congress came into session. The congress signalized a general intensification of the employers' offensive on all fronts. Among the manifestations of this, Lozovsky pointed out, due to the cowardly and conservative policies of the opportunist Social-Democrats, many labor movements had lost most of the membership increases and other gains that they had won during the war and the immediate post-war years. Thus, the total number of trade unionists in France had declined from 2,000,000 to 600,000; in Italy from 2,000,000 to 700,000; in England the unions had lost about 1,300,000 members, and in the United States about 1,500,000. Similar trends were in evidence in Czechoslovakia, Sweden, Norway, Denmark, Holland, etc. The exceptions were in Germany and Austria, where because of the desperate economic conditions of the masses and the revolutionary mood of the workers, they had been able to maintain their membership gains.⁸

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In estimating the general international situation, the congress resolution declared: "Owing to the fact that the proletariat of all countries, with the exception of Russia, did not take advantage of the weakened state of capitalism to deal it the final crushing blows, the bourgeoisie – thanks to the aid of the social-reformists – managed to suppress the militant revolutionary workers, to re-inforce its political and economic power and to start a new offensive against the proletariat."⁹

The congress signalized fascism as the sharpest form of the developing capitalist offensive, and the resolution, with real penetration, warned of the international character of this new danger. Point was lent to all this by Mussolini's march on Rome a few weeks before. The resolution stated: "The menace of fascism lurks today in many countries; in Czechoslovakia, in Hungary, in nearly all the Balkan countries, in Poland, in Germany (Bavaria), in Austria and America, and even in countries like Norway. Fascism in one form or another is not altogether impossible even in countries like France and England."¹⁰

The resolution gave a clear signal of the grave international menace of fascism; but Zinoviev, in making the general report, made certain dangerously erroneous interpretations of fascism. He tended to make it appear as an inevitable stage in the class struggle, one that had to be gone through with. He characterized fascism as only "a stage in the maturing of the revolution in Italy," and he also remarked that, "It is perhaps inevitable that we would pass through an epoch of more or less perfectly developed fascism throughout central Europe."¹¹

This approach of Zinoviev's later on tended to create illusions, especially in Germany, to the effect that fascism, despite all its horrors, was some sort of an advance in the revolutionary process. The contrary was the case; fascism was the counter-revolution; its victory constituted a catastrophic, but preventable, defeat for the working class, and on this basis it had to be relentlessly fought. Zinoviev's "inevitability" concept does not appear, however, in the resolution, which handles fascism only as a potentiality.

THE POLICY OF THE UNITED FRONT

The fourth congress put the utmost stress upon the united front as the means by which the workers could develop the neces-

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sary unity in order to counter and defeat the growing offensive of the employers, which tended to become outright fascism. The resolution stated that, "The slogan of the Third Congress, 'To the Masses!' is now more important than ever. The struggle of the United Front is only beginning, and it will no doubt cover a whole period in the international Labor movement."¹² This was sound Marxist foresight and it was to be borne out fully by world labor experience during the next generation, down to our own period.

The congress devoted careful attention to every aspect of the vital united-front policy. It examined and discussed the right and "left" mistakes that had been made during the past months in united-front work in the several countries. It reviewed at length the big effort to establish an international united front among the three internationals at the ill-fated Berlin conference of half a year earlier. It projected practical lines along which the united-front movement could express itself in the various countries.

The united-front tactic inevitably precipitated the basic question of the possibility of an ultimate united-front government. Both the German and the British Communist parties, as we have seen, had had to be very concrete in this respect in their earliest united-front proposals to the Social-Democrats of their respective countries. In this congress discussion, under the brilliant theoretical leadership of Lenin, various forms of people's governments were discussed. The fourth congress resolution handled the question of eventual worker governments, as follows:

"The Communist International must anticipate the following possibilities:

"1. A Liberal Workers' government, such as existed in Australia, and likely to be formed in Great Britain in the near future.

"2. A Social-Democratic Workers' government (Germany).

"3. A Workers' and Peasants' government – such possibilities exist in the Balkans, in Czechoslovakia, etc.

"4. A Workers' government in which Communists participate.

"5. A real proletarian Workers' government, which the Communist Party alone can embody in a pure form."¹³

The resolution goes on as follows to analyze the relationship of Communists toward such governments:

"The first two types are not revolutionary workers' governments, but disguised coalitions between the bourgeoisie and anti-revolutionary groups. Such workers' governments are tolerated,

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at critical moments, by the weakened bourgeoisie, in order to dupe the workers as to the true class character of the state, or with the aid of corrupt leaders, to divert the revolutionary onslaught of the proletariat and to gain time. The Communists cannot take part in such governments. On the contrary, they must ruthlessly expose their true character to the masses....

“The Communists are willing to make common cause also with those workers who have not yet recognized the necessity for proletarian dictatorship, with Social-Democrats, Christian Socialists, non-party, and Syndicalist workers. Thus, the Communists are prepared, under certain circumstances, and with certain guarantees, to support a non-Communist workers’ government. At the same time, the Communists say to the masses quite openly that it is impossible to establish a real workers’ government without a revolutionary struggle against the bourgeoisie.

“The other two types of workers’ government (workers’ and peasants’ government, and workers’ government – with participation of Communists) are not proletarian dictatorships, nor are they historically inevitable transition forms of government towards proletarian dictatorship, but where they are formed may serve as starting points for the struggle for dictatorship. Only the workers’ government, consisting of Communists, can be the true embodiment of the dictatorship of the proletariat.”

The fourth congress basically attacked the Treaty of Versailles, which followed World War I. It declared that the whole official theory behind this robbing settlement had proved unworkable in view of the continuing instability of the capitalist economic and political system generally. “The Peace Treaties which center around the Versailles Peace Treaty,” says the resolution, “represent an attempt to consolidate the rule of these four victorious nations (the United States, Great Britain, France, and Japan) politically and economically, by reducing the rest of the world to the state of colonial territories for exploitation; socially, by securing the domination of the bourgeoisie over its own proletariat and against the revolutionary proletariat of Soviet Russia by a union of the bourgeoisie of all countries.”¹⁴

The fundamental difference in character between the Communist and the Social-Democratic internationals was illustrated by their contradictory attitudes towards the Versailles Peace Treaty. The head-on collision policy of the Comintern

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expressed the true proletarian opposition towards this imperialist, war-breeding settlement; whereas, the “fulfillment” policy of the Social-Democrats was an unmistakable reflection of the imperialist interests of the capitalist classes and was one of the basic reasons for the eventual success of Hitler, who grew on opposition to Versailles.

38. Partial Stabilization: Fifth Congress (1924)

The fifth world congress of the Communist International was held in Moscow from June 17 to July 8, 1924. This was the first Comintern congress without the leadership of Lenin, the world proletarian leader having died six months before, on January 21, at the age of 54. Sadly, the delegates from 52 countries marched to the Red Square behind a Red Army band to pay their respects to the great Lenin, who lay at rest before the Kremlin wall. President Kalinin and congress delegates spoke.

Lenin delivered mighty blows for exploited humanity against the obsolete and decadent capitalist system. In the field of theory he re-established the revolutionary principles of Marx and developed them to meet the changed conditions of the imperialist era, and in the realm of practice he led the vital Russian Revolution, which tore away a whole segment of the most basic foundations of the capitalist system. Under his direct leadership the workers of the world were well started on the road to socialism. All the power of the capitalist exploiters, with their flocks of right Social-Democratic flunkies, can never undo or offset the revolutionary work performed by the great proletarian leader, Lenin.

Kalinin summed up Lenin's work simply and cogently. "The three main ideas of Lenin are," said he: "*the alliance of the workers with the peasants, the national question, and the dictatorship of the proletariat.*"¹ These were the political fundamentals underlying the Russian Revolution; they are the dynamic principles that will eventually write finis to capitalism all over the world.

Stalin, in his book on Lenin, gives a masterful summary of this supreme teacher and fighter, whose simplicity and modesty were no less marked than his intellectual brilliance, resolute character, and revolutionary spirit. "Confidence in the creative power of the masses – this is the peculiar feature in the activities of Lenin which enabled him to understand the spontaneous movement and to direct it into the channels of the proletarian revolution.... Brilliant foresight, the ability to catch and appreciate the inner sense of impending events – this is the feature of Lenin that enabled him to outline the correct strategy and a clear line of conduct at the turning points of the revolutionary movement."²

PARTIAL STABILIZATION

Lenin's death was a tremendous loss to the Russian people and to the oppressed of the world. Fortunately, in Stalin, Lenin's "ablest pupil," there was developing another leader of major stature. And his great abilities were to be sorely tested in the enormous task of building socialism in Russia, in the face of a hostile world and despite the machinations of an insidious Trotskyite opposition, which, upon the illness of Lenin, began its long, reckless, and reactionary bid for power.

THE AMALGAMATION OF THE TWO SOCIAL-DEMOCRATIC INTERNATIONALS

An important event between the fourth and fifth congresses of the Comintern was the consolidation of the Second and the Two-and-a-Half Internationals. The fusion took place in Hamburg in May 1923. There were present some 400 delegates of the two internationals, claiming to represent 6,700,000 members and 43 parties in 30 countries. The reorganized body became known as the Labor and Socialist International, and set up headquarters in Zurich. Frederick Adler was chosen as secretary. Oudegeest, secretary of the Amsterdam (trade union) International, was present and gave his blessing to the fusion.

The amalgamation was carried through essentially on the basis of the revisionist program of the Second International. This amounted in substance to acting as a sort of radical-talking wing of the League of Nations, the "third party of the bourgeoisie." In the discussions the various national parties reflected the interests of the respective imperialist systems. So far as the centrists at the congress were concerned, a few revolutionary phrases in the program and a number of key posts in the organization apparatus were enough to satisfy them. Thus ended the inglorious, less than two years' existence of the Two-and-a-Half International. Never anything but an adjunct of the Second International, it was organized in February 1921 as a catch basin to trap radical workers who were then deserting that body. When it was given up in January 1923, this was also a device to lure the workers, who were clamoring for labor unity, back under the control of the reactionary Second International.

THE OCTOBER DEFEAT IN GERMANY

On January 23, 1923, in order to wring reparations out of a re-

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sistant Germany, France suddenly sent its troops into the industrial region of the Ruhr (Germany had not been militarily occupied completely at the end of the war). The violent French action provoked a near-war crisis, and also greatly inflamed the current fantastic inflation. The coup likewise generated a revolutionary mood among the workers. The German Communist Party and the Comintern agreed that a revolutionary situation was at hand. In May the Communists initiated strikes in the Ruhr, and on August 11 the General Works Council, "under Communist influence," called for a general strike. The workers took over the cities of Bochum and Gelsenkirchen. The Second International refused to cooperate with the Comintern to protect the Ruhr workers. During the next days the rebellious workers forced out the national bourgeois Cuno government, and a coalition government, headed by Stresemann and including the Social-Democrats Hilferding, Sollman, and Radbruch, took its place. The role of the Social-Democrats, was as usual, to save the threatened capitalist system.³

The Communists' plan was that they and the left Social-Democrats should work together in a united front to mobilize the workers for the revolutionary struggles ahead. In Saxony and Thuringia the two groups constituted a majority in the state parliament and the government. Under revolutionary mass pressure, the left Social-Democrats gave a formal assent to the program, but no more than that. To make matters worse, the rightist Brandler-Thalheimer leadership of the German Communist Party, which had succeeded that of the discredited Levi group, and with which Radek of the Comintern worked closely, also had no heart for the struggle and it yielded to the non-resistance line of the left Social-Democrats. Consequently, when the German government threw its troops against Saxony and Thuringia, these strongholds, although readily capable of defense, were given up without a struggle. In Hamburg the workers rose and fought heroically for several days after October 23 in an insurrection but, isolated, they were eventually crushed. Thousands were jailed. Once again, thanks to the right Social-Democrats, the German revolution was defeated and reaction given the victory. This treason stimulated fascism, not only in Germany but all through Central Europe.

Another serious defeat suffered by the workers during the months prior to the fifth Comintern congress occurred in Bulgaria. Since 1920, that country had been ruled by Stambulinski's

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peasant government but in June 1923 it was overthrown by a fascist-like clique of capitalists, foreign imperialists, and other reactionaries. The Communist Party, slow to react to this coup, tried to retrieve the situation by an insurrection in December of the same year, but it was drowned in blood. Fascist terrorism took another stride forward.⁴

THE CONGRESS AND PARTIAL CAPITALIST STABILIZATION

The fifth C.I. congress made a penetrating analysis of the economic and political situation then confronting the workers of the world. On the one hand, it noted that the workers in Soviet Russia had the situation well in hand and were beginning to move ahead to the reconstruction of the war-shattered economy. The delegates, however, showed much concern over and concretely repudiated the developing Trotsky opposition which, upon the death of Lenin, was becoming malignantly active.

The capitalists, on their side, had succeeded in beating back the new revolutionary wave in Germany and had administered a number of serious defeats to the workers in other countries. Obviously, the great revolutionary moment in Europe that had followed World War I had just about spent itself, and the capitalists, aided on all fronts by the Social Democracy, for the time being at least had managed to save their social system. There was also a certain industrial revival taking place. In Germany, the key to the European situation, there was an improvement in industry and the financial situation, due largely to the American Dawes plan, with its subsidy of some 800 million gold marks. At this time the United States was going into the Coolidge industrial boom, and there was also a considerable pickup in Great Britain and France. This general situation, which the fifth congress noted, resulted, at the meeting of the E.C.C.I. in March 1925, in the formulation of the famous estimate of the situation as constituting "a partial, relative and temporary stabilization of capitalism."⁵

The announcement of the Comintern that capitalism had achieved again a degree of stabilization, however limited, provoked a shout of glee from Social-Democrats and bourgeois economists in many countries. "The revolution is dead and the Comintern admits it," they cried. But this was absurd, as events proved. In the C.I. itself the analysis was also considerably misunderstood, being variously interpreted in right and "left" directions.

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The Comintern, of course, in no sense shared the opinion of the Social-Democrats, who saw a complete recovery of the capitalist system after the war and looked for an indefinite upswing. In this analysis, the Communists stressed again and again that such capitalist recovery as had taken place was only partial and could not last. Europe was in a lull between two revolutionary waves. It was still in the period of general crisis and proletarian revolution.

In his Congress report on the economic situation, Varga showed many facets of the general capitalist crisis which was disrupting the system. One of his major contributions was to point out that the Russian Revolution had irrevocably split the world capitalist economy, a fact which in our time has grown into gigantic importance. Varga also pointed out that an economic crisis was in the making in the United States – a forecast devastatingly confirmed five years later – although at the time this country was just going into the famous mid-twenties “prosperity” period, to the admiration of the world capitalists and Social-Democrats.⁶

The fifth congress also noted that in the weakened state of the capitalist system, the employers, no longer able to govern as before, were adopting new tactics in applying their technique of ruling by making minor concessions, or by using terrorism, or both. Thus, on the one hand, in Germany they had adopted as a settled policy working with the Social-Democrats in government; in Great Britain they were tolerating the minority MacDonald Labor government in power; in France, the Radical bloc, including the Socialists, was in control; in Sweden and Denmark there were labor governments, etc. This was the so-called “democratic-pacifist era,” referred to at the time by the Comintern. On the other hand, there was also a growing recourse by the ruling class to the most violent methods of repression, as seen in Italy, Bulgaria, and other countries of mid-Europe. Obviously, this sinister fascist method of oppressing and exploiting the workers was becoming the dominant trend.

THE QUESTION OF THE UNITED FRONT

In accordance with the enormous importance of this political tactic, the fifth congress devoted close attention to the whole matter of the united front, both in theory and in practice. At the heart of the discussion was the ill-fated experience in Saxony and Thuringia, eight months before. The debate was carried on in a spirit

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of keen self-criticism. At this congress the term “Marxism-Leninism” was first used, in recognition of Lenin’s enormous theoretical contributions to Marxism.

The congress was unsparing in its condemnation of the policies carried out by the Radek-Brandler-Thalheimer party leadership in Germany. They were condemned for having totally distorted the united-front tactics. They had considered the united front as an alliance with the “left” Social-Democrats, and they had failed to guard the independent line of the Communist Party. They had especially failed to arm the workers and to develop a revolutionary struggle. The general result was disaster. This debacle led to the downfall and eventual expulsion of the Brandler-Thalheimer-Walcher leadership and the coming to power of the leftist Ruth Fischer-Maslov group in the German Communist Party.

In its consideration of the application of the united-front policy, the congress resolution stressed the point that this was a mobilization of the workers for revolutionary struggle, and not a lowering of Communist aims to the level of Social-Democratic opportunism; that it was not the establishment of a coalition, Saxony brand, with the Social-Democrats; that the united front, in those countries where the Social-Democrats are strong, must be carried on upon the basis of “Unity from below in the rank and file and at the same time negotiations with the leaders – and never on the basis merely of agreements with the latter”; and that Communist parties in united-front movements “must strictly retain their independence and Communist identity.”

Much theoretical discussion took place as to the precise significance of the slogan of “Workers’ and Peasants’ Government.” On this, the resolution stated: “In the period just expired, the opportunist elements in the Comintern have endeavored to distort the watchword of the Workers’ and Peasants’ Government by interpreting it as a government ‘within the framework of bourgeois democracy,’ as a political alliance with Social-Democracy. The Fifth World Congress of the Comintern, categorically rejects such an interpretation. The watchword of the Workers’ and Peasants’ Government for the Comintern is the translation into the language of revolution, into the language of the masses of the watchword of ‘dictatorship of the proletariat.’ ”⁷

In its general fight for labor unity, the Comintern, at its fifth congress, made an especially important proposal regarding the

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unification of the trade union movement. As for the relative membership strength of the two organizations at this time, Lozovsky said: "The Amsterdam International unites between 14,000,000 and 15,000,000 members.... We unite between 12,000,000 and 13,000,000."⁸ As the first unity step, the congress proposed that "Communists and trade union organizations under their control must propose to the Amsterdam International to form joint organs of action against bourgeois capitalist reaction." It proposed further, as the culmination of this unification process, that organic unity of the two internationals "would be re-established through the convocation of an international unity congress in which all trade unions adhering to the Amsterdam International and to the Profintern would take part on a basis of proportional representation." At this congress the two internationals would fuse into a united body.⁹ This proposal was to have very important repercussions in the near future.

The fifth congress also paid much attention to the work of the Young Communist International, and likewise to that of the Women's Secretariat. Another organization, with which it was concerned was the International Peasants' Council (the "green international"). This body, pioneer attempt to organize peasants on a world scale, had been formed in Moscow in the Autumn of 1923, at a congress of 158 delegates from 40 countries. The new organization carried on much activity among peasants, and it served to attract the attention of the Communist parties to the agrarian question, but it never became an important international political force.¹⁰

THE "BOLSHEVIZATION" OF THE COMMUNIST PARTIES

At the fifth congress, and at other congresses and meetings of the C.I. Executive, special attention was directed to the "Bolshevization" of the affiliated parties. This implied the development of these parties on the principles of Lenin's "party of the new type." Among other elementary measures, it involved the re-organization of the party units upon the basis of the shops, the carrying on of work in all forms in undemocratic countries, the cultivation of a spirit of self-criticism, the firm correction of all errors, right and left, the systematic raising of the ideological level of the party membership, the building of a strong party unity, and the cultivation of a clear-headed, flexible, and realistic Marxist-

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Leninist leadership.

The construction of a strong Communist party, able eventually to lead the people in abolishing the capitalist system and in the construction of socialism, is, at best, a tremendous task. The capitalists, who have been building their power and developing their techniques of rule for centuries, are both powerful and cunning. To create a great revolutionary organization of the masses in the face of their opposition is the most complex and difficult problem in all political history.

Many are the movements which, weighed and found wanting by the workers, have fallen by the wayside in this great task. The Second International, and later its windy branch, the Two-and-a-Half International, like the Anarchist movement before them, made pretensions to being the champions of socialism; but the hard experience of the class struggle showed that they were quite incapable of abolishing capitalism and establishing socialism. The fulfillment of this historic task is reserved for the Communist Party, organized around the fundamental principles of Marx and Lenin.

By the same token, many self-styled revolutionary leaders, some also in the Communist Party, have proved unable to meet the hard test of the revolutionary struggle. They may go just so far and then, in the form of various deviations, they express the poisonous ideological and material influences of the capitalist system under which they were reared. They thus become the spokesmen of classes which are enemies of the proletariat and of socialism. At the time of the fifth congress especially the Communist parties, confronting heavy problems of all sorts, were systematically cleansing and refining their leadership. This explains the ousting of such right opportunist and "left" sectarian elements as Levi, Brandler, Thalheimer, and eventually Ruth Fischer in Germany; Frossard, Souvarine, Monatte, Rosmer, and Loriot in France; Lovestone, Gitlow, and Lore in the United States; Buonik in Czechoslovakia, Koszewa and Borsky in Poland, Roy in India, and Chen Tu-hsui in China. Even the highly developed Russian Communist Party, just at this time was going into the greatest refining process of all, starting along the road to eventually ridding itself of alien elements – Trotsky, Bukharin, Zinoviev, Kamenev, and others. The building of a sound Leninist leadership, therefore, was one of the central, if not the most important of all the tasks of Bolshevization stressed by the fifth Comintern congress.

38. Class Collaboration and Class Struggle (1924-1928)

The four years between the fifth and sixth congresses of the Comintern were a period of “partial, relative, temporary” capitalist stabilization. Production climbed in many capitalist countries: Great Britain 13 percent, United States 15 percent, Germany 25 percent, France 30 percent, Belgium 35 percent, Canada 40 percent.¹ But antagonisms among the capitalist powers also grew, and steadily they prepared the way for World War II. Fascism spread like a poison weed from Italy to Poland, to the Balkans, to Germany. The United States, although outside the League of Nations, was by far the most powerful capitalist country.

The Second International, rejoicing at the pick-up of capitalism, faithfully strove to put the system back on its feet again. When the workers in Austria rose in armed revolt in 1927, the Austro-Marxist Social-Democrats, supposed “lefts,” in the tradition of Noske helped the army to suppress it. The Socialists were also the most ardent supporters of the League of Nations – each party supporting the claims of its national bourgeoisie therein – and they were for the “fulfillment” of the Versailles Treaty. They also sedulously maintained the world labor split throughout this period. They joined, too, in the capitalist attempt to strangle the Soviet Union, taking the lead in anti-Soviet propaganda. Their intellectual leader, the old political reprobate Kautsky, favored the anti-Soviet boycott, instigated internal insurrection, and favored foreign capitalist intervention.²

Reflecting the outcome of World War I among the capitalist powers, the British Labor Party was the leading party of the Labor and Socialist International and the Amsterdam International, with Germany playing second fiddle; and so it remained up to the outbreak of World War II. The American Federation of Labor, according to bourgeois-Social-Democratic victory standards was entitled to a leading position in the I.F.T.U., but finding that organization “too radical,” it had withdrawn in 1920. Like the American capitalists, the A.F. of L. leadership preferred the free hand of so-called isolationism.

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THE RATIONALIZATION OF INDUSTRY

During this post-war period the capitalists, with the Americans in the lead, launched into an intensive drive to speed up industrial production. This campaign, the “rationalization” of industry, was based on methods of mass production, and it included new industrial techniques and machinery, intensified class collaboration, and the sowing of fresh capitalist illusions among the workers. If the workers would join with the capitalists in increasing output, they said, living standards would automatically improve, the work-day shorten, and mass unemployment disappear. A general spiral of social well-being would result and economic crises would be no more. The workers would save their surplus wages and eventually become the owners of the industries. This was the American “new capitalism” of the boom period of the 1920’s, in which “Ford conquered Marx.”

The capitalist-minded A.F. of L. bureaucrats, as well as the S.P. leaders, swallowed this bourgeois program completely. The trade unions hired efficiency engineers to speed production; they went into business and set up many labor banks; they adopted a new philosophy, the “Higher Strategy of Labor,” in which strikes were condemned as obsolete and increased production was hailed as the answer to all the workers’ problems; and they intensified their expulsion policy against the Communists and others who dared to object to the new intensified class collaboration. Meanwhile, as production climbed and capitalist profits soared, the workers’ wages and working conditions deteriorated, their unions lost members, and the fighting morale of the American labor movement sank to the lowest levels in its history.³

The European Social-Democrats, who, like their American brethren, always take their basic programmatic lead from the capitalists, shared the latter’s enthusiasm for the “new” American capitalism. Henry Ford was the new political god. His system solved all problems – for the capitalists, for the workers, for the consumers. Thus, from 1905 to 1923 he had increased the output of his cars from 18,664 annually to 2,200,682, and raised his workers’ wages from \$2.00 to \$6.00 per day, and he ran his capital up from \$100,000 in 1905 to \$240,000,000 in 1923, meanwhile cutting the price of cars from \$950 to \$240.⁴ This was sheer industrial magic and no attention was paid by his Social-

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Democratic admirers to the special monopoly-boom conditions under which these results had been produced.

The British, German, French, Belgian and other Social-Democrats outdid each other and the Americans in hastening to join with the employers in speeding up the workers. More theoretical than the American trade union leaders, the European Social-Democrats covered up their treachery with seeming Marxian phraseology. Strobel, the editor of the Berlin *Vorwaerts*, saw "the social question solved within the confines of capitalism,"⁵ and Hilferding, the noted Social-Democratic theoretician, at the Kiel congress of his party in 1927, declared that "we are in the period of capitalism which in the main has overcome the era of free competition and the sway of the blind laws of the market, and we are coming to a capitalist organization of economy... to organized economy."⁶

In this gross opportunism the Social-Democrats were bringing the revisionism of Bernstein up to date. The substance of it all was that capitalism was gradually turning into socialism. As Lenz put it, "the increased control by the state over conditions of labor, the general tendency toward state capitalism and the transformation of the trade unions into subsidiary bodies of the capitalist state, into executive organs of capitalist society, was lauded by the theoreticians of reformism as economic democracy and an approach to socialism."⁷

The Comintern and the respective Communist parties militantly fought the rationalization drive as injurious to the workers' wages, working conditions, and trade unions. Characteristically, the National Minority Movement in Great Britain stated in 1928, "We declare that the chief issue before the working class is to fight rationalization."⁸ But the Social-Democrats persisted in their economic folly and political intoxication over the rationalization dupery until the whole mess was swept into the ashcan of history by the great economic crisis of October 1929.

THE BRITISH GENERAL STRIKE

That the Social-Democrats, with their rationalization ideological poison, did not succeed in crippling altogether the militancy of the workers, was demonstrated by the number of important strikes which took place in various countries during this general period between the Comintern fifth and sixth congresses. Chief of

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these struggles was the great British general strike of 5,000,000 workers in May 1926. In this the powerful left-progressive Minority Movement of the period was an important factor.

Recovering quickly from the crass sell-out defeat of the Triple Alliance in 1921, the British workers began to take the offensive against intolerably low wages and mass unemployment. The leaders in the movement were the coal miners. Their spirit was indicated by the recent election of the left-winger A. J. Cook as head of the British Miners Federation, who was to be followed a few years later by the Communist, Arthur Horner.

A major manifestation of the new militancy of the British workers was seen in the response of the Trade Union Council to the proposal made by the Profintern and the fifth congress of the Comintern for world trade union unity. The I.F.T.U., voting down this proposal, the British Trade Union Council met in London in April 1925 with representatives of the Russian unions and signed with them an agreement of cooperation. The Anglo-Russian Committee was born, and it began to orient towards a general unification of the world labor movement. A. A. Purcell headed the British unions and M. Tomsy, the Russian.⁹

Meanwhile, the MacDonald Labor government had been succeeded by a Conservative government in 1924, and the British miners were moving towards a strike. The miners' situation came to a head in April 1926. The General Council of the British Trades Union Congress, pressed by the rising fighting spirit of the workers, voted to support the miners with a general strike. This strike, one of the very greatest in labor history, went into effect on May 4, 1926.

The British working class rallied magnificently to the strike, and pledges of support poured in from all over Europe and America. The Russian unions ordered a levy of a quarter day's pay on all workers in the Soviet Union to help the British strikers, and sent them \$5,750,000 or about twice as much as the whole Amsterdam organization contributed. The situation in Great Britain, with its whole economy paralyzed, became very tense. The Comintern declared, "The general strike has brought the British proletariat face to face with the problem of power."¹⁰ Obviously, however, the British Social-Democratic leaders had no taste for this vital struggle. They were much too faithful servants of capitalism for that. Pugh (T.U.C. chairman), Citrine (general secretary),

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J. F. Thomas (railroad workers) and E. Bevin (transport workers), headed the struggle only to behead it. Already, the European Social-Democrats had too much experience at crushing revolutions, in Germany, Hungary, and elsewhere, to balk at the job of smashing the great British general strike.

Denouncing the strike as an attack upon British society, the Baldwin government proceeded to desperate methods of strike-breaking, with widespread use of troops and strike-breakers, but without disrupting the workers' solidarity. It took the treason of the workers' false leaders to do this. They made no real effort to organize the strike – to establish mass picketing, to see to it that the working masses were provisioned, etc. They had only one dominating idea, to get rid of the strike as quickly as possible. So it was called off suddenly on May 12, on vague promises of Prime Minister Baldwin that negotiations would be continued over the questions at issue. "For twenty-four hours after the broadcasted announcement of the strike's ending," says Cook, "the confusion in trade union ranks was indescribable."¹¹

This tragic sell-out had disastrous consequences for the workers. It seriously weakened the whole British labor movement. The employers took advantage of their victory by ramming through Parliament the Trade Disputes Act in 1927, seriously restricting trade union rights and functions, and the leaders of the Trades Union Congress, who were responsible for the debacle, took umbrage when the Russian unionists criticized them, and they liquidated the Anglo-Russian Committee.

REVOLUTIONARY STRUGGLES IN CHINA

In the period between the two congresses, even greater struggles took place in China. As indicated in previous chapters, Marx and Lenin had held the perspective of vast revolutionary upheavals in China, India, and other eastern colonial and semi-colonial countries. Lenin was the great theoretician of the unity of interest between the colonial revolutions and those of the workers in the imperialist countries. And the fifth congress considered that the route of march of the world revolution might, for the immediate future, even be shifted from Europe to Asia.

These Marxist perspectives were sustained by the great Chinese struggles of 1924-27, the early stages in the vast Chinese revolution. The Kuomintang (K.M.T.), the nationalist organization

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founded by Sun Yat Sen (1867-1925) just prior to the 1911 revolution, invited the Communists in 1924 to join it as individuals, which they did. The K.M.T. also applied for membership in the Comintern, but it was not accepted, not being a Communist organization. Sun was a warm political friend of Lenin and Soviet Russia. On his death-bed he wired this message to the Soviet government: "I express the hope that the day is approaching when the Soviet Union will greet in a free and strong China its friend and ally, and that the two states will proceed hand-in-hand as allies in the great fight for the emancipation of the whole world."¹²

The re-invigorated Kuomintang scored great successes. Early in 1924 it had controlled, as the Republican government, only Canton and the nearby areas; but with the active help of the small but vigorous Communist Party it soon drew in huge masses of workers and peasants, began to register major victories and to spread its sphere of control. Particularly during 1925-26, great insurrectional strikes swept Shanghai, Canton, Hong Kong, Peking, and many cities, directed against the Japanese and other imperialist oppressors. The Communist Party grew from 984 in 1925 to 57,900 in 1926, the Y.C.L. had 35,000 members, there were 2,800,000 trade union affiliates, and the organized peasants numbered 9,500,000.¹³

In the K.M.T. the forces of Sun represented the bourgeoisie and petty bourgeoisie; the Communist Party represented the workers and peasants. This alliance was in accordance with Lenin's strategical principles. He said, "The Communist International must enter into a temporary alliance with bourgeois democracy in colonial and backward countries, but must not merge with it, and must unconditionally preserve the independence of the proletarian movement."¹⁴ The Chinese Communist leaders disregarded this basic injunction, however. They failed to maintain the party's unity and to keep a solid grip upon the trade union and peasant masses in the K.M.T. They were infected with the characteristic Menshevik illusion that in the bourgeois Chinese revolution the capitalists, not the workers, should lead. The head of the party at this time was Chen Tu-hsiu. Mao Tse-tung was then a rising leader. The representative of the Comintern was the Russian, Michael Borodin.

Then came the great disaster. The hitherto relatively revolutionary bourgeoisie, alarmed at the militant mass movements of

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the workers and peasants and feeling strong enough now to dispense with Communist cooperation, turned against the revolution. Sun Yat Sen had died in March 1925, and the machinery of the K.M.T. had fallen into the hands of his brother-in-law, Chiang Kai-shek, the right-wing commander of the army. Chiang struck against the Communist Party, first, unsuccessfully, in March 1926, and then disastrously, in April 1927. Thousands of Communists were slaughtered, many of them with the most fiendish, medieval tortures. Such a counter-revolutionary coup was essentially what the bourgeoisie had carried out in Turkey under Kemal and what they had also tried to do in Russia under Kerensky, but could not accomplish.

The Communist Party fought back resolutely, but the damage was done. In September 1927 Chen was removed from the party secretaryship as an opportunist and replaced by Chu Chiu-pai.¹⁵ In October, the first Soviets were set up in Kwantung, but unsuccessfully. In December, the workers in the big city of Canton organized a Soviet, but after three days it was overthrown amid a wholesale butchery, Chiang outdoing himself in ferocious tortures. In all this bloody work of reaction the Chinese Revolution suffered a major setback, Chiang and the Kuomintang turning against the workers and peasants and arriving at a counter-revolutionary understanding with the feudal landlords and the foreign imperialists.

THE FIGHT AGAINST THE TROTSKY-ZINOVIEV- BUKHARIN-OPPOSITION

Even more vital than the British general strike, the Austrian uprising, or the revolutionary battles in China – during the period between the fifth and sixth Comintern congresses, was the struggle that was developing in Russia against the dangerous opposition movement led by Leon Trotsky.¹⁶ In this fight not only was the fate of the Revolution in Russia at stake, but also that of the world Communist movement. A victory for the Trotsky forces would have been a decisive success for world reaction.

Trotsky, whose whole history stamped him as an unstable petty-bourgeois radical and who did not join up with the Bolsheviks until 1917, was a confirmed factionalist and opportunist. Even after he joined the party he continued his opposition to Lenin on many points. When Lenin was in his final illness, during the

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autumn of 1923, Trotsky made a bid to capture the leadership of the Communist Party. He gathered together the several small opposition groups then in the party and issued an oppositional program, the "Declaration of the Forty-Six." The substance of this was to accuse the party leadership of gross bureaucracy, to instigate the youth against the party, to pronounce the N.E.P. a complete retreat, to demand freedom to build factional groupings, to condemn the party for the defeat of the German and Hungarian revolutions, to blame the many economic difficulties upon party mismanagement, and to pronounce the Russian Revolution itself in a state of "Thermidorean degeneration."

It devolved upon Stalin to lead the party fight against this disruptive opposition, and he was to prove brilliantly capable of the task. Joseph Stalin (Djugashvili, 1879-1953), was born in Georgia of poor parents. He studied for a while at a theological seminary, but he soon quit this to work as a revolutionist. He was long a close co-worker of Lenin, and became a noted theoretician on the national question. Arrested many times, he was in Siberian exile from 1913 until 1917, when he was released by the Revolution. In April 1922 he was elected general secretary of the Communist Party.

Stalin, a profound Marxist and a relentless fighter, ideologically shattered the Trotsky case, and at the 13th conference of the party in January 1924, the opposition was condemned overwhelmingly as a "petty bourgeois deviation from Marxism." During this fight Stalin produced his great book, *The Foundations of Leninism*, which played a big part in the controversy. The defeated Trotsky, tongue-in-cheek, pledged himself to abide by the party decision, a pledge which, however, he immediately began to violate.

Shortly afterward, the party, faced with the subsidence of the revolutionary wave in Europe, was confronted with the basic problem of defining its perspective. Stalin, in early 1925, met this tremendous theoretical task magnificently. He declared, and the Central Committee backed him up, that Soviet Russia possessed all the requisites for the building of socialism. Lenin had previously indicated the possibility, if need be, of building socialism in one country, Russia. Stalin's formulation was a bold departure from commonly held Marxist opinion, which was that in order to make the construction of socialism possible it would be necessary for the workers simultaneously to gain political power in several countries.

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Stalin's basic statement immediately drew fire from the adventurer Trotsky, who came forth with what he called the theory of "permanent revolution." Trotsky categorically denied the possibility of constructing socialism in Russia alone. He proposed, instead, an intensification of revolutionary struggle at home and abroad, the substance of which would have meant civil war at home against the peasantry (all categories)¹⁷ and war abroad against the bourgeois governments. The fate of the Russian Revolution was at stake in this historic discussion. Stalin succeeded in making the party understand that Trotsky's line would have meant the overthrow of the Soviet government and the end of the Revolution. As a result, at the 14th party conference, April 1925, Trotsky's policy was defeated and Stalin's overwhelmingly endorsed. Again Trotsky agreed to abide by the party decision, but did not.

Meanwhile, Zinoviev and Kamenev, who also had a long record of political instability in the party, developed what was called the "New Opposition." Their program was similar basically to that of Trotsky. They also were soundly beaten in the party discussion at the 14th party congress in December 1925. Like Trotsky and his followers, Zinoviev and Kamenev hypocritically promised to carry out the party line, but did not do so in practice.

During the summer of 1926 the inevitable happened when the Trotsky and Zinoviev groups formed a bloc and re-opened the fight against the Central Committee. Again the program was Trotskyite, and again the opposition's refrain was, "You cannot build socialism in one country." Stalin's proposal to do this was denounced as national chauvinism and a complete abandonment of the world revolution. Trotsky and Zinoviev accused the party leadership of gross betrayal of the Chinese revolution and the British general strike, and they opposed every facet of the economic program of the party. The Trotsky-Zinoviev group organized fractions all over the country, set up an illegal printing press, and were obviously resolved upon establishing a new party.

In October 1927, after repeated broken pledges by the opposition to cease its factional work, a party discussion began, two months before the 15th party congress. This resulted in an overwhelming defeat for the Trotsky-Zinoviev bloc, by a vote of 724,000 to 4,000. Disregarding this, however, the factionalists held a street demonstration against the party on November 7. These disruptive activities resulted in the expulsion from the par-

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ty, on November 14, of Trotsky, Zinoviev, Kamenev, Radek, Piatakov, Smilga, Safarov, and about 100 others, most of whom, however, upon promises of discipline, were later reinstated.

Meanwhile, the right-wing Bukharin-Rykov-Tomsky group, disapproving of the party's strong drive against the kulaks (rich farmers) and its aggressive industrialization, also began an active opposition, along a rightist variation of the general opposition dogma that socialism could not be built in one country alone. Bukharin, the leader of this group, was also a long time opportunist in the party. The group advocated a slacking off of the campaign for the collectivization of agriculture and industrialization, the liquidation of the foreign trade monopoly, and the weakening of other basic measures necessary for the building of socialism. When the sixth congress of the Comintern assembled, this dangerous right-wing opposition was just getting well under way.

Naturally, the serious factional struggles in the Soviet Union, the stronghold of world socialism, had powerful repercussions in all the affiliated parties of the Comintern throughout the world. Wherever there were leftist or right-wing groups in the several parties, these reflected the line of the corresponding political groupings in Russia. Almost invariably, however, the parties as such supported the Bolshevik policy of the Stalin-led Central Committee. The sixth Comintern congress itself categorically condemned the Russian opposition groups, and specifically rejected an appeal by Trotsky to the congress against his expulsion by the Russian Communist Party.

This long series of internal struggles in the Russian Communist Party reflected, so far as the party and the masses were concerned, the extreme complexities and difficulties of building socialism in Russia under the given conditions. The opposition leaders, however, definitely expressed the interests and desperate moods of the expiring bourgeois classes – capitalists, landlords, and petty bourgeoisie. As Stalin pointed out, the more impossible the position of these classes became, the more recklessly they fought.¹⁸ Inevitably, the opposition, with its violently anti-party line, represented the hopes and aspirations of these defeated and dying, but still fighting, enemy classes. As the party was to learn concretely later, there were also involved in this historic fight sinister foreign fascist-imperialist elements, which transformed this factional struggle into one directly for the overthrow of the Soviet regime.

40. C. I. Program: Sixth Congress (1928)

At the sixth congress of the Communist International, held in Moscow during July 15-September 1, 1928, the Comintern adopted its first rounded-out program. The major documents passed at its previous five congresses were but segments of a general program. In fact, the sixth congress program was the first such document constructed since the Inaugural Address, written by Marx and adopted by the First International in 1864. Never in all its history was the Second International, with its component parties constantly at loggerheads over conflicting bourgeois national interests, able to agree upon a general program for the world labor movement.

THE COMINTERN PROGRAM

The Comintern Program, based upon the fundamental writings of Marx, Engels, Lenin, and Stalin, expressed a century of world labor experience. In pointing the road to socialism, it outlined the dynamic laws of capitalist development, and traced the history of capitalism from its early competitive stage to the era of monopoly and finance capital, to imperialism. It analyzed the growth of the multi-national state, the monstrous expansion of militarism, and the role of the state as the weapon of the exploiting capitalists against the working class.

“The development of capitalism, and particularly in the imperialist epoch of its development, reproduces the fundamental contradictions on an increasingly magnified scale. Competition among small capitalists ceases, only to make way for competition among big capitalists; when competition among big capitalists subsides, it flares up between gigantic combinations of capitalist magnates and their governments; local and national crises become transformed into crises affecting a number of countries and, subsequently, into world crises; local wars give way to wars between coalitions of states and to world wars; the class struggles change from isolated actions of single groups of workers into nation-wide conflicts and subsequently, into an international struggle of the world proletariat against the world bourgeoisie. Finally, two main revolutionary forces are organizing against the organized might of finance capital – on the one hand, *the workers in the capitalist states*, on the other hand, the victims of the oppres-

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sion of foreign capital, *the masses of people in the colonies*, marching under the leadership of the international revolutionary proletarian movement.”¹

The revolutionary process tends to be temporarily slowed down by the ability of the imperialists to corrupt materially and ideologically the upper, skilled strata of the working class. The counter-revolutionary Social-Democracy, which bases itself upon this labor aristocracy, is thus a hindering force. “The principal function of Social-Democracy at the present time is to disrupt the fighting unity of the proletariat in its struggle against imperialism. In splitting and disrupting the united front of the proletarian struggle against capital, Social-Democracy serves as the mainstay of imperialism in the working class. International Social-Democracy of all shades, the Second International and its trade union branch, the Amsterdam Federation of Trade Unions, have thus become the last reserve of bourgeois society and its most reliable pillar of support.”²

“Imperialism has greatly developed the productive forces of world capitalism. It has completed the preparation of all the material prerequisites for the socialist organization of society. By its wars it has demonstrated that the productive forces of the world economy, which have outgrown the restrictive boundaries of imperialist states, demand the organization of economy on a world, or international scale. Imperialism tries to remove this contradiction by hacking a road with fire and sword towards a single world state-capitalist trust, which is to organize the whole world economy. This sanguinary utopia is being extolled by the Social-Democratic ideologists as a peaceful method of newly ‘organized’ capitalism. In reality, this utopia encounters insurmountable objective obstacles of such magnitude that capitalism must inevitably fall beneath the weight of its own contradictions. The law of uneven development of capitalism, which becomes intensified in the era of imperialism, renders firm and durable international combinations of imperialist powers impossible. On the other hand, imperialist wars, which are developing into world wars, and by which the law of the centralization of capitalism strives to reach its world limit – a single world trust – are accompanied by so much destruction and place such burdens upon the shoulders of the working class and the millions of colonial proletarians and peasants, that capitalism must inevitably perish beneath the

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blows of the proletarian revolution long before this goal is reached.”³

The accumulated stresses and struggles add up to a general crisis of the world capitalist system, and this constantly grows in intensity. This general crisis began to mature with World War I and the Russian Revolution. It has since been expressed by a tremendous series of great economic breakdowns, enormous strikes, and revolutionary upheavals all over the capitalist and colonial world. The reactionary bourgeoisie, in an attempt to stem this rising revolutionary tide, makes use of new and desperate weapons, chief among which is fascism. “The bourgeoisie resorts either to the method of fascism or to the method of coalition with Social-Democracy according to the changes in the political situation; while Social-Democracy itself often plays a fascist role in periods when the situation is critical for capitalism.”⁴

Under the weight of its growing contradictions, capitalism faces inevitable revolution and downfall. “The system of world imperialism, and with it the partial stabilization of capitalism, is being corroded from various causes: First, the antagonisms between the imperialist states; second, the rising struggle of vast masses in the colonial countries; third, the action of the revolutionary proletariat in the imperialist home countries; and lastly the hegemony exercised over the whole world revolutionary movement by the proletarian dictatorship in the U.S.S.R. The international revolution is developing. Against this revolution, imperialism is gathering its forces. Expeditions against the colonies, a new world war, or a campaign against the U.S.S.R., are matters which now figure prominently in the politics of imperialism. This must lead to the release of all the forces of international revolution and to the inevitable doom of capitalism.”⁵

“The ultimate aim of the Communist International is to replace world capitalist economy by a world system of communism.... Communist society will abolish the class divisions of society.... After abolishing private ownership in the means of production and converting them into social property, the world system of communism will replace the elemental forces of the world market, of competition and the blind processes of social production, by consciously organized and planned production for the purpose of satisfying rapidly growing social needs.... Culture will become the acquirement of all and the class ideologies of the past

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will give place to scientific materialist philosophy.”⁶ The Program explains in great detail the forging of the foundations of this new type of social order in the Soviet Union.

Between capitalism and communism lies a period of transition; this is the period of the dictatorship of the proletariat, of growing socialism, under which the remnants of the old society are being cleared away and the foundations of communism are being laid. The conquest of political power by the workers can be achieved “only by the overthrow of the capitalist state,” and by “substituting in its place new organs of proletarian power, to serve primarily as instruments for the suppression of the exploiters. The most suitable form of the proletarian state is the Soviet state – a new type of state, which differs in principle from the bourgeois state, not only in its class content, but also in its internal structure.... The Soviet state is the dictatorship of the proletariat, the rule of a single class – the proletariat. Unlike bourgeois democracy, proletarian democracy openly admits its class character and aims avowedly at the suppression of the exploiters in the interests of the majority of the population.... Bourgeois democracy, with its formal equality of all citizens before the law, is in reality based on a glaring material and economic inequality of classes.... The Soviet state, while depriving the exploiters and the enemies of the people of political rights, completely abolishes for the first time all inequality of citizenship, which, under systems of exploitation, is based on distinctions of sex, religion, and nationality.”⁷

In the class struggle, the Program based its strategy and tactics, among other considerations, upon the readiness of the masses. In periods of a rising revolutionary tide, the party puts forward transitional slogans for Soviets, workers’ control of industry, disarming of the bourgeoisie, arming of the workers, etc., and “When the revolutionary tide is not rising the Communist parties must advance partial slogans and demands that correspond to the everyday needs of the toilers, and combine them with the fundamental tasks of the Communist International.”

Together with the Program, the Congress also adopted the “Constitution and Rules of the Communist International.” The C.I. acted as the guide and mentor of the world revolutionary movement. Eschewing all dogmatic establishment of policy and authoritarian methods of organizational controls, it achieved its high degree of unity and fighting action upon the basis of a broad

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international Marxist-Leninist program, the practice of a profound self-criticism, revolutionary discipline, the realistic development of national party policies, and a boundless devotion to the proletarian revolution.

Due to its ideological and organizational unity, the Comintern and its affiliated parties were able to conduct organized world campaigns and struggles that were quite impossible for the Second International, torn as it was with all sorts of national divergencies. The C.I. resolutions came to life in broad international struggles – against unemployment, for Sacco-Vanzetti and Tom Mooney, annual celebrations of women and youth international days, May First, against fascism, against war, in support of the U.S.S.R., the Chinese Revolution, etc. The Comintern was thus definitely a strong world political force.

THE COMINTERN'S POLITICAL PERSPECTIVE

The sixth congress, in shaping its immediate perspectives, divided the post-war years into three general periods. The political resolution says: “The *first* period was the period of extremely acute crisis of the capitalist system, and of direct revolutionary action on the part of the proletariat. This period reached its apex of development in 1921 and culminated on the one hand in the victory of the U.S.S.R. over the forces of foreign intervention and internal counter-revolution and in the consolidation of the Communist International. On the other hand, it ended with a series of severe defeats for the Western European proletariat and the beginning of the general capitalist offensive. The final link in the chain of events was the defeat of the German proletariat in 1923.

“This defeat marked the starting point of the *second* period, a period of gradual and partial stabilization of the capitalist system, of the ‘restoration’ process of capitalist economy, of the development and expansion of the capitalist offensive and of the continuation of the defensive battles fought by the proletarian army weakened by severe defeats. On the other hand, this period was a period of rapid restoration in the U.S.S.R., of extremely important successes in the work of building up socialism, and also of the growth of the political influence of the Communist parties over the broad masses of the proletariat.

“Finally, came the *third* period which, in the main, is the period in which capitalist economy is exceeding the pre-war level and

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in which the economy of the U.S.S.R. is also almost simultaneously exceeding the pre-war level (the beginning of the so-called 'reconstruction period,' the further growth of the socialist form of economy on the basis of a new technique). For the capitalist system, this is the period of rapid development of technique and accelerated growth of cartels and trusts, and in which tendencies of development towards state capitalism are observed. At the same time, it is a period of intense development of the contradictions of world capitalism, operating in forms determined by the whole of the preceding process of the crisis of capitalism (contraction of markets, the U.S.S.R., colonial movements, growth of the inherent contradictions of imperialism).

"This third period, in which the contradiction between the growth of the productive forces and the contraction of markets becomes particularly accentuated, is inevitably giving rise to a fresh series of imperialist wars; among the imperialist states themselves; wars of the imperialist states against the U.S.S.R.; wars of national liberation against imperialism and imperialist intervention, and to gigantic class battles. The intensification of all *international* antagonisms... will inevitably lead – through the further development of the contradictions of capitalist stabilization – to capitalist stabilization becoming still more precarious and to the severe intensification of the general crisis of capitalism."⁸

This sharply revolutionary congress put out the slogan, "Class Against Class." In its aftermath, marked by intense fights against the right elements, both within and outside the Communist parties, there were considerable tendencies to develop "leftist" deviations in many countries, by drifting into dual unionism, by failing to stress the united front, etc. Social-Democrats were more or less generally characterized as "social fascists" without differentiating various trends among them and their following.

Bukharin made the main report to the congress, but he was sharply corrected by the Russian delegation on questions of the extent of capitalist stabilization, the fight against Social-Democracy, etc. The brilliant Marxist analysis of the sixth congress was basically the work of Stalin. It foresaw a developing perspective of economic crises, great class struggles, revolutions, and imperialist wars, and it evoked loud guffaws from Social-Democrats all over the world. This was a period of so-called capitalist boom, especially in the United States, where the most fan-

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tastic "prosperity" illusions were rampant. Hence the Comintern analysis, particularly its conception of the "third period," was ridiculed as a glaring example of "leftist" wishful thinking. But the next few years gave this analysis a devastating confirmation, with the development of the great economic crisis of 1929, the victory of Hitler fascism in 1933, and the outbreak of World War II in 1939.

IMPERIALIST WAR AND COLONIAL REVOLUTION

In line with its Program, the sixth congress adopted a strong resolution on the danger of the approaching imperialist war. The imperialist powers, only ten years after they had concluded the monstrous first world war, were obviously preparing for another mass slaughter. They were getting ready for a new violent redistribution of the world. This time their major objective was to destroy the Russian Revolution, and with it the Chinese Revolution, and to dismember these countries. To facilitate war preparations, the imperialists were cultivating fascist reaction in various parts of Europe and were fomenting a rabid anti-Soviet hatred everywhere. Military expenditures were rapidly mounting. The Social-Democrats were doing their reactionary bourgeois part by carrying on a ceaseless red-baiting attack against the Soviet Union. The League of Nations, instead of being a peace organization, was only a maneuvering ground for the warlike imperialists. In 1928 all the major governments signed the futile American Kellogg peace pact, supposedly to outlaw war, but this only served to disarm the peoples as to the growing seriousness of the world situation.

The sixth congress pointed out that, "War is inseparable from capitalism. From this it follows that the 'abolition' of war is possible only through the abolition of capitalism."⁹ The resolution differentiated between just wars of oppressed peoples against their oppressors and unjust wars among or by imperialist states. As for the present threatening war, the congress urged the workers, "To transform the war between imperialist states into proletarian civil war against the bourgeoisie for the purpose of establishing the dictatorship of the proletariat and socialism." This followed the general pattern with which Lenin had led the fight against World War I.

The congress also adopted a comprehensive resolution on the colonial situation.¹⁰ This hailed the heroic Chinese Revolution,

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the development of the anti-imperialist movement in India, the 1926 insurrection in Indonesia, the awakening of the peoples in Egypt and other Near East countries, the rebellion of the Cabil and Riff tribes in North Africa against French and Spanish imperialism, and the sharpening of the struggle against Yankee imperialism in Latin America.

In this general respect, the congress re-endorsed Lenin's famous colonial theses of the second congress. The sixth congress resolution declared, "In this struggle, the cooperation of the revolutionary proletariat of the whole world and of the toiling masses of the colonies represents the surest guarantee of victory over imperialism," both in the colonies and in the imperialist countries. The revolution in the colonies was characterized as a bourgeois democratic revolution, of which, "along with the national-emancipation struggle, the agrarian revolution is the axis." The resolution analyzed in detail the role of all the classes in the colonial liberation struggle. It showed the shifting position of the national bourgeoisie under the contradictory pressures of foreign imperialism and of the revolutionary proletariat and peasantry. Solid organization of the working class and a close alliance with the peasantry were indispensable for the success of the revolution. The key task in the colonial and semi-colonial countries was the building of strong Communist parties, capable of understanding the complex struggle and of giving it general political leadership: "Without the hegemony of the proletariat, an organic part of which is the leading role of the Communist Party, the bourgeois democratic revolution could not be carried through to an end, not to speak of the socialist revolution."

In a brilliant report, Ercoli (Togliatti) signaled the danger of reformism in the colonial world. At its current congress in Brussels, the Labor and Socialist International had, at long last, begun to pay some attention to the colonial revolt. Its commission on the question was headed by the Socialist governor of the British colony of Jamaica. The line of the congress was a justification of imperialism and colonialism, with criticisms of their more barbarous features. "The policy to be pursued was to damp down revolutionary struggles and to divert the attention of the masses to innocuous activities.... As to the Labor Party [Great Britain]," says Ercoli, "in all the material presented by this party to the congress of the Second International, it is maintained that the right of self-

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determination is not applicable to any of the British colonies. And in the same way all the other socialist parties of countries possessing colonies express themselves.”¹¹ Hopefully, at some vague and distant date, imperialism, like capitalism itself, would be abolished.

SOME ORGANIZATIONAL MATTERS

The sixth congress was made up of 515 delegates, of whom 143 had advisory votes, as against 475 (with 133 advisory) delegates at the fifth congress. Represented were 66 parties and organizations, embracing 4,024,159 members. Of these 1,798,859 belonged to 52 Communist parties, and 2,225,300 to the Young Communist International. Of the 470 delegates who signed questionnaires, 451 were men and 19 women, and 50 percent of them were manual workers. The great majority, 359, were between the ages of 21 and 40. The votes were apportioned as follows: U.S.S.R. 50; Y.C.L., France, Germany, Czechoslovakia, Italy 25 each; Great Britain, China, United States 20 each; Poland 15, with the others ranging down to one vote.¹²

On January 1, 1928, the Communist membership of all sections, including the C.P.S.U., was 1,707,769 – a small decline from 1925. The following table,¹³ with “reservations,” indicates the course of membership of the main parties:

	1924	1925	1926	1927
C.P. Germany	121,394	122,755	134,248	124,729
C.P. Czech	138,996	93,220	92,818	150,000
C.P. France	68,187	83,326	75,000	52,376
C.P. U.S.A.	17,000	14,000	11,990	12,000
C.P. Sweden	7,011	8,650	10,859	15,479
C.P. Great Britain	4,000	5,000	6,000	9,000
C.P.S.U.	446,089	741,117	1,078,185	1,210,954

The congress report on the Communist press of the world was very incomplete. At this time great stress was being placed on the establishment of shop papers. Of these there were large numbers, France alone reporting several hundred of such journals.

Between the fifth and sixth congresses, six Enlarged Executive meetings were held; there were also 71 meetings of the Political Secretariat and 35 meetings of the Organizing Branch. The E.C.C.I. meetings often included up to a couple of hundred dele-

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gates from all over the world.

The sixth congress definitely marked a new and firm consolidation of Communist leadership all over the world, represented by such figures as Stalin (U.S.S.R.), Thaelmann (Germany), Thorez (France), Togliatti (Italy), Mao Tse-tung (China), Gottwald (Czechoslovakia), Pollitt (Great Britain), Buck (Canada), Roca (Cuba), and Codovilla (Argentina). Zinoviev, who had been expelled from the Russian Communist Party, was replaced in December 1926 by Bukharin as President of the Comintern, although the latter was soon to develop an opposition movement in the C.P.S.U. The incoming Executive Committee was made up of 57 members and 42 alternates.

41. The Great Economic Crisis (1929-1933)

The economic smashup, beginning in October 1929, was the most serious crisis in the history of world capitalism. It was world-wide in scope, affecting both industrial and colonial countries, with its main storm center in the United States. The previous several years had been a period of capitalist stabilization and growth, reaching the stage of a hectic boom in the United States, where the most extravagant notions prevailed as to the supposed invulnerability of the “new” American capitalism to periodic economic crises. The crisis was a tremendous anti-climax to this bourgeois ideological and financial spree.

The great crisis was of a cyclical character, deepened by the workings of the general crisis of the world capitalist system. The bottom cause of it was the robbery of the workers through capitalist exploitation. This expressed itself in a situation of rapidly increasing production on the one hand, and of shrinking markets on the other. “The first signs of the approaching crisis appeared in the accumulation of stocks of primary products. World stocks of primary products, on the basis of 1923-1925 as 100, increased by the end of 1926 to 134, by 1928 to 161, and by 1929 to 192.”¹ Finally, the dam broke under the accumulating pressure.

Despite the many alarming signals, not to mention the repeated crisis warnings of the Communists, practically every bourgeois and Social-Democratic economist in the world was caught totally unawares by the outbreak of the crisis. The economic collapse came as a shattering shock to the super-optimistic bourgeois economists and to their faithful pro-capitalist henchmen, the Social-Democrats. Overnight, the latter’s opportunistic theories of “organized capitalism” “ultra-imperialism,” and “the higher strategy of labor” were knocked into a cocked hat. Ideological chaos reigned in bourgeois ranks. On the other hand, the tremendous economic crisis completely bore out the Communist analyses made over the years, and particularly the much-maligned resolution of the sixth world congress of the Comintern in 1928, which foresaw just such a crisis.

The international effects of the crisis were catastrophic. By 1933, “industrial output in the U.S.A. had sunk to 65 percent, in Great Britain to 86 percent, in Germany to 66 percent, and in France to 77 percent of the 1929 output.”² The crisis also hit heav-

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ily in the raw materials-producing colonial countries of the Far East, and it was devastating in Latin America. In the latter area, "Between 1929 and 1932 the dollar value of the exports of the twenty republics fell by 64.3 percent."³ World trade collapsed, falling from a grand total of \$33 billion in 1928 to \$12 billion in 1932. Many countries went off the gold standard and the international financial situation was demoralized.

Mass unemployment mounted to heights altogether unknown before in capitalist history. There were 17,000,000 jobless in the United States (not counting the huge masses of part-time workers), 8,000,000 in Germany, 4,000,000 in England, with similar conditions prevailing in all the capitalist industrial countries. An estimated 40,000,000 to 50,000,000 throughout the world were unemployed. The crisis also impoverished tens of millions of peasants in all countries.

THE CRISIS-STRICKEN UNITED STATES

Hardest hit of all was the United States, land of the "wonder achievements" of Fordism and mass production. In this country especially the fatal capitalist process of expanding production and restricting markets had been at work. Thus, although during the boom period of 1923-1929 industrial production in general went up by 20 percent, the total number of wage workers actually declined by 7.6 percent. This crisis-breeding situation was accentuated by the fact that, largely paralyzed by the current class collaborationist (speed-up) policies of the later 1920's, the trade unions had failed to keep the workers' wages even abreast of the rapidly rising cost of living. Thus, the Labor Research Association shows that, all factors considered (wages, prices, employment, production), the relative position of American workers deteriorated from point 85 in 1923 to point 69 in 1929.⁴

Signs of overproduction, long prevalent in agriculture, began to be manifest in industry by 1928. The full crisis hit the United States with a wild panic on the New York Stock Exchange on October 24, 1929. Within one week the frantic stock-selling reached the unprecedented total of 12,800,000 shares sold in one day. Between October 1929 and January 1932, the index of stock values collapsed from point 216 to point 34. About \$160 billion in paper wealth vanished into thin air within three years. Some 5,761 banks, with \$5 billion in deposits, failed during the crisis years.

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Industrial production tumbled – coal declined 41.7 percent, iron 79.4 percent, steel 76 percent, and automobiles 80 percent. The total value of annual industrial production collapsed from about \$70 billion to \$31 billion. Agriculture, already in crisis since 1920-21, took a further tumble. Wheat, selling at \$1.00 a bushel before the war, dropped to 25 cents, corn to 10 cents, and cotton to 5 cents. The total value of agricultural products in 1932 was only half that of 1929. All over the country frantic bankrupted capitalists leaped to death from skyscraper windows.

The employers ruthlessly applied their traditional policy of thrusting the burdens of the crisis onto the backs of the workers. The great masses of the jobless were thrown onto the streets, with no unemployment insurance whatever. And it was only after long struggles, led by the Communist Party, that even the skimpiest government relief systems were introduced. Mass starvation stalked the country. Hundreds of thousands vegetated in the “Hooverilles” (shack towns) that were to be found on the dumps in every town and city, and vast numbers of workers beat their way aimlessly over the railroads, vainly seeking jobs. The wages of those fortunate enough to have jobs were deeply slashed, the wage-cuts averaging 45 percent. According to the Bureau of Labor Statistics, total wages in the United States dropped from \$17.2 billion in 1929 to \$6.8 billion in 1932.⁵ Millions of workers and farmers lost their homes and farms by mortgage foreclosure.

As usual, the worst of all sufferers in this economic holocaust were the Negro workers, who were the first to be discharged, who got the least relief, and who were in every other way discriminated against. The great economic depression, like World War I, was followed by a wave of lynching, race riots, and other anti-Negro terrorism.

Such was the tragic picture in capitalist America, the boasted Utopia of the bourgeois world. This was the country supposedly crisis-proof, whose president, the ill-famed Hoover, had boasted in 1929 that the United States was on the verge of finally abolishing all poverty. Conditions were no better in Germany, England, Japan, France, and the other capitalist industrial and colonial countries of the world.

The international capitalist system was giving still another terrible demonstration of the historic fact that it was unable to employ, feed, and clothe the great masses of the peoples of the

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world. The terrific economic breakdown was one more basic manifestation of the deepening of the general crisis of the world capitalist system as a whole.

THE FIRST SOVIET FIVE-YEAR PLAN

While world capitalism was thus helplessly wallowing and floundering about, bringing misery and pauperization to countless millions, the new socialist system in the Soviet Union went roaring ahead, building its industry and agriculture at an unprecedented rate. During 1929-33, the U.S.S.R. realized its first five-year plan. When this comprehensive plan was announced, the bourgeois and Social-Democratic economists everywhere roared with laughter. They said the Bolsheviks were entertaining the world with another gigantic propaganda stunt! But the Russian workers responded to these insults by finishing their great plan in four years.

The first five-year plan called for a new capital investment of 64.6 billion rubles, of which 19.5 billion were for industry, 10 billion for transport, and 23.2 billion for agriculture. The consequent drive for industrialization and the improvement of agriculture amazed the incredulous capitalist world, the U.S.S.R. far outstripping all records of progress ever made anywhere under capitalism. This achievement was all the more dramatic inasmuch as while it was being made every capitalist country in the world was economically prostrate. It was all an historic lesson to the world that the new socialist system was crisis-proof and that it had permanently abolished mass unemployment.

Great plants sprang up all over the Soviet Union. Varga says, "In the years 1930-1932, when *the industrial production of the capitalist world went back 38 percent, that of the Soviet Union rose by not less than 81 percent.*"⁶ In a vast surge, too, the bulk of the farms were fused into collectives. "In 1934, there were already 281,000 tractors and 32,000 harvester combines at work in the Soviet countryside."⁷

In this tremendous expansion of industry the Soviet youth, the Komsomols, played a very great part. They were pioneers and shock-workers in the building of great plants all over the country. Their tireless exploits at the time are still hailed in the Soviet Union.

Stalin thus summed up the results of the historic first five-year plan: "(a) The U.S.S.R. had been converted from an agrarian

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country into an industrial country, for the proportion of industrial output to the total production of the country had risen to 70 percent. (b) The socialist economic system had eliminated the capitalist elements in the sphere of industry and had become the sole economic system in industry. (c) The socialist economic system had eliminated the kulaks as a class in the sphere of agriculture, and had become the predominant force in agriculture. (d) The collective farm system had put an end to poverty and want in the countryside, and tens of millions of poor peasants had risen to a level of material security. (e) The socialist system in industry had abolished unemployment, and while retaining the eight-hour day in a number of branches, had introduced the seven-hour day in the vast majority of enterprises and the six-hour day in unhealthy occupations. (f) The victory of socialism in all branches of the national economy had abolished the exploitation of man by man.”⁸

These great achievements, carried out in the midst of the profound economic crisis of capitalism, constituted a tremendous demonstration of the inherent superiority of socialism over capitalism. Varga, who analyzes in detail the specific superiorities of the socialist economy, thus sums them up: “Socialist planned economy dispenses with the huge ‘unnecessary costs’ of anarchistic capitalism, leads to all the able-bodied being brought into the process of production, and makes possible a rapid planned accumulation together with a simultaneous extension of consumption. Socialist planned economy thus leads to a rapid improvement of the material and cultural situation of the working people in the Soviet Union, while capitalist anarchy leads to the growing material, cultural and moral decline of the masses of working people.”⁹

During the great economic crisis of 1929-33 the contrast was so glaring between broken-down capitalism and flourishing socialism, that in the ensuing years there were a whole number of capitalist attempts to “copy the Soviet Union,” especially with regard to planned economy. Consequently, capitalist five-year, three-year, and other term plans sprang up in many countries. Carr says, “It would be tedious to record the numerous imitations all over the world, some substantial, some superficial, of the Soviet five-year plans.” In the same respect, he says, “The impact of the Soviet Union on the western world has been a decisive historical event.”¹⁰ But such bourgeois plans were hollow and ineffectual, the indispensable necessity for planned economy being the

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abolition of the capitalist system.

The greatest handicap that socialism in the Soviet Union has had to face, from its inception down to the present day, is the fact that world capitalism, with its inherent tendency towards war, has compelled the U.S.S.R., in self-defense, to squander the energies of its people in building up a strong military organization, which is foreign to the nature of socialism. This trend operated also to burden the fulfillment of the first five-year plan. But a hardly less harmful obstacle came from the representatives of the remnants of the former ruling classes, landlords and capitalists. The political expression of these elements, as well as of world capitalism, was the Trotsky-Zinoviev-Bukharin opposition. Proof of this was to be found in the fact that these oppositional figures were the darlings and heroes of every Soviet-hater, both within and outside Russia.

As we have seen in chapter 39, the Bukharin-Rykov-Tomsky group, just as the party was fighting against the Trotsky-Zinoviev opposition, came forward with its right opportunist program of slowing down the tempo of industrialization and collectivization. In view of the imperative need for the U.S.S.R. to industrialize itself with all possible speed – a need which was made clear in World War II – the program of the rights would have been no less fatal than that of the “lefts.” Under Stalin’s brilliant leadership, the party realized this basic fact and in November 1929 the Central Committee ruled that the propagation of the views of the right opportunists was incompatible with membership in the party.¹¹ This brought forth tongue-in-cheek pledges of loyalty from the opposition leaders. As we shall see, this meant only a temporary lull in the activities of the rights, who surreptitiously were maintaining a bloc with the remnants of the Trotsky-Zinoviev opposition.

CLASS STRUGGLE, FASCISM, WAR PREPARATIONS

The economic crisis years 1929-33 were a time of acute class struggle, growing fascism, and threatening war preparations. Underlying all this sharpening up of social tensions and capitalist contradictions was the deepening general crisis of the world capitalist system; but they were all intensified as a result of the tremendous cyclical economic crisis which was then crippling the capitalist system everywhere.

The Second International and the I.F.T.U., however, made little response to the great crisis. Lorwin remarks that “The leaders

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of the I.F.T.U. were slow in grasping the gravity of the economic depression which followed the financial panic of October 1929.”¹² This was because the crisis came as such a shock to their whole complacent bourgeois ideology. And when they did wake up and bestir themselves, they did little for the unemployed, rejecting the Communists’ united-front proposals and striving to keep the workers from Communist leadership. In the United States, for example, as late as November 1931, the A.F. of L. leaders, striving to disrupt the big Communist-led unemployment movement, declared that the establishment of government unemployment insurance was against “the American way of life” and would destroy the trade union movement.

The Comintern responded quickly to the new situation created by the economic crisis, and it intensified its work everywhere. The twelfth meeting of the Executive Committee of the Comintern in September 1932, declared that because of the increased strength of the U.S.S.R., the sharpening of the economic crisis, the growing revolutionary upsurge, the further deepening of the antagonisms between the imperialists, and the intensified preparations for a counter-revolutionary war against the U.S.S.R., “The end of relative capitalist stabilization has come.”¹³ It had lasted only a few years. The meeting also declared that revolutionary crises were developing in Germany and Poland.

The first task of the Comintern and the Communist parties, and the R.I.L.U. and left unions in all countries, was the protection of the living conditions of the working class everywhere under heavy attack from mass unemployment and wage cuts, whereas the Second International and the I.F.T.U. were interested primarily in saving capitalism. The R.I.L.U., which in 1929 numbered some 17,000,000 members in 50 countries,¹⁴ gave special attention to the mobilization of the unemployed for struggle. As early as January 1930 the R.I.L.U. issued a call for a day of international protest and struggle against unemployment. This took place on March 6, 1930, and was a huge success in many countries.

The Communist parties and left trade unions in Great Britain, the United States, Poland, Austria, Czechoslovakia, and various other countries led important struggles of the unemployed. In the United States the March 6 demonstration turned out no less than 1,250,000 unemployed. In many countries unemployed councils were established and innumerable hunger marches and other un-

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employed struggles were carried through. The American veterans' bonus march of the period attracted world attention.

Throughout the crisis years there were many strikes in various countries – Germany, Poland, Great Britain, the United States – and if there were not more the major reason was that the Social-Democrats, who controlled by far the larger part of the labor movement in the capitalist countries, had a rigid anti-strike policy. Their general line (like that of the employers) was that the workers should accept the wage cuts “necessary to put the capitalist system on its feet again.” Thus, in the United States, when the over one million railroad workers “voluntarily” accepted a wage-cut, Matthew Woll, vice-president of the A.F. of L., hailed it as a major act of labor statesmanship. Had the reformists been able to control the unemployed, they, too, would not have struggled. A lesser reason for the relatively few strikes during this period was the fact that, following the sixth congress of the Comintern, there were strong “leftist” tendencies in the parties in many countries to overstress independent unionism and to understress the united front, thereby weakening their mass contacts.

The struggles of the period of the economic crisis also involved the armed forces of various capitalist countries. Among the more important of them were: the Spanish Revolution of 1931, the Inverness strike in the British navy on September 14, 1931, the spontaneous uprising in the Chilean navy in September 1931, the mutinies of February 5, 1933, in the Dutch navy, and in the Japanese Army of Occupation in China.¹⁵

During the general period of the great economic crisis the Comintern and its affiliated movements devoted major attention to combatting the threatening dangers of fascism and war. The parties, trade unions, women, and youth movements were all very active in this struggle. In July 1929 in Frankfurt the Y.C.I. held its first anti-imperialist world conference,¹⁶ and in Berlin, in March of the same year, a general world anti-fascist congress was held. Strong anti-fascist, anti-war drives were also made in Latin America. The fascist danger was constantly on the increase, and the multiplying war preparations finally climaxed in the invasion of North China by Japanese forces. On September 18, 1931, they occupied Mukden, and within a few months they had taken possession of most of Manchuria. The League of Nations never stirred a finger to stop them. This was the actual beginning of World War II.

42. Hitler's Fascism and Roosevelt's New Deal

The bourgeoisie, as Lenin pointed out in 1907, uses two general methods of rulership, terrorism and minor concessions to the workers. It is the time-honored alternative of the club or the carrot, with often both combined. Germany and the United States provided striking examples, in Hitler's fascism and Roosevelt's New Deal, of the use of these two varying systems. They were different attempts of the bourgeoisie of the respective countries to cut their way out of the terrific economic and political problems developed by the great economic crisis of 1929-33, on the background of the deepening general crisis of the world capitalist system.

Two elementary factors determined these different lines of capitalist policy in Germany and the United States. The first was the degree of capital resources at the disposal of the respective capitalist classes. In the United States the capitalists still possessed the means to make certain material concessions to the workers, which they did; whereas, relatively lacking such resources, the German capitalists had recourse to fascist violence. The second determining factor in capitalist policy had to do with the degree of revolutionary spirit shown by the workers. In Germany the capitalists faced an increasingly revolutionary working class, millions of whom were looking more and more to the Communist Party for leadership; hence the capitalist resort to ultra-violence in order to try to smash the growing revolutionary movement. Whereas, on the other hand, in the United States, although the workers were militant, in a fighting mood and responsive to Communist Party slogans on unemployment, there was no such urgent revolutionary threat as in Germany.

In the United States, nevertheless, there was also a broad streak of fascist sentiment among the big capitalists. Events showed that considerable numbers of them nourished the illusion, then common among capitalists all over the world, that the historical moment had arrived when by fascist violence the trade unions could be finally smashed, parliamentary democracy obliterated, and the menace of socialism, particularly the U.S.S.R., wiped forever from the face of the earth. These ultra-reactionary

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elements believed that a capitalist Utopia was at hand. Despite the New Deal reforms, therefore, there was also a fascist menace in the United States.

THE ADVANCE OF GERMAN FASCISM¹

The victory of Hitler fascism in 1933 can be understood only in the sense of the reformist Social-Democracy clearing the way for it by breaking up the working class opposition. The Social-Democrats' slogans were that the main enemy was on the left and that at all costs Germany was to be "saved from Bolshevism." As the most faithful guardians of the capitalist system, they followed a course of close collaboration with the bourgeoisie which, as the latter turned more and more to the right, led them and with them Germany, to the catastrophe of fascism.

The seeds of Nazism were sown in the Social-Democratic betrayal in the war and the German revolution in 1918. These events made it clear that, cost what it might, the Social-Democrats would fight to the end against the overthrow of capitalism by the workers. The reactionaries tried a big counter-revolutionary stroke with the Kapp putsch of 1920, but this was premature. Their road to victory was to be far tougher and more complicated. After the revolution it took them a full fifteen years, even with the indispensable help of Social-Democracy, to arrive at fascism.

Adolf Hitler (1889-1945) joined the Nazi party in 1919, but by 1928, despite much heavy financial backing from the capitalists, all the votes his party could muster in the election of that year were 800,000 as against 9,100,000 for the Social-Democrats and 3,200,000 for the Communists. But the ravages of the great economic crisis quickly changed this picture. With 8,000,000 workers unemployed, with wages being slashed on all sides, with the Weimar government (in which the Social-Democrats were a powerful factor) doing nothing to remedy the situation, and with the extravagant demagoguery of Hitler and his group, by April 1932, the Nazi vote had increased to 13,418,547, against a combined Socialist-Communist vote of some 13,000,000.

Almost up to the end, the Socialists and Communists had had a large potential majority over the forces of Hitler, and in view of the rising spirit of the working class, a united front between the two parties could have rallied the great bulk of the working class in a victorious fighting force. That the workers were in an increas-

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ingly revolutionary mood was shown by the fact that between 1930 and 1932 the Communist vote increased by 1,384,000, while that of the Socialists fell off by 1,338,000.

Upon four crucial occasions the Communists proposed the united front: in April 1932, against an impending general wage cut; on July 29, 1932, when the Von Papen dictatorship expelled the Social-Democrats from the government of Prussia, which they controlled; on January 30, 1933, when Hitler became Chancellor; and on March 1, 1933, after the Reichstag fire. These were key moments in the advance of Hitler and a united blow from the working class at any of these times would have been disastrous to the Nazi cause. But the Social-Democrats, closely allied with the big bourgeoisie, who were moving towards fascism, in each case rejected the Communists' united-front proposals. Menacing fascism loomed to them as much less a danger than a fight for socialism.

Although the Nazis were butchering workers on the streets, as Hitler was marching to power, the Social-Democrats, through the Weimar government, prohibited the Red Front Fighters, disarmed the workers, and aided the building up of the Black Reichswehr, Stahlhelm, and Storm Troops into powerful armed forces of reaction. They also supported the Brüning (Christian Center Party) dictatorship, which had dispensed with democratic controls and was ruling the country by decree. Their final treason was to reelect von Hindenburg as president of the Reich, upon the stupid pretext that he was a "lesser evil" than Hitler and that he was a barrier against Nazi fascism. The decisive election in April 1932, resulted in Hindenburg being elected over Hitler by a vote of 18,657,497 to 11,339,446, with the Communist candidate Thaelmann polling 4,983,341 votes.²

HITLER SEIZES POWER

Hindenburg, of course, was no "lesser evil" than Hitler, but just a convenient means of getting Hitler into power. The Communists explained this fully and warned the workers that, "A vote for Hindenburg is a vote for Hitler," that a choice between Hindenburg and Hitler was merely a choice between two roads to fascism. But the Social-Democrats nevertheless went through to the end with their tragic alliance with the bourgeoisie.

On this question Manuilsky remarked: "The Social-Democrats say: 'Since the Communists prefer bourgeois democracy to fas-

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cism, they, too, are becoming adherents of the “lesser evil” policy.’ Yes, we Communists prefer the ‘lesser evil’ to the greater evil. It is not this that separates us from Social-Democracy. We expose the Social-Democratic ‘lesser evil’ policy because that policy meant *the betrayal of bourgeois democracy and directly helping fascism.*”³ The only constructive choice was to have set up a united-front ticket between the Communists, Social-Democrats, and other democratic forces.

On January 30, 1933, Hindenburg yielded to the Nazis completely, and made Hitler Chancellor. The Nazis at once redoubled their terror campaign. The Communist Party was completely outlawed, and hundreds of Communists killed or arrested. The most prominent prisoner was Ernst Thaelmann, general secretary of the Communist Party. Thaelmann was born in Hamburg in 1886 and worked as a docker. He entered the Social-Democratic Party in 1902, became a charter member of the Independent Social-Democratic Party, and joined the Communist Party in 1920. A militant fighter, Thaelmann represented all that was best in the German working class; he became head of the Communist Party in 1923, upon the ousting of the Fischer-Maslov “leftist” and corrupted leadership.⁴ He was murdered in a Nazi jail in 1944.⁵

After Hitler came to power, the Social-Democrats fully expected to be accepted by him as partners, as had been the case in all other German capitalist governments since 1918. Servilely, they declared that Hitler had acquired power by legal, democratic means. Abroad, the Social-Democratic leaders – Vandervelde in Belgium and Blum in France – took a similar line. The Berlin *Vorwaerts*, official party organ, on February 2, even boasted that, “except for the Social-Democrats,” a man from the people such as Hitler never could have become chancellor.⁶ Weis, the leader of the party, resigned from the Executive of the Second International in protest against foreign condemnation of Nazi brutalities. The Social-Democratic Party agreed to work with Hitler, and the Leipart-Grossman trade union leadership, hailing the Hitler victory as a triumphant “continuation of the 1918 revolution,” called upon the workers to participate in Hitler’s May Day celebration.⁷

But this Social-Democratic bootlicking was all in vain. The days of bourgeois reformism were over in Germany; the arrogant capitalists were now embarked upon a path of terrorism towards the workers, and they needed a new crew of politicians and “labor

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leaders” to carry out their policies. On May 2, therefore, Hitler violently seized control of the trade unions, and later merged them into the boss-dominated Labor Front. On June 22 the Social-Democratic Party was declared dissolved, and the big cooperative movement soon followed suit. Many Social-Democrats were arrested, others fled the country, while numbers of Socialist bureaucrats made personal peace with Hitler and became cogs in his repressive machine.

Hitler acted with far greater swiftness than Mussolini had been able to do. Although Mussolini seized governmental power in October 1922, it was not until November 1926 that he felt strong enough, upon the occasion of an attempt to assassinate him, formally to dissolve the Communist Party and all other organizations hostile to the regime, to suppress their journals, to arrest their leaders en masse, etc. Hitler was able to move faster because of the utter political cowardice and surrender of the German right Social-Democrats. The Italian working class, not completely dominated by reformists, was able, under Communist Party stimulus, to make a much better fight.

The great German Social-Democracy, which the workers had been building for 70 years, gave up without a struggle. It had followed its alliance with the bourgeoisie and its policy of the “lesser evil” to their inevitable goal – fascism. Trotsky later contended that the Communist Party should have made an attempt alone at revolution, but this could have led only to a futile putsch and a useless butchery of the unarmed workers at the hands of the heavily armed state forces, then supported by the Socialists. Moreover, at the time of the advent of Hitler, the Social-Democrats controlled a big majority of the working class. Workers’ councils elections in the industries clearly showed that the bulk of the workers were still following right-wing leadership. “In 1930,” says Dutt, “at enterprises employing 5,900,000 workers, the reformist trade unions had 135,689 factory committee members, or 89.9 percent of all factory committee members.”⁸ The tragic fact was that the Communist call for a general strike against Hitler when he came to power got an ineffective response from the workers.

Heckert points out that when the Bolsheviks gained power in October 1917 they had on their side an overwhelming majority of the workers and peasants; whereas, in Germany, the Communist

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Party did not have even a majority of the proletariat supporting it. The Comintern, basing itself upon Lenin's dictum that, "It is impossible to win with the vanguard alone," declared that in Germany "conditions for a victorious rising had not yet managed to mature at that moment." Its resolution said: "Having heard the report of Comrade Heckert on the situation in Germany, the Presidium of the E.C.C.I. declares that the political line and the organizational policy pursued by the C.C. of the Communist Party, led by Comrade Thaelmann, before and at the time of the Hitler coup, was quite correct."⁹

GERMAN FASCISM

Bourgeois and Social-Democratic "theoreticians" asserted at the time that the Nazi movement was basically anti-capitalist, a revolt of the middle classes. The Communists, from the outset, challenged this nonsense, pointing out that while Nazism attracted to itself masses of declassed middle-class elements and backward workers, the real force behind it was monopoly capital – the Krupps, Thyssens, Von Siemens, Boschs, Voglers, and other great industrial leaders and bankers. The twelfth meeting of the E.C.C.I., held in December 1933, thus stated the Comintern analysis of Nazism: "Fascism is the open, terrorist dictatorship of the most reactionary, most chauvinist, most imperialist elements of finance-capital."¹⁰ This definition has since come to be pretty generally accepted, in substance at least.

The German fascist-imperialist bourgeoisie, in their proposed "New Order," planned definitely to put world capitalism upon a more stable basis, with themselves in full command. To this end, they worked out their super-aggressive domestic and foreign policies, with all necessary demagogic and ideological justification. German fascism learned much from its predecessor, Italian fascism, but it was no mere continuation of that movement. It was, instead, the major representative of the widely prevalent attempt of big capital generally at that time to cut its way out of the worldwide crisis of capitalism on the basis of ruthless terrorism at home and no less ruthless imperialism abroad.

In their domestic policies the Nazi capitalists had one all-decisive objective, to secure unchallenged economic and political supremacy for monopoly finance-capital. To this end, by demagoguery and terrorism, they systematically wiped out competing

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lesser capitalist elements, and they drove to demobilize their most feared enemy, the working class. They broke up every working class organization, deprived the workers of all liberties, slashed their wages, and speeded them up in the industries. They tried to stamp out their conceptions of the class struggle and of class organization. In view of the Marxist traditions of the German working class, the Nazis cunningly undertook to give their movement a pseudo revolutionary coloration. They spouted much “anti-capitalist” demagogy, named their organization the National Socialist German Workers Party, carried the Red Flag (Nazi brand), and celebrated May Day. They also gave the workers “trade unions” – made up, however, of capitalists, peasants, and tradesmen, as well as of workers. As never before, the monopolists were in complete control of the domestic economic and political regime in Germany, with corresponding beneficial results to their profits.

In their foreign policies the German fascist capitalists were no less aggressive. They gave maximum interpretation to the traditional German imperialist slogans of *Drang Nach Osten* and *Lebensraum*, and their anti-Versailles attacks served as a cover for the most ruthless aggression against neighboring peoples. They would spread their “New Order” throughout the world. “Nazi foreign policy has a single major objective – world domination,” said Ebenstein.¹¹ Nor did the Nazi would-be world conquerors feel that it would be too difficult for them to achieve this objective. They had nothing but contempt for the western capitalist powers as obsolete, and to overthrow the Soviet Union, they were sure, would be the job of but a few weeks’ armed assault.

To facilitate this program of trickery and violence in building their fascist “New Order”, the Nazi ideologists worked out a whole system of demagoguery. Their theory of the Germans as the master Aryan race was a screen for aggressive imperialist expansion. According to them, biologically the Germans were predestined to stand at the head of all humanity; their “leader” and “elite” principles facilitated the forced acceptance of the capitalists and the Nazi politicians as the natural leaders, also on biological grounds, of the German people; their murderous anti-Semitism, anti-Marxism, and anti-liberalism provided convenient scapegoats upon which to blame all the evils that the German people were suffering because of the capitalist system; their Keynesian economics and glorification of militarism served to justify munitions

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production, thug controls, and the building of a vast war machine, and their contempt for science and reason helped to clear the intellectual field for the predominance of the barbarous Goebbels propaganda and agitation.

THE ROOSEVELT NEW DEAL

While the imperialist bourgeoisie were attacking the working class in Germany with fire and sword, the bourgeoisie in the United States, although very reluctantly, were following a policy of making concessions. This they did, however, under the surging mass pressure of a working class impoverished, aroused, and enraged over the savage way it had been mistreated by the Hoover government during the great economic crisis.

In the sweeping election of the Democrat Franklin D. Roosevelt (1882-1945) as President in November 1932, the masses expressed their resentment against the Republican reactionaries. And in the ensuing years they followed this up with many other powerful mass actions. They extended the big strike movement beginning in the early thirties, of which the 1934 general strike in San Francisco was a dramatic feature; they rapidly built the trade unions, which eventually resulted in the organization of the workers in the great open-shop industries; they pushed through the ensuing development of powerful mass movements among the unemployed, Negroes, farmers, veterans, the youth, and the aged; and, finally, they caused the unprecedented election of Roosevelt four times to the Presidency.

The capitalists tried to stifle this developing movement of the toiling masses, but they could not do so. For this purpose they lacked a powerful Social-Democracy, able to dominate and repress the working class, such as the bourgeoisie had in England, Germany, Austria, and elsewhere. The A.F. of L. bureaucrats, who despite their anti-Marxist slogans (which are simply an adaptation to American working class political backwardness) are a variety of Social-Democrats, tried hard to check the movement, but they were too weak, and they failed. Indeed, the mass movement split their own ranks in 1935 (birth of the C.I.O.) and rolled on past them.

Roosevelt first took office on March 4, 1933, just 35 days after Hitler became Chancellor of Germany. Facing a disrupted economic system, a confused and frightened capitalist class, and a

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rebellious working class, Roosevelt launched at once into a vigorous campaign of reform. His many bills, constituting the "New Deal," were rushed through congress so fast that, as was truly said, "the legislators did not have time to read them." During the first hundred days of his administration more reform measures were passed than during the previous seventy years since the Civil War.

The New Deal program, as finally formulated, aimed: " (a) to reconstruct the shattered financial-banking system; (b) to rescue tottering business with big loans and subsidies; (c) to stimulate private capital investment; (d) to raise depressed prices by setting inflationary tendencies into operation; (e) to overcome the agricultural overproduction through acreage reduction and crop destruction; (f) to protect farm- and home-owners against mortgage foreclosure; (g) to create employment and stimulate mass buying power through establishing public works; (h) to provide a minimum of relief for the starving unemployed."¹²

The working class and other exploited elements profited considerably from this reform legislation, such as the eventual unemployment and old age insurance, protection against farm and home mortgage foreclosures, guarantee of bank deposits, etc., but mostly they gained from the recognition of the right to organize, first expressed in Section 7 (a) of the National Industrial Recovery Act and later in the Wagner Act. Roosevelt did little specifically for the doubly oppressed and persecuted Negro people, save to establish in 1941, as a war measure, the Fair Employment Practices Committee. Lynching and the Jim Crow system raged virtually unchecked throughout his entire regime, with his Democratic Party mainly responsible.

In his economics Roosevelt followed the general Keynesian principles then taking hold. It was in this period that John Maynard Keynes, noted British economist (with whom Roosevelt was in direct touch), came forward with his writings to the effect that mass unemployment under capitalism could be averted or even cured by stimulated government investment in industry (pump-priming).¹³ Both Roosevelt and Hitler applied the Keynesian theories, but differently, Roosevelt using public works as his chief pump-priming method, and Hitler employing the sinister job-making expedient, now so well known in all the capitalist countries, of munitions production and war preparations.

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Roosevelt also carried his New Deal program into the realm of foreign policy. In Latin America, with his imperialist "Good Neighbor" policy, he softened some of the crass barbarities of American imperialist practices in this area. He also looked forward to peaceful co-existence with the U.S.S.R., diplomatically "recognizing" that country after 16 years of American refusal to do so. He also favored world peace; when he grasped the significance of the fascist world offensive he took his place with the other western capitalist democracies and began to prepare systematically for war.

Roosevelt was a liberal capitalist, a millionaire, and his policies worked out in the long run to the great benefit of monopoly capital. His New Deal reforms, which were all kept strictly within the framework of the capitalist system, no doubt prevented the militant working class from pushing through more drastic reforms and organizing a broad labor party. This was their basic purpose. Roosevelt's Keynesian ideology also sowed a dangerous reformism among the workers (at the cost of Marxism) which they have not yet overcome. But it could not cure mass unemployment – at the outbreak of World War II there being still some seven to ten million unemployed. Roosevelt's Good Neighbor policy in Latin America also turned out to be highly profitable in an imperialist sense. Under his regime, too, the monopolists made more progress in consolidation, and they reaped bigger profits than ever before. In World War II, Roosevelt also never lost sight of the basic interests of American imperialism.

At the outset, Roosevelt had the support of the great bulk of monopoly capital. Undoubtedly, most of the big business men thought that his regime would lead towards fascism. There were many signs of this, Roosevelt's famous National Industrial Recovery Act being patterned on Mussolini's corporate state and prepared by the United States Chamber of Commerce. But by 1935 most of finance capital had broken with the liberal Roosevelt. The monopolists especially resented his favoring the organization of trade unions, an attitude which contributed considerably to the unionization of the great open shop basic industries. Henceforth, the Wall Streeters became rabid enemies of Roosevelt, and they launched a bitter, fascist-minded opposition against him. His reelection in 1936, 1940, and 1944 was the work primarily of the great democratic masses of the American people.

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In the beginning, especially while Roosevelt's policies had strong fascist overtones and Wall Street backing, the Communist Party took a definite stand against him and devoted its chief efforts to building up the current trade union organization and strike movements. In 1936, however, as well as thereafter, the party gave Roosevelt strong, although critical, support.

43. Growing Struggle Against Fascism and War (1933-1935)

Hitler's big victory in Germany greatly spurred fascism everywhere; the violent fascist general offensive acquiring vastly more momentum. Japan stepped up its invasion of North China; Italy invaded Ethiopia in 1935; and during the same year Hitler grabbed the Saar, scrapped the Versailles treaty, demanded union with Austria, and the cession to Germany of part of Czechoslovakia, and he feverishly set about rebuilding the German army. Germany and Japan quit the League of Nations early in 1934, and Italy soon followed. In the various countries the fascists initiated drives for power, which by the time of the outbreak of World War II, were destined to make them masters, together with Germany, Japan, and Italy, of Austria, Poland, Czechoslovakia, Yugoslavia, Hungary, Albania, Ethiopia, Rumania, Bulgaria, Spain, Turkey, Greece, Latvia, Lithuania, Finland, and Esthonia. The fascist powers were driving for world mastery.

For this great growth of fascism, the Social-Democracy bore a heavy responsibility. Without the aid of Social-Democracy the employers would have been basically crushed and socialism established all over middle and eastern Europe. The Social-Democrats definitely defeated the socialist revolution in Germany, Italy, Austria, and Hungary in 1918-19. Then with their program of cooperation with the bourgeoisie against the Communists, they were responsible, during the next years, while fascism was rapidly growing, for the general strengthening of reaction. They were to blame, with these treacherous policies, for the deadly split in the ranks of the working class. Their general policy of the "lesser evil" carried them inevitably to the support of pro-fascist candidates – in Austria they even backed one group of fascists against another. All over middle and eastern Europe the Social-Democrats openly collaborated with fascist parties and governments, notably in Germany, Italy, and Austria, when they freely accepted the terrorist fascist governments as legal and legitimate and proposed to work with them.

In the face of the arrogant and widespread fascist aggression, the capitalist powers of the West were already demonstrating the "appeasement" policies that were finally to be so disastrous to

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themselves and the world. This was because these “democratic” governments, being themselves permeated with a fascist spirit, hoped to direct against the Soviet Union the military storm which Hitler and his allies were so obviously preparing. In this reactionary spirit, the League of Nations refused to take any real steps to halt Japan’s invasion of China and Italy’s armed attack upon Ethiopia, and it backed up, step-by-step, before Hitler’s systematic aggressions in Europe. The failure of the League as a peace organization was complete.

In this critical situation, with the world confronted with the grave danger of fascist enslavement, the Second International was impotent. It was demoralized by its catastrophic defeat in Germany, not only from the loss of the big German Social-Democracy, which had been wiped out, but also from the fact that its central policy of collaboration with the bourgeoisie had suffered shipwreck. Its affiliated parties were quarreling as to what had caused the German debacle, while its leaders toyed with the opportunistic de Man Belgian plan of transforming capitalism painlessly into socialism. The general result was that, as in the revolutionary period following the first world war, responsibility for the international leadership of the workers devolved squarely upon the Communists, and they proved competent for the historic task.

In this great crisis for humanity the Soviet Union stepped forward into the international arena. In May 1934 Maxim Litvinov, Soviet delegate to the Disarmament Conference, proposed that that body be turned into a Permanent Peace Conference to enforce world peace.¹ He declared that “Peace is indivisible.” Joining the League of Nations in September 1934 of the same year, after the fascist powers had quit it, with Litvinov as its League spokesman, the U.S.S.R. began its great struggle to prevent a world war by organizing the western capitalist democracies into its proposed international anti-fascist peace front. To this end it also began to make non-aggression pacts with the respective powers – starting with France and Czechoslovakia in 1935. Had the U.S.S.R. been hearkened to, World War II could have been prevented and fascism easily strangled, for it was still relatively weak. President Roosevelt extended to the Soviet Union full diplomatic recognition November 17, 1933, but he gave no active support to its plan for an international anti-fascist peace front.

In full realization of the grave danger to peace and democracy

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inherent in the fascist offensive, the Comintern also repeatedly made united-front proposals to the Second International (L.S.I.) for joint action against it. The R.I.L.U. made similar offers to the Amsterdam International. Thus, in October 1934 the C.I. proposed to the L.S.I. a general united front in defense of the embattled workers in Spain,² and in September 1935 it called for a united front to fight against Mussolini's invasion of Ethiopia.³ The Y.C.I. followed a similar united-front policy. But under one pretext or another, the L.S.I. and the I.F.T.U. rejected all the united-front proposals of the C.I., Y.C.I. and R.I.L.U., even as, at the time, the capitalist governments, whose main policies the Social-Democrats always reflected, were rejecting the proposals of the Soviet Union in the League of Nations for a great anti-fascist world peace front. Meanwhile, in many countries, the workers in the spirit of the Communist fighting policies, were developing resolute struggles against the aggressive fascists, who were seeking to conquer their countries and to wipe out the labor movement.

THE REVOLUTIONARY CHINESE STRUGGLE

Simultaneously with the Hitler success in Germany, the Japanese militarists speeded up their intervention in China. In March 1933 they captured Jehol in North China, and in March 1934 they set up their puppet emperor Henry Pu Yi in Manchuria. They then claimed hegemony over all of China, and they repudiated the Washington naval treaty of 1922. In June 1935 China surrendered Peking and Tientsin to Japan.

Characteristically, the Japanese Socialist Party had long since given its blessing to this brazen imperialist raid upon China. In 1931 Akamatsu, its renegade secretary, said: "Intervention in Manchuria is not imperialist, because even in a socialist Japan it would be necessary to wage war for raw materials required by our industry."⁴ In November 1938, a Socialist Party manifesto, celebrating the success of the Japanese imperialist invaders in China, declared: "We humbly offer three *banzai* for the Emperor and thank our officers and men for their hardship and toil."⁵ On the other hand, the Japanese Communists, although facing an iron repression, heroically fought against the war.

Chiang Kai-shek, after his treacherous break with the Chinese Communist Party in 1927 (see chapter 39), kept up a murderous

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war of extermination against the Communists. Nor did the invasion of China by the Japanese imperialists deter him from this madness. Like the Social-Democrats, Chiang could see an enemy only on the left. He did less than nothing to mobilize the Chinese people to repel the Japanese fascist pirates who were rapidly overrunning their country.

The Communist Party, however, by precept and example, was striving to organize the Chinese masses to fight the Japanese invaders. The party stimulated the fierce defense of Shanghai, in which the splendid fighting qualities of the Chinese soldiers amazed the world. In 1932 the Communist-led Soviets began war on Japan, and in 1933 they unavailingly offered Chiang a united front to fight the common enemy.⁶ During this general period Chiang directed no less than six major offensives against the Chinese Red Army, all of which were beaten back. Chu Teh was the main Red Army commander, and in 1935 his close co-worker, Mao Tse-tung, became general secretary of the Communist Party.

Late in 1934 the Red Army, in order to improve its adverse strategical position, decided to move from Kiangsi province to the northwest areas of China. Thus began the famous "Long March" of 20,000 li, or some 3,000 miles,⁷ which lasted from October 1934, to October 1935. For length, hardships, and general military and political significance, this march far outdid any of the famous marches of history. At the conclusion of the march, the Red Army numbered about 30,000 and they had some 700,000 of Kuomintang troops, modern-equipped, to fight.⁸ On the march the troops averaged 24 miles a day, and once they covered 85 miles in 24 hours. They crossed 18 mountain ranges and 24 rivers,⁹ and throughout they were harried by vastly superior numbers of Kuomintang troops. The Red Army soldiers averaged 19 years of age, and many of them were young women. In the Red Army the Young Communist League was a vital force. The victorious arrival of the Red Army in Shensi province was soon to mark the beginning of dramatic political and military events of the greatest eventual significance to China and the entire world, as we shall see.

THE FASCIST DEFEAT IN FRANCE

On February 6, 1934, fascist reaction in France, deeming the time ripe to establish a French Hitler, delivered a violent demonstration at the Chamber of Deputies against the "Left bloc" gov-

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ernment, headed by Daladier. The core of the attempted overthrow was the *Croix de Feu* (Fiery Cross), headed by Colonel de la Roque, who claimed to have 300,000 armed followers. The government made no effort to suppress the attempted fascist insurrection, but numerous Mobile Guards, contrary to their officers' orders, spontaneously fired upon the fascist demonstrators.¹⁰ Next day the Daladier government, in obvious connivance with the reactionaries, resigned from office, despite its substantial majority in Parliament. It was succeeded by the ultra-conservative Doumergue government.

The French working class, following the general political lead of the Communist Party, delivered a smashing counter-offensive against this fascist attack. Despite the government's banning of all demonstrations (a prohibition which caused the Social-Democrats tamely to cancel their demonstration on the 8th), the C.P. organized a militant monster anti-fascist outpouring on February 9, during which ten workers were killed. Over 40,000 troops and police vainly tried to break up this demonstration.

Simultaneously, the Communist Party and the left-led Unity Confederation of Labor (C.G.T.U.) urged a general strike. Under this great mass pressure, the Confederation of Labor (C.G.T.) called the strike, which the C.G.T.U. joined. The result was a general 24-hour tie-up by 4,500,000 workers. The reluctant reformist leaders did manage however, partially to sabotage the strike by such maneuvers as restricting it on the railroads to a "one-minute" strike.

These great events profoundly stirred the French working class, and the C.P., Y.C.L., and other left organizations spared no efforts to arouse the masses. The anti-fascist unity movement came to a tremendous expression on July 14 (Bastille Day) when half a million workers demonstrated in Paris (also with big turn-outs elsewhere) with the leaders of the Communist, Socialist, and Radical-Socialist parties at the head of the giant march.

These tremendous demonstrations, carried out in the name of the Communist united-front policy and with Communist revolutionary spirit, gave French fascism a major setback. By the same token, the Paris demonstration greatly inspired the working class, not only in France, but all over Europe. The Communist Party, 26 times since 1923, had proposed the united front to the French Socialist Party, and each time had been rebuffed. It was not until

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July 15, 1934, the day after the great demonstration, that the Blum-Zyromski S.P. leadership, under tremendous mass pressure, finally agreed to such united action.¹¹ In fact the united front from below had already been largely achieved, and the S.P. leaders had little choice in the matter.

The Communist Party, in October 1934, initiating the famous slogan of the "People's Front," proposed a general pact of all French working-class and sympathizing organizations, to repel and defeat the fascists. (At this very time, the Second International leaders were refusing the proposal of the Comintern for a united front in support of the embattled workers in Spain.) Reluctantly, the French S.P. agreed to joint action. In formulating the program of the People's Front, the Socialists, with pseudo-radicalism, wanted to base it upon an extensive socialization of industry; but the Communists made it clear that the People's Front program, if it was to attract the broad masses, would have to consist of only the most elementary demands of the people in their efforts to halt fascism and war. It was this realistic Leninist approach, developed especially by the outstanding French Communist leader, Maurice Thorez, that gave the People's Front in France its tremendous mass appeal. Characteristically, all through this historic struggle, the Trotskyites, with their pretenses of super-revolution, condemned and fought the People's Front as an abandonment of Marxist principles.

The Communist Party not only initiated the People's Front cooperation of the broad toiling masses, it also moved for the unification of the organized forces of the working class itself. The C.P. raised the question of establishing one party of the working class, but no headway could be made on this.¹² Proposals to unify the trade unions, however, which the C.P. and the C.G.T.U. had been insisting upon for years, had better success. As usual, the Jouhaux Social-Democratic leaders were resistant, but the C.G.T.U. began to fuse its own unions at the bottom, with those of the C.G.T., so that when the C.G.T. unity congress was finally assembled at Toulouse in March 1936, the unification process was already well under way. At this congress, the trade union split, which had begun in December 1921, was healed¹³.

By these dramatic developments, it was made clear that unlike the German Social-Democrats, the French labor movement, following general Communist policy, was not going to submit

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tamely to fascist enslavement. Because of correct leadership, the Communist Party tripled its membership within one year, the Young Communist League increased by five-fold, and the party daily, *Humanite*, gained 50,000 new readers. The Amsterdam committee against fascism and war, headed by Romain Rolland of France, which played a big part in the struggle, also greatly increased its membership and prestige.

ARMED STRUGGLE IN AUSTRIA

The most important of the many struggles of the European workers against the Fascist offensive in the years immediately following Hitler's victory in Germany took place in Austria in February 1934. In that country, lying between fascist Italy on one side and fascist Germany on the other, and largely dominated in its politics by the Vatican, the fascist movement, divided into Italian and Nazi groups, was strong and arrogant. Hence, on March 7, 1933, Premier Dollfuss, a fascist and head of the Christian Democratic Party, suddenly dissolved the parliament and declared that he would rule henceforth by decree. The Social-Democratic Party, powerfully organized, with 600,000 members in a population of 6,000,000, refused to fight. It had previously declared that it would take up armed struggle only "if a fascist constitution were proclaimed without consulting Parliament, if the Vienna municipal administration were superseded, if the party were suppressed, or if the trade unions were suppressed."¹⁴ This was the famous "defensive violence" theory of the Austro-Marxists, Bauer, Deutsches, Renner, and company. But they never applied it, even when Dollfuss violated all its conditions. These men, former centrist leaders of the Two-and-a-half International, while following the basic Social-Democratic line of the Second International of collaboration with the bourgeoisie, were noted for the heavy veneer of revolutionary phrases with which they applied this treacherous policy.

Following the 1933 Social-Democratic surrender, things steadily deteriorated economically and politically in Austria. Encouraged by the Social-Democratic weakness and timidity, Dollfuss proceeded from one political attack to another. And all the while Bauer and his colleagues made the most desperate efforts to cooperate with the developing fascist regime. Finally, they got to such a point of concessions where they were willing to go along on the basis of the

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party barely being allowed to exist. As Bauer later admitted, "We left nothing undone. For a Socialist Party we had offered extraordinary concessions. We said that... we would give our consent to a law that would authorize the government to govern for two years without parliament, by the use of emergency decrees."¹⁵

This was Germany all over again, with the Social-Democracy, despite its Marxist phrasemaking, following its policies of the "lesser evil" and of alliance with the bourgeoisie right into fascism. Dollfuss, like Hitler, no longer had any direct use for the Social-Democracy, even upon the degrading terms offered him. By February 12, 1934, he had suspended the Parliament and outlawed the Social-Democratic Party, the Workers' Defense Corps, and the trade unions.¹⁶

Even under this violent assault, Bauer and Co. called upon the workers not to resist. They still hoped for an agreement with the fascist dictator, Dollfuss. The workers, however, who had taken seriously their leaders' radical phrases, launched into a general strike and an armed insurrection, neither of which was called officially by the party. The Social-Democratic union leaders refused to declare a general strike, and they even kept the powerful railroad union at work hauling government troops back and forth during the struggle. Manuilsky said: "It was not the working class that rose in armed rebellion, but only a small section of the workers, the Schutzbund (Workers Defense Corps)."¹⁷

The fight centered in Vienna, particularly in the big Karl Marx apartment buildings. After an heroic four days' battle, in which the government used their heaviest artillery, the workers were beaten, with ferocious reprisals. During the uprising, the Communist Party had a militant and courageous policy, but it was not strong enough to win the decisive leadership of the working class.

Thus fascism came to Austria. Even Bauer himself admitted later that fascism could have been defeated had the party fought at the outset, in March 1933. "At that time," said he, "we might have won. But we shrank dismayed from the battle."¹⁸ Austria was another disastrous defeat for the workers, due to the treachery of Social-Democracy.

ARMED UPRISING IN SPAIN

In the early thirties, with desperate economic conditions prevailing and an arrogant fascist movement growing, Spain was in a

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developing revolutionary situation. In 1933 there were twice as many strikes as in 1931. The Communist Party, attuned to the situation, proposed a united front to the Socialist Party for the 1933 elections. This was cynically rejected, with the result that the S.P. lost one-third of its seats in Parliament (from 115 to 70) while the C.P. gained 300,000 votes.

In October 1934 the situation burst into a general strike, centering among the Asturian coal miners. It quickly became an armed uprising, mainly in the Asturias, Catalonia, Madrid, and the Basque provinces. The C.P. again proposed a united front to the S.P. and the Anarcho-syndicalists, but again was refused by the top leaders. The result was confusion in the leadership of the uprising, to the great detriment of the whole movement.

The Asturian coal miners, among whom Communist and left Socialist influence was strong, seized political control in their area. They set up a Soviet in Oviedo, and by sheer heroism managed to retain power for 15 days, in the face of assaults from vastly stronger government troops. The revolt was stamped out in a general butchery. Some 30,000 workers were arrested, many were executed, and numerous others given ferocious jail sentences. In the workers' brave struggle the Young Communist League, as usual, specially distinguished itself. It was a serious defeat for the Spanish working class, but, as the sequel showed, one from which the workers were to make a swift and militant recovery.¹⁹

DIMITROV AT LEIPZIG

A great event during these crucial years of anti-fascist struggle was the trial of George Dimitrov at Leipzig, September 24-December 16, 1933. The Nazis, to stir up anti-red hysteria and to win the national elections, burned the Reichstag on February 27. On March 9 they arrested Dimitrov, Popov, and Tanev (Bulgarians); Torgler (German); and Van der Lubbe (Dutch), and charged them with the crime. Hitler planned to make the trial a great triumph for Nazism, but Dimitrov completely wrecked his plans.²⁰

George Dimitrov (1882-1949) was born in Bulgaria of a revolutionary workers' family. A printer and a rebel from earliest boyhood, Dimitrov, with a record of imprisonment for labor activities, played important parts in the Bulgarian Socialist Party and trade unions, and he became a devoted worker in the Comintern and Profintern.

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Dimitrov's trial in Leipzig attracted world-wide attention, especially when the defendant began his bold defiance of the Nazi Hitler court and his courageous defense of Communism. Manacled in court and subjected to fascist intimidation in jail, Dimitrov displayed a fearless revolutionary spirit. This was all the more outstanding in view of the cowardly attitude of Torgler, erstwhile German Communist leader, who dissociated himself from Dimitrov's Bolshevik conduct.

Hitler put Goering and Goebbels on the witness stand, to try to overwhelm Dimitrov, but this failed completely. Dimitrov, a first class Marxist, as well as a lion of a fighter, exposed the pair as perjurers. He won the support of world democratic opinion, and smashed the Nazi case completely. As a result the Nazis had to acquit all the defendants, except Van der Lubbe, who, although a tool of theirs, and a government witness, was beheaded.

Threatening reprisals against him, the Nazis kept Dimitrov in jail until February 1934, when as a result of the pressure of world opinion and of direct Soviet intervention, he was released. He went to the U.S.S.R., and a few months before the seventh congress, in 1935, was elected general secretary of the Communist International. Bukharin, who had become general secretary after the defeat of Zinoviev in December 1926, resigned in 1929, as a result of his opposition to the line of the Comintern and the Russian Communist Party. Molotov then formally became the head of the C.I., but between 1929 and 1935 its actual leadership was carried on by a secretariat of three – D. Z. Manuilsky, Otto Kuusinen, and O. Piatnitsky. Dimitrov remained general secretary from 1935 until the Comintern was dissolved in 1943.

44. The People's Front: Seventh Congress

The Seventh World Congress of the Communist International took place in Moscow during July 25-August 20, 1935. There were 510 delegates (371 with votes) from 65 Communist parties. The congress met in a situation of a rapidly developing fascist-war offensive on both the world and national scales. The entire work of the congress was concentrated upon the building of national and international programs with which to check and defeat this tremendous fascist threat to the freedom and well-being of humanity. These general programs took the shape of a development of the policies of the international peace front and the national united front against fascism and war, the outlines of which the E.C.C.I. had already established in its practical work. The main congress report was developed by Dimitrov. Stalin took a prominent part in the preparation and work of the congress.¹

WHAT FASCISM IS

In view of the widespread confusion as to just what fascism signified, particularly with regard to the false liberal-Social-Democratic interpretation that it was a revolt of the middle class, Dimitrov paid considerable attention to the question of definition. He reiterated the famous analysis of the thirteenth E.C.C.I. meeting (chapter 42), that "fascism is the open terrorist dictatorship of the most reactionary, most chauvinistic and most imperialist elements of finance capital." This placed the responsibility for this murderous movement where it belonged, and where the workers could understand it, in the offices of the monopolist bankers and capitalists of the world.

"Fascism is not super-class government, nor a government of the petty bourgeoisie or the lumpen-proletariat over finance capital. Fascism is the power of finance capital itself. It is the organization of terrorist vengeance against the working class and the revolutionary sections of the peasantry and intelligentsia. In foreign policy, fascism is jingoism in its crudest form, fomenting bestial hatred of other nations."² Fascism is not an evidence of the growing strength of capitalism, but of its developing weakness. It is an expression of the decay of the capitalist system. "The fascist dictatorship of the bourgeoisie is a ferocious power, but an unstable one."³ Fascism is not inevitable. "The German working class

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could have prevented it. But in order to do so, it should have achieved a united anti-fascist proletarian front.”⁴

“The accession to power of fascism is not an ordinary succession of one bourgeois government by another, but a *substitution* of one state form of class domination of the bourgeoisie – bourgeois democracy – by another form – open terrorist dictatorship.”⁵ The policy of the Social-Democrats leads to the victory of fascism, and they bear basic historical responsibility for the establishment of fascism in Germany and other countries.

Fascism takes on various forms in the different countries, in accordance with national peculiarities. The most savage type is that in Germany. Fascism wins mass support by a pretended defense of the people’s immediate interests. “Fascism aims at the most unbridled exploitation of the masses.... Fascism delivers up the people to be devoured by the most corrupt and venal elements.... Fascism acts in the interests of the extreme imperialists, but it presents itself to the masses in the guise of champion of an ill-treated nation, and appeals to outraged national sentiments.”⁶

THE INTERNATIONAL PEACE FRONT

The congress gave active support to the international aspect of the united-front struggle against fascism and war, that is, to the efforts of the Soviet Union to build a great world peace front against the arrogant fascist war alliance. The resolution on the progress of socialism in the U.S.S.R. (reporter Manuilsky) thus stated the peace role of the land of socialism: “With the victory of socialism, the U.S.S.R. has become a great political, economic, and cultural force which influences world policy. It has become the center of attraction and the rallying point for all peoples, countries, and even governments which are interested in the preservation of international peace. It has become the stronghold of the toilers of all countries against the menace of war. It has become a mighty weapon for consolidating the toilers of the whole world against world reaction.”⁷

The line of the congress envisaged an active anti-war struggle of all countries, particularly with regard to the building up of a great alliance of the peace-loving states to hold in check and defeat the rapidly growing international war drive. This international policy, had it been accepted by the western democracies, would have averted World War II, and brought about the speedy down-

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fall of Hitler and Mussolini.

The congress worked upon the assumption that the world's peoples had the power to prevent the war if they would act together. Lenin had correctly said that while imperialism lasts war is inevitable; but this did not mean that this (or any other particular war) was inevitable and that nothing could be done but take a passive, fatalistic attitude towards it. On the contrary, the Communist forces of the world fought with all their power to prevent the war that was brewing.

The resolution on the war danger (reporter Togliatti) stated that the Comintern, in its fight against the war, was basing itself upon the famous Lenin-Luxemburg paragraph in the resolution of the Stuttgart 1907 congress of the Second International, as follows: "If, nevertheless, war breaks out it is their duty to work for its speedy termination and to strive with all their might to utilize the economic and political crisis produced by the war to rouse the political consciousness of the masses of the people and thereby hasten the downfall of capitalist class rule."⁸

The congress, while pointing out that "The main contradiction in the camp of the imperialists is the Anglo-American antagonism," placed the major responsibility upon the German fascists for the current war danger. They were "the chief instigators of war," and were striving "for the hegemony of German imperialism in Europe." They were organizing "a war of revenge against France, dismemberment of Czechoslovakia, annexation of Austria, destruction of the independence of the Baltic states, which they are striving to convert into a base for attack on the Soviet Union, and the wresting of the Soviet Ukraine from the U.S.S.R." They are aiming at "a world war for a new repartition of the world."⁹

THE PEOPLE'S ANTI-FASCIST UNITED FRONT

The congress devoted most of its attention to the development of people's front movements in the respective capitalist countries, as the foundation of the whole struggle of these peoples against fascism and war. Dimitrov showed that on the basis of a resolute fight for the immediate needs of the broad masses, particularly against the threat of fascism, a broad movement, including sections of the peasantry and the city middle classes, could be built under the leadership of the working class. This movement, how-

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ever, could not be constructed around an immediate fight for the dictatorship of the proletariat, because these masses were ideologically not yet ready for such a struggle.

The core of the people's front must be the united front of the working class – that is, “to establish unity of action of the workers in every factory, in every district, in every region, in every country all over the world. Unity of action of the proletariat on a national and international scale is the mighty weapon which renders the working class capable not only of successful defense but also of successful counter-attack against fascism, against the class enemy.”¹⁰ This policy required the setting up of collaboration agreements with workers and organizations of various types – parties, trade unions, cooperatives, youth, women, Communists, Socialists, Anarcho-syndicalists, Catholics, etc. Even workers in fascist organizations had to be contacted.

Upon the basis of working class political unity, the anti-fascist people's front is to be organized. Says Dimitrov, “The success of the whole struggle of the proletariat is closely bound up with establishing a fighting alliance between the proletariat on the one hand, and the toiling peasantry and basic mass of the urban petty bourgeoisie, who together form the majority of the population, even in industrially developed countries, on the other.”¹¹ The two processes, building the proletarian united front and the people's anti-fascist front, should go ahead simultaneously, there being no arbitrary barrier between them.

The perspective of mobilizing such enormous masses of people, the majority in every country, inevitably raised the question of the possibility of creating people's front governments. The congress met this issue. Dimitrov referred to the fact that previous congresses had dealt with this question, the fourth congress, in 1922 (Chapter 38) having foreseen five possible types of united-front governments.

The people's front government, based on the various types of workers' and other organizations, would come into existence, before, not after, the abolition of capitalism. It would come into power only in a period of political crisis, “when the ruling classes are no longer able to cope with the powerful rise of the mass anti-fascist movement.” It should be based on “a definite anti-fascist program.” It must not be merely a parliamentary arrangement with the Social-Democrats, but a real mass movement. It must

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have a program of class struggle, not of class collaboration, and it "should carry out definite and fundamental revolutionary demands. For instance, control of production, control of the banks, disbanding of the police and its replacement by an armed workers' militia, etc." It was necessary to prepare for the Socialist revolution and Soviets. It would be an approach to the proletarian dictatorship, not a "transitional phase between the bourgeois and proletarian dictatorship." The people's front government was a probable, but not an inevitable development. Whether or not the Communists would actually participate in such a people's front government would depend upon specific circumstances.

Dimitrov stressed the need of the Communist parties to maintain their political identity and not to lose themselves in such broad movements by opportunistically tailing after the masses – a warning which the later experience of the parties proved to be a very timely one. He sharply criticized the mistakes of the Brandler leadership in the united-front government of Saxony and Thuringia in 1923. It was a "right opportunist Workers' Government in action." It was correct for the Communists to enter the government, but they should have used their position to arm the proletariat, to requisition the houses of the rich to furnish homes for the workers, and to organize the workers' mass movement. But they did nothing of all this. "They behaved in general like ordinary parliamentary ministers 'within the framework of bourgeois democracy.'"¹²

THE UNIFICATION OF LABOR'S FORCES

The organic unity of the working class was essential for carrying out the people's front program with the maximum success; hence, the seventh congress laid out policies for the eventual consolidation of the organizations of the working class – trade unions, parties, and youth. For the achievement of these goals, stress was laid upon cooperation with new left currents developing in the Socialist parties.

The seventh congress resolution declared "for one trade union in each industry; for one federation of trade unions in each country; for one international federation of trade unions organized according to industries; for one international of trade unions based on the class struggle." Where the R.I.L.U. unions were small, they should singly join up with the other unions; where

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they were large they should negotiate for amalgamation upon an equal basis. The Communists should fight for trade union unity “on the basis of the class struggle and trade union democracy.”¹³

Fusion of the parties and the youth organizations was more complex. The congress set down five general conditions for such organic unity: including a complete rupture with the bourgeoisie, a unity of action that should precede organic unity, recognition of “the necessity of the revolutionary overthrow of the rule of the bourgeoisie and the establishment of the dictatorship of the proletariat in the form of Soviets... rejection of support of one’s bourgeoisie in imperialist war, and that the united party be based on the principles of democratic centralism.”¹⁴ The unity program did not demand affiliation to the Communist International.

Commenting on this unity program, Manuilsky said later: “We are often asked why we are now laying down five conditions for unity instead of twenty-one, as we did at the Second Congress of the Communist International. We are doing that because the five conditions of the Seventh Congress essentially cover the twenty-one conditions of the Second Congress; because the Communist International is not now in danger of being swamped by Centrism; because the working class has not only passed through the post-war experience of the policy of right-wing German Social-Democracy, but also of (‘Left’) Austrian Social-Democracy; because there is not yet an ‘influx’ of Social-Democratic leaders into the Communist International, what we have as yet is a stream of Social-Democratic workers towards Communism; because our five conditions wholly correspond to the thoughts and sentiments of these workers.”¹⁵

The seventh congress made a review of the parties’ forces. Most of the parties, except in the fascist countries, showed a substantial growth, and all efforts were put forth to increase Communist penetration of the fascist organizations. Manuilsky said, “There is hardly a single (open) party in the Communist International which has not doubled or trebled its membership during the past two years.”¹⁶ The parties in China, France, Poland, Japan, Czechoslovakia, and elsewhere all registered substantial gains, and the same was generally true of the Young Communist Leagues. Pieck reported that, “only 22 of the 67 sections of the Communist International in the capitalist countries, and only 11 in Europe, are able to work legally or semi-legally. Forty-five sec-

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tions, 15 of them in Europe, are obliged to work under conditions of strict illegality and under a gruesome terror."¹⁷

Especially, Communist progress was to be noted in the colonial and semi-colonial countries. In China the Communist Party had become the real leader of the people, and in Indochina, India, the Philippines, Indonesia, Korea, Malaya, Egypt, Syria, Palestine, firm Communist parties were established and they were fighting for leadership in the various national liberation movements. All these countries were moving towards a new round of revolutions. The congress honored its numberless martyrs in the colonial countries and throughout the rest of the far-flung class struggle.

THE NEW TACTICAL ORIENTATION

Dimitrov said, "Ours has been a congress of a new tactical orientation of the Communist International." Obviously, this was the case. "The tactics of a political party," added Manuilsky, "are not the spectacles of a musty keeper of the archives, who never takes them off, even when he goes to bed. Tactics, which are the sum total of the methods and means of struggle of a political party, are precisely intended to be changed if changed circumstances require it."¹⁸ The development of the fascist offensive had drastically altered the world situation; therefore, the Comintern, with true Leninist flexibility, had changed its tactics accordingly, and in some respects, also its strategy. This tactical re-orientation, however, did not imply the repudiation of the former tactical line of the Comintern, but the logical development of it, particularly of its established policy of the united front.

The new political line of the Comintern had vast implications. On the international field it projected nothing short of the organization of a great peace alliance between the U.S.S.R. and many capitalist states. As it turned out, in World War II, the U.S.S.R. actually became the political leader of this anti-fascist alliance in the vital military struggle. All this, of course, was quite new in Communist practical policy. The people's front, in its application in the individual countries, also meant for the Communists a broad new policy of developing an unprecedented alliance of the working class, the peasantry, and large sections of the urban middle classes. The clear implication in such a wide combination, comprising the majority of a given people, was that the Communists, henceforth, must speak not only in the name of the

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working class, but of the entire nation.

The people's front policy also bore many other important implications. It meant that the Communists would work for the creation of democratic governments within the framework of capitalism; governments very probably to be regularly elected under bourgeois democracy and with Communist participation in them. Experience was to show that the people's front policy, clearly worked out at the seventh congress, was, a decade later, to result in the development of new forms of the dictatorship of the proletariat (People's Democracies). Also, with capitalism greatly weakened, and world socialism and the organizations of the working class vastly strengthened, there was now the possibility, in given cases, of a relatively peaceful establishment of socialism. This possibility was based on the ability of the powerful democratic forces of the people to beat back every effort of the bourgeoisie at counter-revolution.

The Comintern policy also projected new unity relationships towards the Social-Democrats, Anarcho-syndicalists, Catholics, and other non-Communist segments of the working class and the labor movement. The application of the people's front policy made imperative the need for labor unity, industrial and political, and it also created far more favorable conditions for the achievement of such unity. The Comintern rose fully to these new needs, responsibilities, and opportunities.

To equip the Communist parties to apply the people's front policy, the seventh congress carried on a two-front fight against political and ideological deviations. It warned sharply against the right dangers that sprang up in applying the new broad policy, citing numerous examples from Communist and Social-Democratic experience. It also fired sharply into the many "leftist" moods, errors and shortcomings that had crept into the work of most of the Communist parties, especially since the sixth congress of the Comintern.¹⁹ Obviously, a very sharp break had to be made with sectarianism in all its forms if the Comintern and its affiliated parties were to lead or to play a vital role in the great mass movements contemplated by the people's front and international peace front policy.

The seventh congress was the last congress ever held by the Communist International, and it was also one of the C.I.'s greatest. At this historic gathering the Comintern forces gave real lead-

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ership to the harassed peoples of the world, who faced the imminent danger of fascist butchery or enslavement. The people's front policy developed at the seventh Comintern congress was, during the next decade, to have the most profound consequences upon the political fate of the peoples of the world.

45. The People's Front in Action (1935-1939)

During the four years between the seventh congress and the outbreak of World War II the workers in many countries waged bitter struggles against the rising tide of fascism and the threat of war. These fights were mostly fought along the principles and inspiration of the people's front and under the general leadership of the Comintern. The Second International (L.S.I. and Y.S.I.) remained deaf to appeals of the Comintern and the Y.C.I. for a united front against the encroaching fascist-war menace. Most of the people's front movements of the period, therefore, were primarily on the basis of the united front from below.

Manuilsky thus pictures the situation: "The Executive Committee of the Communist International has proposed uniting for action ten times in the past five years. What reply did we get from the reactionary leaders of the Socialist International? They replied that international united action required the preliminary formation of a united front in the various countries. When the sections of the Comintern approached the various Social-Democratic parties, the leaders of these parties replied that it was first necessary to reach agreement on an international scale."¹

One of the most important things accomplished during these years was the securing of a certain measure of trade union unity.* This was done, not in agreement between the Amsterdam International and the R.I.L.U., but simply by the latter advising its union affiliates to make such unity arrangements as they could with the Socialist-dominated unions. Consequently, with its unions in the capitalist countries gradually coalescing with Amsterdam unions, the R.I.L.U., after 1935, progressively liquidated itself. It was dissolved by the end of 1937.² The Russian unions, however, 20,000,000 strong, remained independent, Amsterdam fearing their affiliation.

THE NATIONAL ANTI-IMPERIALIST FRONT IN CHINA

The seventh Comintern congress had paid close attention to

* In Czechoslovakia, for example, the trade unions were badly split on political, national, religious, and craft lines.

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the application of the people's front among the oppressed peoples. Its resolution reads: "In the colonial and semi-colonial countries, the most important task facing the Communists consists in working to establish an anti-imperialist people's front. For this purpose it is necessary to draw the widest masses into the national liberation movement against growing exploitation, against cruel enslavement, for the driving out of the imperialists, for the independence of the country; to take an active part in the mass anti-imperialist movements headed by the national reformists and strive to bring about joint action with the national-revolutionary and national-reformist organizations on the basis of a definite anti-imperialist platform."³

Dovetailing with Lenin's famous thesis of the second C.I. congress, this political policy had vital consequences in the colonial and semi-colonial countries, notably in China. Shortly after the victorious end of the Long March in Shensi (see Chapter 43) in May 1936, the Communist Party of China, now headed by Mao Tse-tung and representing the will of the workers, peasants, and city middle classes, proposed to Chiang Kai-shek the formation of a broad national front to resist the Japanese invaders. But Chiang, the representative of the warlords, big bankers, and pro-imperialist bourgeoisie, contemptuously rejected this, preferring to fight, not the Japanese, but the Communists.

On December 12, 1936, however, this autocrat came a cropper. At Sian, where he was visiting the headquarters of Chiang Hsueh-liang, Chiang Kai-shek was seized by patriots. While he was in jail, Chu Teh, the Red Army chief, saw him and wangled out of him a tentative agreement for a national front,⁴ whereupon he was released. Chiang then backed and filled, trying to avoid forming such a front, but national pressure was too great. On September 23, 1937, he finally had to sign.

The C.P. of China made major concessions in order to secure this agreement. The party liquidated the Soviets in the broad areas which it controlled, changed the name of the Red Army and subordinated it to the military council of the Kuomintang government, and temporarily suspended the confiscation of big landed estates. The united action movement was to be based on the carrying out of Sun Yat Sen's famous "three principles" of nationalism, democracy, and the people's livelihood. Civil war between the two forces was to be abandoned. Chiang, for his part, agreed

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to extend democratic rights to the people, to convene a conference of national salvation of all anti-Japanese groups, and to wage an aggressive war against Japan.⁵

This historic agreement marked the end of the civil war of 1927-37 and the beginning of the war of resistance of 1937-45 against Japan. This war, as we shall see, Chiang systematically sabotaged, especially in its later phases. All through the war he saw the Communists as the chief enemy.

The building of the national anti-imperialist front aroused burning enthusiasm among the Chinese masses. It marked the Communist Party as the true leader of the nation and showed Mao Tse-tung as the major Communist leader. It was a stupendous demonstration of the soundness of the people's front policy of the seventh congress of the Comintern. It prevented China from being completely overrun by the Japanese, and it set into motion a whole chain of forces and events that led straight to the ultimate victory of the great Chinese Revolution. In neighboring Japan, despite many proposals by the Communists, the Social-Democrats rejected an anti-war people's front.

THE FRENCH PEOPLE'S FRONT GOVERNMENT

The decisions of the seventh Comintern congress also greatly stimulated the general struggle in France, the home of the people's front. The workers were in a high state of militancy from their victory over fascism in February 1934 and from their growing successes against the employers. At the March 1936 congress of the C.G.T. in Toulouse formal unity was established between that organization and the C.G.T.U. This further raised the fighting spirit of the workers.

In the national elections of April 26, 1936, the People's Front groupings participated as a bloc. The result was a striking victory for them. The coalition, based upon the Communist, Socialist, and Radical parties, won 380 seats, a majority in the National Assembly. The number of Communist seats went up from 10 to 73, and the Socialists from 101 to 148. The Communist Party doubled its 1932 vote, while the Radicals lost 450,000 votes. The result was that Leon Blum, Socialist, became Premier of France. The Communist Party did not actually become part of this People's Front government (of a sort), but gave it active support, with necessary criticism.

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Meanwhile, the workers had launched into a wide series of sit-down strikes, a tactic used by the Italian workers in 1920. The bosses had to yield, and the general consequence was the establishment of union recognition, the 40-hour week, wage increases, holidays with pay, etc. Thorez relates that, "When the delegates of the C.G.T. called upon Blum in 1936 in his office in the Hotel Matignon, he said to them, 'Good, I shall support these proposed laws in October.' Frachon [Communist trade union leader] replied: 'They must be adopted by Parliament immediately within forty-eight hours.' And that is what happened under pressure of the masses."⁶ The government also nationalized the munitions industry and took the Bank of France under control. During these struggles the C.G.T. membership jumped from 1,000,000 to 5,000,000 within a year.

Leon Blum (1872-1950), who became the leader of the French Socialist Party in 1923 upon the death of Marcel Sembat, was a typical Second International intellectual. A lawyer, he was the son of a wealthy business man. In the party he was a right-winger, a revisionist, an imperialist warmonger, a Munichite, and an inveterate enemy of the Soviet Union. He was a petty-bourgeois reformist, and there was nothing socialist in his makeup. Blum thus typically reassured the French employers that he would do them no harm: "I am not Kerensky; after I go Lenin will not assume the heritage."⁷

Under Blum's leadership the People's Front government was soon run into the ground. In February 1937 Blum ordered a "pause" in the workers' demands – to "catch our breath" and to "digest" the reforms of the People's Front. His policies of devaluation of the franc, and of making concession after concession to the employers, cut the foundations from beneath the great movement which had elected him. Blum disgraced the People's Front altogether by initiating the notorious "non-intervention" policy towards the Spanish civil war. In July 1937 he quit as Premier, even without a vote of the Chamber prevailing against him. He was succeeded by the notorious Edward Daladier, head of the Radical-Socialist Party. In 1938, Blum also had a term of 28 days.

During this people's front movement the French Communist Party was led by Maurice Thorez (1900-), ably seconded by Jacques Duclos. Thorez, the son of a coal miner and active in the labor movement since his youth, was elected to the Central Com-

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mittee in 1924 and became general secretary in 1929. By the end of 1936 the Communist Party's membership increased to 254,000, "ten times as much as a few years ago," and the youth organization, in two years, jumped from 3,000 to 89,000 members. The Socialist Party and its youth group also made a substantial growth.⁸ In the great people's front struggle the Communist Party stood forth as the true national leader of the people. One of its greatest achievements during the whole movement was the strong bonds it established with the great masses of Catholic workers with its policy of "the outstretched hand," a development full of significance for the future.

THE PEOPLE'S FRONT IN THE AMERICAS

One of the central objectives of the Hitler-Mussolini-Hirohito fascist axis was to establish control over the vast areas of Latin America. The peoples there, half-starved and barbarously oppressed, could have been ready victims for the fascist demagogues and their local allies. But the fascists' aims were frustrated, chiefly by the powerful anti-fascist, pro-people's front movements that played such an important role in these countries during the middle and later 1930's. In this broad movement the various Communist parties were the moving spirits.

Among the more important of such movements were the People's Front in Chile in 1938, which elected President Cerda. In Brazil the National Liberation Alliance, a united front of the Communist and Socialist parties, trade unions, peasant organizations, student bodies, etc., in 1936 conducted a bitter struggle against the pro-fascist Vargas government. In Argentina, in 1936, there was also a strong people's front movement; and from 1933 on the Communist Party of Cuba led a broad, people's front movement. The Mexican Revolution, during 1933-40, took a big spurt ahead under people's front stimulus, and similar movements displayed themselves in Venezuela, Colombia, Nicaragua, Uruguay, Costa Rica, and the Dominican Republic. The general effect was to block everywhere, except in Argentina, the attempts of the fascist axis forces to seize these countries. The leaders were such Communists as Prestes, Codovilla, Roca, Gomez, Viera, etc.⁹ The movement superseded the plans of the Social-Democrat Haya de la Torre, who, especially in Peru and Bolivia, was attempting, with his *Alianza Popular Revolucionaria Americana* (A.P.R.A.),

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to build an "American Marxism," in which not the proletariat, but the petty bourgeoisie should play the leading role.¹⁰ He is now a supporter of American imperialism.

The greatest achievement of the whole broad Latin American united-front movement of those years was the building of the Latin American Confederation of Labor (C.T.A.L.), headed by Vicente Lombardo Toledano. The C.T.A.L. was organized in Mexico City in September 1938. It drew into its ranks nearly all the labor unions throughout Latin America and gave a tremendous impetus to union-building. John L. Lewis was present at its founding congress. During the war the C.T.A.L. reached a membership of some 4,000,000 and was far and away the biggest and best labor federation ever created in Latin America.

North of the Rio Grande, in the United States, the broad popular movement of these years, of which Roosevelt was the leading figure, also had in it pronounced elements of the people's front (see chapter 42). It contained in its ranks the great bulk of the working class, the Negro people, the poorer farmers, and the city middle classes. A striking feature was the powerful youth movement. The American Youth Congress, among whose leaders was Gil Green, in the late thirties had about five million affiliates.¹¹ The entire broad mass people's movement was animated by a strong anti-fascist, anti-war spirit. The movement, however, was headed by the liberal bourgeoisie, of whom Roosevelt was the chief spokesman. The conservative trade union leadership never discovered enough initiative even to insist upon a coalition status with Roosevelt, much less to gather the great mass forces, then politically on foot, into a labor-farmer party. The seventh Comintern congress stated that such a party would be an American form of the people's front. The broad mass New Deal movement, however, blocked fascism in the United States.

In the United States and Canada the Communist-led trade unions amalgamated themselves, willy nilly, chiefly with the A.F. of L. unions. The Trade Union Unity League of the United States, with some 100,000 members, merged with the A.F. of L. unions in 1935. In the great organization campaigns of the C.I.O., beginning shortly afterward, the Communists took a very active part and were admittedly a major factor in the unionization of the basic, trustified industries.¹² The biographer of John L. Lewis says: "The fact is that the Communist Party made a major contri-

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bution in the organization of the unorganized for the C.I.O.”¹³

PEOPLE'S FRONT AND CIVIL WAR IN SPAIN

Recovering quickly from the bitter defeat of 1934 (see chapter 43), the Spanish working class in 1935, under Communist stimulus, organized a strong people's front movement. Making it up were the Socialist and Communist parties, the General Workers Union, the Syndicalist organization of Pestana, the Anarchist National Confederation of Labor, the petty-bourgeois Republican Party of Manuel Azana, the Catalonian Party of Escer, the Republican League of Barrio, the Basque Nationalists, and millions of party-less peasants.¹⁴ The People's Front thus covered the great mass of the Spanish people. On February 16, 1936, in the national elections, the People's Front administered a sharp defeat to the reactionary forces led by Gil Robles, winning 253 seats in the Cortes (112 of them for the S.P. and C.P.) against 153 for the right and 65 for the center.¹⁵

Although the People's Front had a majority in the parliament, the fascist opposition was powerful, controlling the army officers, the banks, the industries, and large sections of the government apparatus, and had the all-out support of the Catholic Church. The Communist Party warned of the grave danger of a fascist revolt, and urged necessary measures to smash reaction, especially by purging the army and the police. But the Azana government would have none of such drastic measures. Its leaders said, "Leave the army alone, no politics in the army."

On July 17 the revolt began in Morocco, led by Franco, Mola, and other fascist generals. By vigorous action, the counter-revolution could have been crushed at the start, but the Azana government and the Social-Democrats vacillated, and the Franco movement spread. Azana was removed from his post on September 4, and the left Socialist Largo Caballero was installed as Premier. Two Communists became members of his government. Frantic efforts were begun to create a Republican army and to halt the advancing fascist forces.

Meanwhile, Hitler and Mussolini, from the outset, poured men and munitions into Spain to aid Franco. This presented a basic challenge to the anti-fascists of all countries. With the world steadily moving towards a great conflict, evidently the winning of the civil war in Spain by the democratic forces was of fundamen-

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tal importance to the whole struggle against fascism and war.

The Communists clearly understood this and reacted accordingly. The Soviet Union proceeded to send airplanes, guns, food, and military advisors to help the embattled Republican forces, and in the League of Nations it fought for recognition of the full belligerent rights of the Spanish Republic. The Comintern proposed to the Second International that a world united front be established in behalf of Republican Spain. Negotiations were held, but nothing came of them. The Communist parties all over Europe and America called upon the workers to volunteer to fight in Spain.

The International Brigades, thus raised, consisted not only of Communists, but of left Socialists and other fighters. They amounted to some 30,000 to 40,000 men. There were contingents from France, Italy, Germany, Poland, Russia, Bulgaria, Britain, Canada, and the United States. They became a vital section of the Republican Army. Even the hostile Borkenau admits that they prevented an early fall of Madrid.¹⁶ They suffered terrible casualties, about 50 percent of them never getting back to their native lands.

The Second International, as usual, failed to take a fighting working-class stand for Spain. Although it made declarations favoring the Spanish Republic and demanding that it be accorded all diplomatic rights, nevertheless its leaders and parties proceeded to sabotage these statements. Blum, the head of the French People's Front government, adopted a policy of "neutrality," of "non-intervention," which denied the Spanish Republic the right to buy arms in France. This became the policy of all the bourgeois democratic governments. Consequently, while the Franco counter-revolutionists had a big foreign source of munitions supply, the Republic was embargoed by its supposed friends. This was a fatal blow. Social-Democrats in the various West European governments went right along with this treacherous appeasement policy.

Under these hard circumstances, lacking guns, tanks, and planes, heavily outnumbered by the enemy forces, crippled by hunger and sickness, and subject to serious internal disruption from the Trotskyites and Anarchists, the Spanish Republican army made an heroic but losing fight. The battles of Madrid, Guadajajara, Jarama, Teruel, the Ebro, and many others, wrote the

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names of the brave Republican fighters forever in proletarian revolutionary history. But the odds were too great, and after almost three years of a struggle that inspired the proletarian, anti-fascist world, Madrid fell on March 28, 1939, and the bitterly fought war was over. In an orgy of revenge and bestiality, the victorious fascists jailed and slaughtered tens of thousands of their prisoners. The capitalist governments, including Roosevelt's, hastened to recognize the Franco regime.

The Spanish People's Front had serious internal weaknesses, and these contributed to the defeat. There were such paralyzing right elements as Azana and Prieto to contend with, but worse yet were the "left" Socialists like Caballero, the Anarchists and Anarcho-syndicalists, and especially the Trotskyites, whose leader was Andres Nin of the Workers Party of Marxist Unity (P.O.U.M.). These elements pretended to transform the struggle into a proletarian revolution, as they confusedly described it; whereas, as the Communists contended, if the People's Front was to avoid a complete break-up and demoralization in the face of the enemy, it had to continue to base itself upon the elementary task of beating the fascists. All through the war the "ultra-left" elements were a constant source of indiscipline, confusion, and treachery. In March 1937 they tried to create a revolt in Barcelona. Their ranks were permeated with Franco spies and provocateurs. Caballero was ousted in May 1937, as an incompetent and disrupter, and he was replaced by Juan Negrin, Socialist.

During the war there was much real cooperation established between the Communists and the Socialists, as against the indiscipline and confusion of the Anarchists and Trotskyites. In Catalonia the two parties consolidated, and the Communists proposed, without success, however, that one united party be formed throughout Spain. The two national youth organizations were, in fact, amalgamated into the United Socialist Youth; but this body was later expelled from the Socialist international youth organization, unity with the Communists being against the policy of the Second International.

The real leadership in the Spanish civil war, that which made of it one of the most glorious struggles in world labor history, came from the Communists. They alone understood the real role of a people's front movement, and it was they, too, who possessed the requisite organizing ability and resolute fighting spirit. The

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two outstanding leaders of the party were Jose Diaz, general secretary, and Dolores Ibarruri (Pasionaria), the famous Asturian revolutionary fighter.

The splendid fight of the Spanish People's Front was a great inspiration to the anti-fascist forces all over the world. But the loss of the war was a heavy defeat. It exposed again the treacherous appeasement policies of the western bourgeois democracies and of their faithful ally, the Second International, and it also stimulated the fascist powers to further aggressions. The defeat of Republican Spain opened the door for World War II.

46. Munich: The Road to War (1935-1939)

Throughout the period between the end of the seventh Comintern congress in 1935 and the beginning of the second world war in 1939, the drive of the fascist big powers, Germany, Japan, and Italy, went ahead at an increasing tempo. The western capitalist democracies, their bourgeoisies heavily tainted with fascism, instead of checking the dangerous fascist offensive, fed it with policies of appeasement. The Communist forces, for all their tireless efforts, could not bring sufficient mass pressure to bear to stop the aggressive fascists. The U.S.S.R. and the national people's front movements could not line up the western democracies in a great anti-fascist peace bloc. As for the Second International parties, which always follow the same basic political policies as their national bourgeoisie, they tagged along after the respective capitalist classes through all the windings of their treacherous appeasement policies.

During the whole period, the capitalist economic system was stagnant; it did not make the customary recovery after the profound cyclical crisis of 1929-33, but lingered along in what Stalin called "a depression of a special kind." In the United States, Great Britain, France, and other western capitalist countries, huge masses of workers remained unemployed, the number of jobless in the United States in these years, despite Roosevelt's Keynesian pump-priming, averaging up to 10,000,000. Only in the fascist countries, because of their feverish war preparations, did the industries come back again into full production.

THE APPEASEMENT CRIME

Realizing the weakness of the capitalist opposition to their plans, the fascist powers pushed their aggressions with the utmost brazenness. In March 1936 Hitler sent his troops into the Rhineland. Two months later the Italians captured Addis Ababa, and the conquest of Ethiopia was completed. On October 24, 1936, Germany and Italy announced a treaty specifically directed against "communism," and a month later Japan also signed it; the notorious "Anti-Comintern Pact" was thus born. Japan continued its violent irruption into China, and Germany and Italy waged war against Republican Spain. All during this period Hitler, flouting the Versailles Treaty, hurriedly built his army. In March 1938 he

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seized Austria by force, and shortly afterward demanded that Czechoslovakia cede Sudetenland to Germany. The Vatican gave its thinly disguised blessing to these fascist depredations.

The non-fascist powers had the physical strength to put a quick halt to these arrogant aggressions, had they been so disposed. They possessed three times as much population, produced 50 to 100 percent more steel, twice as much electricity, fourteen times as many automobiles, fifty-five times as much liquid fuel, nine times as much raw materials for textiles, four times as much food, and had forty-nine times as great gold reserves.¹ But the bourgeois democratic governments, themselves soaked with fascism, refused to act, instead, making one concession after another to the insatiable fascist imperialists. The Comintern thus described their course of "appeasement":

"Italian fascism was allowed to attack Ethiopia with impunity. It not only enslaved Ethiopia, but also hurled itself against Spain. German fascism was permitted to militarize the Rhineland without hindrance. It made use of this to fall upon Spain. Then it engulfed Austria and crushed Czechoslovakia. The Japanese freebooters were enabled to seize Manchuria and the Northern provinces of China. With growing insolence, the Japanese militarists embarked upon a war to enslave the whole of China. Step by step, the countries of 'great western democracy' retreated before the fascist plunderers. Step by step, the fascist plunderers strengthened their positions, increased their aggressions, resorted to new acts of violence, and at the same time, used all this to draw the noose tighter around the necks of their own people."² Some capitalist politicians, such as Churchill, Eden, and Cooper in England, condemned this folly, and Roosevelt spoke of a "quarantine against the aggressors" but the United States nonetheless continued to ship great quantities of scrap iron to Japan.

In the bankrupt League of Nations, the Soviet Union tried to organize the anti-fascist forces to stop the fascist assaults. It generally urged that Article 16, the "collective action" clause of the League Covenant, be applied. During the Ethiopian war, it fought for the enforcement of the League's tongue-in-cheek sanctions against Italy; it demanded the abandonment of the disastrous "non-intervention" policy towards Republican Spain; it urged a "collective repulse" of the Japanese invaders in China; it proposed joint action to halt Hitler's invasion of Austria; and it took a firm

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stand against Hitler's demands upon Czechoslovakia. But all this insistence upon militant struggle fell upon deaf ears. The capitalist democratic governments, with their appeasement policies, were heading irresistibly towards the great debacle of Munich.

THE GROWTH OF SOVIET POWER

Meanwhile, during the past decade, the Soviet Union had been registering a tremendous growth in its economic and military strength and in its internal consolidation – facts which were soon to have decisive results in the eventual defeat of the world fascist menace. As we have seen in chapter 41, the first five-year plan, of 1929-33, had been a tremendous success, vastly increasing the industrial and agricultural output of the U.S.S.R. The second five-year plan, of 1933-38, fulfilled in four years and three months, was also a brilliant victory. It raised Soviet industrial production by 120.6 percent over 1932, and strengthened the economic system in every respect.³ Since 1913 Russian output had gone up from 100 to 908 in 1938; whereas that of the United States, in the same period, had advanced only from 100 to 120.⁴ The third five-year plan,⁵ calling for a further industrial production increase of 88 percent by 1942, was about three-fourths completed by June 1941, when the U.S.S.R. became involved in World War II. The U.S.S.R. had become the most powerful industrial country in Europe. This enormous increase in the industrial strength of the Soviet Union was to be decisive in the winning of that great world war.

The spectacular advance of socialism in the U.S.S.R. was further dramatized by the adoption in November 1936 of the famous Stalin Constitution. Under this constitution, among other basic rights, "All the citizens of the U.S.S.R. are guaranteed the right to work, the right to rest and leisure, the right to education, the right to maintenance in old age and in case of sickness or disability," and "Women are accorded equal rights with men in all spheres of life." It is far and away the most democratic constitution in the world.

Vitaly important, too, in the increase of Soviet economic-military-political strength during this pre-war period, was the complete defeat of the counter-revolutionary Trotsky-Zinoviev-Bukharin opposition. As we have seen in chapter 39, during 1923-29 the three groups had been defeated singly and en bloc by the

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party majority led by Stalin. And defeated with them was their basic contention that socialism could not be built in one country. The succeeding years completely confirmed this defeat by the tremendous socialist successes in the U.S.S.R.

But the defeated opposition leaders refused to accept the party decision. Surreptitiously, they carried on factional work. In their desperation and degeneration they engaged in sabotage, wrecking of industry, and assassination, finally even becoming agents of Nazi Germany and Japan. Trotsky, who had been expelled from the Soviet Union in 1929, organized abroad the "Fourth International" in 1933, which was composed of skeleton groups in many countries. Among its other counter-revolutionary activities, it openly advocated the violent overthrow of the Russian Communist Party leadership and of the Soviet government. In Spain, China, and elsewhere, Trotskyites were proved to be police spies.⁶

The Russian opposition conspiracies and treasons came to a head in the assassination on December 1, 1934, in Leningrad of S. M. Kirov, a prominent party leader. This brutal murder led to extensive investigations, which exposed the wide extent and desperation of the Trotsky-Zinoviev-Bukharin-Tukhachevsky intrigues. The proven objectives of these elements in their reckless bid for power were, "to assist foreign military intervention, to prepare the way for the defeat of the Red Army, to bring about the dismemberment of the U.S.S.R., to hand over the Soviet Maritime Region to the Japanese, Soviet Byelorussia to the Poles, and the Soviet Ukraine to the Germans, to destroy the gains of the workers and collective farmers, and to restore capitalist slavery in the U.S.S.R."⁷ These shocking revelations, which were proved to the hilt, led to several large trials in 1936-37, and to the execution of Zinoviev, Kamenev, Bukharin, Tukhachevsky, Rykov, Krestinsky, Smirnov, Piatakov, and a number of others.⁸

The elimination of this Nazi-Japanese fifth column in the U.S.S.R. was a major factor in the winning of World War II. The Soviet Union had to carry the overwhelming fighting burden of that war, and if in addition, while fighting for its very life, it had had also to contend with this internal gang of spies, wreckers, and counter-revolutionaries, the consequences to the war and to world civilization might well have been disastrous.

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THE BETRAYAL AT MUNICH

With the war crisis coming to a boil over Czechoslovakia, President Roosevelt proposed on September 25, 1938, that Hitler and the Czechs get together and settle their dispute. Taking advantage of Roosevelt's initiative, Hitler called a conference of Germany, Italy, France, and Great Britain at Munich, with himself, Mussolini, Daladier, and Chamberlain in attendance, the Russians being carefully left out. On September 30, this conference came forth with an agreement, the substance of which was the dismemberment of Czechoslovakia to the benefit of Germany.

The capitalist leaders of the world, including Roosevelt, hailed this criminal sell-out as a great victory for peace. Chamberlain and Daladier returned home in triumph, loaded with bourgeois praises for having established "peace in our time." On October 3 Hitler's *Wehrmacht* marched into Sudetenland and grabbed even more Czech territory. Czechoslovakia was lost. The whole cause of peace and democracy had received a staggering blow.

The Second International, faithful tool of the world bourgeoisie, also hailed the Munich "peace." The British Labor Party shared in the betrayal and characteristically its two party *Histories*, of 1946 and 1950, shamefacedly make no mention of Munich. In France Leon Blum said, "Now we can sleep soundly again," and the other French Socialist leaders also accepted Munich. Vidal says, "Immediately after Chamberlain's and Daladier's conspiracy with Hitler and Mussolini, the Socialist Party of France declared itself almost unanimously in favor of the fatal policy of Munich."⁹ Only one Socialist voted with the 73 Communists in the French Chamber against it. The Polish and Hungarian Socialist parties also shamelessly welcomed Hitler's annexation of the Sudetenland.¹⁰ Only later, the Second International parties, seeing the tragic damage that had been done and sensing the strong working-class reaction against the Munich sellout, began to make their customary word (not deed) opposition to it. In the Far East, the Japanese Socialist Party was applauding the victories of Japanese imperialism and calling for a tightening of the Anti-Comintern Pact.¹¹

The Communists in the various countries protested as soon as the Munich conference was called. Characteristically, in Great Britain, as Dutt says, "The single voice raised in opposition to that

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visit was that of William Gallacher, Communist Member of Parliament, who shouted, 'Shame' and 'This means war.'¹² Communists all over the world took a similar stand against the Munich treachery. The *Communist International*, promptly expressing this general stand, said: "Czechoslovakia, the last bastion of democracy in Central Europe, has fallen a victim to an unprecedented conspiracy directed by Hitler and Chamberlain against the freedom and the peace of the nations. The French government has connived at this conspiracy and committed an act of treachery unparalleled in history towards the most faithful ally of France."¹³

In its manifesto of November 7, 1938, the Comintern categorically condemned the Munich betrayal. While placing the chief responsibility for the treachery upon the British and French imperialists, it pointed out that a united world labor movement could have defeated them. "This force could have prevented the Munich agreement, could have rendered impossible the crime committed against Czechoslovakia and could have driven the unbridled fascist robbers far back." The Comintern proposed in vain to the Second International the calling of a great world conference of all workers' organizations, to organize an international united front to halt the march of fascism. The manifesto listed ten previous occasions since 1933 when the Comintern unavailingly proposed international united-front actions with the Second International against advancing fascism. The manifesto also contained a forecast of Hitler's war timetable, stating that he would invade the U.S.S.R. in the autumn of 1941 – it actually took place in June of that year.¹⁴

The basic purpose of the British and French bourgeoisie in engineering the Munich betrayal was to direct Hitler's bayonets away from themselves and against the Soviet Union. Undoubtedly, they felt that in the Munich agreement they had finally achieved their long-desired all-capitalist united front against the U.S.S.R. – a determination which remains to this day the great imperialist objective. This explains why, when the Soviet government offered, if France agreed, to support Czechoslovakia with arms – their treaties calling for the defense of that country, it got no response whatever from the West. Undoubtedly, if the Soviet Union had gone to war alone against Hitler over Czechoslovakia it would have had to face not only Germany, but Britain and France as well, which would have been just what the European imperial-

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ists were planning for.

Since the Russian Revolution of November 1917, down to the present time, the bourgeoisie of the world have dreamed and plotted for an all-out attack against the U.S.S.R. This is the main key to all their foreign policy. Sometimes this counter-revolutionary scheming has been active and sometimes passive, but it is always there. In the period just before World War II the bourgeois hope for a great capitalist war against the Soviet Union was especially alive.

As for the Soviet government, it has always followed a resolute peace policy. This was well stated in 1934 by Stalin, and it remains today the line of the U.S.S.R. Said Stalin: "Our foreign policy is clear. It is a policy of preserving peace and strengthening commercial relations with all countries. The U.S.S.R. does not think of threatening anybody – let alone attacking anybody.... Those who want peace and seek business relations with us will always have our support. But those who try to attack our country will receive a crushing repulse to teach them not to poke their pig snouts into our Soviet garden."¹⁵

THE DRIVE TO WAR

The Munich betrayal, of course, did not satisfy Hitler, but only whetted his insatiable appetite for more conquests. On March 2, 1939, he marched into Prague, and he was already knee-deep in demands upon Poland. In August Daladier sought to arrange another Munich at the expense of Poland, but the arrogant Hitler believed that the time had come for a showdown with the wobbly capitalist West, and he moved directly towards taking Poland by force. He rejected Daladier's proposal. Again, as in the case of Czechoslovakia, the Soviet government offered, jointly with the West, to defend Poland by arms. But Great Britain and France, who were looking in a different direction for allies, would have none of this, and their fascist puppet, the Polish government, flatly refused the passage of Soviet troops across its territory.

Meanwhile, the Soviet government was bending all efforts to create the general anti-fascist peace front, which had been its policy for five years past. Negotiations, presumably to this effect, went on in Moscow. But Great Britain and France, which were hoping for a Hitler attack upon the U.S.S.R., wanted no alliance with that country, which would obligate them to resist such an

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assault. So they sent minor officials to dabble with the Moscow conference, and they used every subterfuge to prevent any constructive alliance being formed.

After several direct but futile warnings to Britain and France that it was not going to let them thus play with its most basic national interests, that "it was not going to pull the chestnuts out of the fire for them," the Soviet government entered into negotiations with Germany, and on August 21, 1939, announced the Soviet-German ten-year non-aggression pact. This pact was in line with similar treaties that the U.S.S.R. had drawn up with other neighboring states, France, Czechoslovakia, Mongolia, China, etc.

Great Britain and France, which wanted to keep the U.S.S.R. under their thumb while they peddled away its fate to Hitler in a new Munich, cried out that the Soviet-German pact was a betrayal. Foreign Minister Molotov of the U.S.S.R., however, recited to them their repeated treacheries against the Soviet Union. He said, "As the negotiations had shown that the conclusion of a pact of mutual assistance could not be expected, we could not but explore other possibilities of insuring peace and eliminating the danger of war between Germany and the U.S.S.R."¹⁶ Churchill publicly admitted that the Soviet Union needed the two years of the pact to prepare for the Nazi invasion which it knew would come.

The oft-repeated charge that the Soviet-German pact helped Hitler was not true. On this matter, Yakhontoff says: "Its immediate effect was to crack the fascist bloc. Hitler offended his ally, Japan. He alienated his secret collaborators, Chamberlain and Daladier. He lost his financial support among certain bankers."¹⁷

The Soviet-German non-aggression pact has been fully justified by history. It not only broke up the attempt of the British and French imperialists to develop an all-out capitalist war against the U.S.S.R., but it gave that country a breathing space of some 22 months, in which to prepare for the inevitable Nazi attack. During this period the Soviet Union made tremendous industrial and armament progress, and this added strength was a very important, if not a decisive, factor in winning World War II.

Hitler, who had long been developing his war line, marched against Poland, as he had done against Czechoslovakia and Austria. Great Britain and France, therefore, declared war on Germany on September 3, 1939. For all their maneuvering, the British and French imperialists had succeeded only in getting "the wrong

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kind of a war.” Instead of the Soviet-German war that they had devoutly hoped and planned for, they found themselves in a war with Germany. The world had been deceived and betrayed by the German-French-British-American imperialists into another terrible mass slaughter.

47. World War II: The Course of the War

World War II was a product of the general crisis of the world capitalist system, a devastating explosion of that system's inner contradictions, precipitated by the uneven development of the respective capitalist powers. Concretely, it was a violent imperialist redistribution of the earth. Germany, Japan, and Italy were mainly responsible for the war, with a large share of the guilt attaching also to Great Britain, France, and the United States, because of their appeasement policies and anti-Soviet line. In the war there were various clashing elements – the attempts of all the imperialist powers to destroy the Soviet Union; the efforts of the two groups of great capitalist states to secure imperialist world domination, and the resistance of the world democratic masses to fascist enslavement.

THE IMPERIALIST STAGE OF THE WAR

After the official declaration of war on September 3, 1939, there set in a period of six months without hostilities, the so-called “phony war.” Great Britain and France turned not a finger to help attacked Poland, nor did they move in any way against Germany. This was because the last thing their reactionary leaders wanted to do was to fight Nazi Germany; their aim was to transform the “wrong war” into a “right war,” a German-Soviet war. Meanwhile, on September 5, the United States declared its “neutrality.” The policy of its ruling class, essentially as in World War I, was to stand aside from the conflict, to get rich selling munitions to the western belligerents, and then, when all the fighting states were weakened by the war, to assert its own decisive power.

Hitler was deaf to the blandishments of the western democracies. He and his Japanese pals were out for world conquest and they did not want to share the expected loot with British, French, and American imperialism. Hitler's schedule, as previously exposed by the Russians, called first for the destruction of the flabby western powers, then the mobilization of their industries and man-power, and finally, the grand assault upon the Soviet Union, with Japan, in the meantime, taking over the Eastern colonial systems of Britain, Holland, and France. Besides, Hitler was not taking any chances on a two-front war by assaulting the U.S.S.R. with an armed Britain and France at his back. So the initial at-

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tack, when Hitler was well ready, was to go against the West. The fascists' perspective was entirely unacceptable to British and French imperialism, which could not accept a position of utter inferiority to German imperialism in a fascist world. Hence, when Hitler's attack upon them came, they had no alternative but to fight, as they did, in some sort of fashion. Chamberlain represented the British bourgeoisie, seeking an anti-Soviet bargain with Hitler; Churchill, who became Prime Minister on May 10, 1940, represented that bourgeoisie refusing to surrender to Hitler.

These developments – the obvious attempts of British and French imperialism (with the United States in the background) to turn Hitler's guns against the Soviet Union – caused a necessary shift in Communist policy everywhere. The expectation had been that if it came to war, the U.S.S.R. would be on the side of the western democracies, which would have given the war a democratic content. This had been the sense of Communist policy for several years past. But the treachery of the western Munichites had made this course utterly impossible, as we have seen. Therefore, a policy of non-support had to be adopted. The major expression of this was the German-Soviet pact of mutual non-aggression.

In October 1939 the Communist International issued a manifesto containing this new policy. It declared: "This war is the continuation of the many years of imperialist strife in the camp of capitalism." It pointed out that England, France, and the United States held sway over the major economic resources of the world and that the fascist powers were trying to wrest them away. "Such is the real meaning of this war, which is an unjust, reactionary, imperialist war. In this war the blame falls on all the capitalist governments, and primarily the ruling classes of the belligerent states. The working class cannot support such a war." The C.I. put out as slogans, "No support for the policy of the ruling classes aimed at continuing and spreading the imperialist slaughter!" "Demand the immediate cessation of the war!"¹ At the same time, Dimitrov wrote, "It is for the working class to put an end to this war in its own way, in its own interests, and in the interests of the entire world of labor, thus creating the conditions for the abolition of the fundamental causes of imperialist wars." This revolutionary policy was reiterated in the Comintern May Day manifestos of 1940 and 1941.

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The Communist parties everywhere in the West followed this general line, after some hesitation and confusion at the start, as they reoriented themselves to the new world situation. In China, where it was a people's war, the Communist Party was the leader of the national defense. The western Communist parties demanded the organization of people's front governments in the respective countries, the ending of the war, and the establishment of a democratic peace. The British, French, and other continental Communist parties demanded radical changes in the governments as a basis for a successful defense. This new line brought down upon the heads of the Communists persecutions in the various capitalist democracies. In France the Party was outlawed, its parliamentary representatives expelled, 159 party journals suppressed, 317 Communist municipalities dissolved, and large numbers of party leaders thrown in jail.² In Japan, the Communist Party, taking an anti-war position, faced barbaric repression. As for the parties and unions of the Second International, in accordance with their usual course of taking leadership from the capitalist class, they obediently followed the policy of their governments, Munich, imperialist war, and all.

THE SO VIET-FINNISH WAR

On November 30, 1939, war broke out between fascist Finland and the U.S.S.R. This was caused by systematic Finnish provocations, by repeated forays across the Soviet border. Leningrad was fully within range of the Finnish heavy fortification guns. Behind the Finnish depredations were the imperialists of Great Britain and France, who had long since been using Finland as an anti-Soviet puppet. They expected that the Finnish War would provide them with the opportunity to organize their hoped-for all-out capitalist anti-Soviet war. It was their chance, they speculated, to turn the "wrong war" against Germany into the "right war" against the U.S.S.R.

During this minor Finnish War a wild anti-Soviet agitation was carried on in the capitalist democracies; little "Democratic Finland" became the darling of the capitalist West. Fantastic reports were made regarding imaginary Finnish successes in the war. President Roosevelt ostentatiously donated \$10 million to Finland. Pro-Finnish "volunteer armies" were raised in Britain, France, and other countries. The U.S.S.R. was expelled from the

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League of Nations. Open efforts were made to enlist Hitler in the projected all-capitalist war against the U.S.S.R. The Second International parties joined in this anti-Soviet agitation.³

But Hitler had no taste for such a general war. He believed that Germany, Japan, and Italy would take care of all questions of world conquest in due season, to the exclusion of British, French, and American imperialism.

The Red Army ended the Finnish adventure, concluding the war on March 13, 1940. It had smashed the "impregnable" Mannerheim line, thus displaying some of the power that was later to be fatal to Hitler's *Wehrmacht*. The Soviet government worked out a democratic peace with Finland, and this dangerous interlude passed into history. Later, "democratic" Finland joined Hitler's side in World War II.

HITLER SMASHES THE WESTERN POWERS

His military preparations completed, and disregarding the ingratiating maneuvers of British and French capitalists, in April 1940 Hitler opened his assault against the West by an attack on Norway. The German *Wehrmacht* quickly smashed through the armies of Britain, France, Holland, and Belgium. The fascist-soaked general staffs and broad officers corps made little resistance; King Leopold of Belgium quit the war outright. By May 28 Hitler had shattered the western armies and driven their remnants into the sea at Dunkirk, France, and had made himself master of western Europe. The Communist parties of the West proposed a militant reorganization of the war into a democratic struggle in defense of their countries, but in vain.

During this period Esthonia, Latvia, and Lithuania, formerly parts of Russia, first made non-aggression pacts with the U.S.S.R. and then reaffiliated with her.⁴ And as the reactionary Polish government fled before Hitler, the Red Army occupied eastern Poland up to the so-called Curzon line, territory which the Versailles Peace Conference had long since declared legitimately Russian.⁵

With its army destroyed, Great Britain was about to fall, when the Soviet Union made a sudden move which saved it. The Red Army occupied the former Russian territory of Bessarabia, then in the hands of Rumania. This dramatic step forced Hitler at once to relax his mounting pressure against Great Britain. Mortally afraid of a two-front war, the Fuehrer was compelled to consolidate

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himself in the Balkans and to further strengthen his main forces on the border of the U.S.S.R. Hence, for the next nine months he was busy conquering Bulgaria, Rumania, Yugoslavia, and Greece, and getting ready to attack the U.S.S.R. Figuring, no doubt, that after the chore of whipping the Soviet Union was accomplished, he could easily finish mopping up weakened Great Britain, he made the fatal mistake, on June 22, 1941, of sending his troops, 170 divisions, across the Soviet borders.⁶

Meanwhile, in the United States the dominant sections of the bourgeoisie, fearing the downfall of Great Britain and the rise of a far more powerful German imperialism, tended more and more towards active support of the embattled western capitalist powers. Roosevelt's slogans were "All Aid Short of War," and turning the United States into "The Arsenal of Democracy." But a very powerful section of the capitalist class, the most fascized elements, openly sought to aid Hitler, although looking askance at the spectacular Japanese victories in Asia. As for the American people, peace-loving and democratic, while willing to aid England, in the vast majority they wanted to keep out of the war.

THE CHANGED CHARACTER OF THE WAR

The entry of the Soviet Union changed fundamentally the character of the war. This is what made it progressive, democratic, and anti-fascist. Prior to this time, the war was in the hands of imperialists, including also western democracies, and was being directed to further their class interests. Under such circumstances, the war was not, and could not be, an anti-fascist war. The entry of the U.S.S.R. changed all this: it not only conferred upon the war a definite anti-fascist character, but it also gave the western democracies their first opportunity to win. Up until that time, with Britain, France, Belgium, Holland, and Norway virtually completely knocked out of the war, their chances of victory were practically nil. The U.S.S.R., which was the real political leader of the war, gave the war both its democratic content and its possibility for victory.

From the outset there had been a deep people's element in the war, the struggle of the masses against fascist subjugation. This element finally became dominant, putting the stamp of a just, people's war upon World War II, but not until the great democratic weight of the Soviet Union was thrown into the war scales.

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Doubtless it was this process that Stalin had in mind when he said: "Unlike the first world war, the second world war against the Axis states from the very outset assumed the character of an anti-fascist war, a war of liberation, one aim of which was also the restoration of democratic liberties. The entry of the Soviet Union into the war against the Axis states could only enhance and indeed did enhance, the anti-fascist and liberation character of the second world war."⁷ The Second International, of course, did not recognize the all-importance of the entry of the U.S.S.R., and as for the Trotskyites, they declared the war to be imperialist throughout.

No sooner had the Hitler attack upon the U.S.S.R. begun than Churchill, followed by Roosevelt after Pearl Harbor, accepted the plan of a war alliance with the Soviet Union, making all due reservations against communism as such. Thus came into existence, in war form, the general anti-fascist alliance that the Soviet government had been advocating ever since the middle thirties. The peace front at that time could have averted the war and checked fascism in its early stages, but it was, however, cynically rejected. Only when British, French, and American imperialism had their backs against the wall, virtually whipped in the war, did they call upon the Communists to pull them out of their deadly predicament. But the united front was better late than never. The all-out national and international front against fascism, the line of the Comintern seventh congress, thus became the general strategy which won the war, another example of Communist world political leadership.

Because of the greater sharpness of the fascist issue presented by the war, the anti-Axis front at that time, both internationally and nationally, was broader in scope than the pre-war anti-fascist front. Thus, on the international scale, it was expressed by the general anti-fascist alliance finally crystallized in the United Nations, and on the national scale by the united action of all those classes ready and willing to fight against fascism, including sections of the bourgeoisie. The national front in the respective countries ranged from a loose cooperation of these anti-fascist groups to their joint participation in national governments.

UNFAITHFUL CAPITALIST ALLIES

Although the western capitalist powers officially made an alli-

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ance and a joint war front with the U.S.S.R., they never treated that country as a real ally. Their line was to utilize the U.S.S.R. as much as they could to smash Germany in the war, but at the same time to see to it that the Soviet Union was weakened as badly as possible in the process. Hoover, Truman, and other American reactionaries openly said as much at the time. Hoover still boasts of this shameless treachery.⁸ Especially after Stalingrad, which opened up a prospect of victory for the Allies, did this knifing of the Soviet Union take place. From then on the imperialists especially had in mind a post-war world run by the Anglo-Americans, in which Socialist Russia would play only a subordinate role.

These reactionary imperialist considerations stood out like a mountain in British-American attitudes and war policy towards the U.S.S.R. Among other things, this was manifested by the concealment of vital much-needed military secrets from the Soviet Union, among which were radar and certain bomb-sights. Worse yet, there was the withholding from the Russians of all information about the atomic bomb.

Besides, there was the gross discrimination shown in the matter of lend-lease. All told, the U.S.S.R. was sent only about one-fourth as much lend-lease materials as Britain got, although the former did at least ten times more fighting. Reactionaries, for obvious reasons, have grossly exaggerated in general the importance of American lend-lease supplies to Russia in winning the war. Actually, the \$10-billion worth that was sent – a large portion of which was sunk en route – amounted to only five percent of the American total of \$210 billion in wartime munitions production. Besides, as Herbert Hoover said, “she [the U.S.S.R.] had stopped the Germans even before Lend-Lease had reached her.”⁹

Gross discrimination against the U.S.S.R. was also shown by the United States in devoting its main war effort to the defeat of Japan. Roosevelt insisted time and again that Nazi Germany was the chief enemy and Europe the main theater of war, but it is nevertheless a fact that, under the pressure of the “Japan first” crowd, the basic war struggle of the United States was directed against Japan. The Soviet Union was left to fight and defeat the main enemy, Germany, virtually alone – save for the help of the West’s minor military activities, indecisive air-bombing, and inadequate lend-lease shipments.

This general situation was emphasized, above all, by the stud-

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ied refusal of the United States and Great Britain to open up a western front in Europe. The U.S.S.R. facing the vast bulk of Hitler's *Wehrmacht* and with a great section of its army immobilized on the Chinese borders, holding Japan at bay, almost desperately called upon its capitalist "allies" to attack Hitler from the west. This was the great means needed to win the war swiftly – on May 1, 1942, the Comintern put out the slogan to win the war in 1942.¹⁰ But nothing was done by the Anglo-Americans. The western front was deliberately held up for at least 18 months after it became possible to launch it. British and American reaction was definitely responsible for this monstrous crime, which prolonged the war and cost millions of Russian, American, British, French, and other lives. Indeed, the western front never was opened until the Russians, having broken the back of the German *Wehrmacht*, were rapidly sweeping ahead and had already entered Poland, a thousand miles along the way to Berlin. The British and American imperialists were afraid then that if they did not finally act the Red Army would occupy all of Europe.

Communists have often charged the western allies with this treachery, only to meet with indignant denials. But Winston Churchill has lately proceeded to spill the beans by boasting publicly that in the closing months of the war he issued instructions to Field Marshal Montgomery, to the effect that in disarming the Germans he should be prepared to re-arm them, if he deemed it necessary in order to stop the advancing Red Army.¹¹

The American masses had nothing in common with such shameful treachery toward our Russian ally. On the contrary, all through the war they expressed a warm, friendly, and admiring solidarity with the Soviet people, then carrying through the greatest military effort in human history. Nor was the liberal Roosevelt chiefly to blame. Generally he also had a friendly attitude toward the Russian people, but he was by no means a dictator of American war policy.

THE RUSSIANS SMASH NAZI GERMANY

When Hitler's armies swept across the Soviet border in June 1941, the bourgeois military experts of the West were unanimous in prophesying that it would be only a few weeks until Hitler would crush the U.S.S.R. completely. In fact, Hitler's "blitz" did carry him fast and far, to the very gates of Leningrad by Septem-

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ber, a city he was never to capture. On October 3, the vainglorious Hitler blared out to the world that the Soviet Union was crushed and would never rise again.

But Hitler counted his chickens before they were hatched. He vastly underestimated the fighting power of the Soviet people, their Red Army, and their socialist system. The *Wehrmacht* had been made to pay a terrible price in its drive across Russia. It was battered again in its fruitless attempt to take either Moscow or Leningrad. And in January 1943, its back was broken at Stalin-grad, the most decisive battle in the history of the world.

Then began, for the Nazis, their terrible 1,500-mile retreat, with the Red Army slashing them to pieces all the way, while the United States and Great Britain kept their enormous armies idling in Britain. For two years the press of the world hailed enthusiastically the great victories of the Red Armies (which in these days of cold war are completely ignored by American war-mongers), and even the reactionary General MacArthur stated that, "the hopes of civilization rest upon the worthy banners of the courageous Red Army."¹² The Communists were wonderful people while they were saving the world from the criminal follies of the capitalist system. At long last, on June 6, 1944, after the European war was basically decided and Hitler licked, the Allies launched their long-delayed western front, and on April 25, 1945, the British-American and Soviet armies met on the banks of the Elbe, in Germany. Hitler was indeed *kaput*.

The war in the Pacific was far more of a coalition war than that in Europe. The Chinese people, during their many years of struggle, had done enormous damage to the Japanese war machine; the great drive of the American navy, army, and air force was, of course, a disaster to the Japanese armed forces; and the immobilization of Japan's Kwantung army all through the war on the Siberian border, and the final destruction of that army by the Red Army, was also a major factor in winning the war. On August 14, 1945, Japan unconditionally surrendered. The great world war, with its 25 million dead and 32 million wounded,* was final-

* Of these casualties, the Russians had 6,115,000 battle deaths and 14,012,000 wounded, or about nine times as many soldier deaths as Britain and the United States combined.

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ly at an end.

During the last days of the Japanese phase of the war a sinister event took place, of the gravest historical importance. Upon the express orders of President Truman, atomic bombs were dropped upon Hiroshima (August 6) and Nagasaki (August 9). This was a monstrous crime, the brutal killing of vast numbers of non-combatant civilians. The crime was all the more reprehensible because Japan, already defeated, was at the point of surrender. Even more terrible than all this, however, was the notification, by the dropping of the bombs, that Wall Street was going to try to set up its domination of the post-war world on the basis of this terrible weapon. The bomb was aimed at the Soviet Union even more than at the Japanese.

48. World War II: The Guerilla Forces

Among the most basic factors in winning the second world war were the guerillas, or semi-irregular armed forces. These were known variously in Europe and Asia as “the resistance,” as “partisans,” or simply as “guerillas.” They did much to inspire the peoples and to wear down the enemy’s regular troops. They operated both in occupied and semi-occupied areas.

In November 1870 Engels pointed out the significance and importance of this type of popular warfare, which was then being waged by the masses in defeated France against victorious Germany. He remarked that, “From the American War of Independence to the American Civil War, in Europe as well as in America, the participation of the population in war has not been the exception but the rule.” Engels described the savage reprisals made against guerillas by the Prussians, but he also remarked that, nevertheless, “the English in America, the French under Napoleon in Spain, the Austrians in 1848 in Italy and Hungary were very soon compelled to treat popular resistance as perfectly legitimate warfare.”¹ In World War II, however, the barbaric German, Italian, and Japanese fascist officers dealt with captured guerillas almost always as outlaws and bandits.

In no war have guerillas operated upon such a wide, systematic, and successful basis as in World War II. Their activities extended from France in the West to China in the East. The guerillas usually, but not always, worked in organized cooperation with regular troops. This extensive development of the resistance, guerilla movement indicated the progressive and people’s character of the war.

Realizing from the outset the fundamental importance of armed action by the peoples themselves, Stalin, on July 3, 1941, only eleven days after the German invasion of the U.S.S.R. began, issued a call for the organization of guerilla forces everywhere. He said, “In areas occupied by the enemy, guerilla units, mounted and on foot, must be formed, diversionist groups must be organized to combat the enemy troops, to foment guerilla warfare everywhere, to blow up bridges and roads, damage telephone and telegraph lines, set fire to forests, stores, transports. In the occupied regions conditions must be made unbearable for the enemy and all his accomplices. They must be hounded and annihilated at every step,

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and all their measures frustrated.”² Eventually, the western bourgeois military forces also took to cultivating guerilla forces.

Throughout the entire area of the great war the militant guerilla policy, requiring real courage and fortitude, was applied by the masses of the peoples. In this dangerous work, it is a matter of historical record that the Communists were nearly everywhere the fighting leaders. It was a situation that called forth in fullest measure their natural bravery, strong organization and discipline, tireless devotion to the cause, and burning hatred of the capitalist enemy. In organizing the guerilla forces, whether in the cities or in the country, the wide experience that Communists had with “underground” political life, in the face of vicious police persecution, stood them in very good stead.

Generally, the resistance was organized upon a national front basis, all those willing to fight fascism being eligible. This was one more application of the basic anti-fascist people’s front tactic worked out by the seventh congress of the Comintern. Many Social-Democrats and bourgeois elements participated, but characteristically, the general line of their leaders was to dampen down the militancy of the resistance forces, on the grounds that the Germans’ savage reprisals would scare off popular support – which was an illusion. The Communists, on the other hand, were for a bold fighting policy, without which the whole resistance movement was almost valueless as a war force, a policy which the workers and peasant masses supported.

The Comintern and the Communist parties gave a strong lead to the guerilla movement. Characteristically, the C.I. May Day manifesto of 1942 declared: “The workers in the Hitler-occupied countries will affirm their determination to fulfill their proletarian and national duty. Every ounce of energy and every bit of skill will be concentrated by them to disrupt war production and the transport of military supplies for the malignant foe. By diverse means, including fires and explosions, they will destroy machinery and equipment working for the invaders.”³ Communist parties and Communist youth leagues everywhere carried out this policy vigorously. As for the Second International parties, they mostly disappeared in the occupied countries. Price says, “On the political side, the L.S.I. ceased to function after the collapse of France.”⁴

The resistance, or guerilla movement, besides playing a tre-

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mendous role in the military defeat of the fascist Axis powers, also had much to do with the national revolutions at the end of the war and with shaping the political situation in the post-war period. This we shall deal with later.

THE RUSSIAN PARTISANS

The Russian people have a long and rich tradition of guerilla action by the masses to resist tyrants. During past centuries there were many peasant uprisings against brutal tsars, and these always took on the character of guerilla movements. Napoleon, in his terrible march to and from Moscow in 1812, also got a bitter and fatal taste of Russian guerillas. And during the revolutionary civil war of 1918-21, guerilla fighting took place on a wide scale. Hence, in fighting Hitler's invasion in 1941, the Soviet people had many guerilla precedents to guide them.

Stalin's call for guerilla action and a "scorched earth" policy, cited above, gave a big impetus all over Europe to such fighting. It especially stimulated the growth of powerful partisan movements in the Baltic states and in the Balkans, as well as in the U.S.S.R. The broad partisan movement in the Soviet Union did not spring up merely spontaneously. Kournakoff says: "It was organized long in advance. Everything was prepared – men, women, and youngsters, their weapons, training, and morale."⁵ The guerilla forces were integrated with the Red Army.

Partisan fighting was also a definite part of Stalin's great political-military strategy which won the war and saved the world from fascism. It was included in the basic "war-in-depth" concept, which is described by Kournakoff: "We can say that the grand strategic scheme of the war-in-depth is as follows: the Red Army fights the war in the front zone; the Guerilla Army spreads it all over the German rear; the People-in-Arms keep it from spreading over the Soviet rear."⁶

The collective farm system was well-adapted to the development of guerilla warfare, each farm becoming a center of patriotic resistance. The spirit of united action, inherent in the whole Soviet social order, was another strong contributing force to the mighty guerilla organization. Capitalism could not possibly develop such a solid and rugged defense.

The guerilla bodies, often including regular Red Army detachments which had been cut off from the main forces, actually

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controlled whole stretches of territory behind the German front. Thus, in 1942 there was such an area of 3,000 square kilometers, close to Leningrad, "occupied, controlled, and administered" by guerillas, who sent supplies through the German lines to the beleaguered city.⁷ Similar guerilla-controlled "islands" existed in many other parts of the country overrun by the Germans.

Guerillas systematically destroyed railroads, roads, bridges, telegraph and telephone lines, etc. It took whole detachments of German troops to do repair work, small bodies being wiped out if they undertook such tasks. Sloan thus pictures how guerillas on the farms applied the "scorched earth" policy: "The milk-maids from the collective farm drove their cows through the fields of growing corn, trampling it down and destroying it. Women cut the corn with scythes, and tractors were used to crush it into the ground. A whole beet field was plowed under. Pigs were slaughtered and were hauled over to a nearby Red Army regiment. The pig-sties, stables, and a cowshed were demolished. The best horses were driven off into the woods for the use of the guerilla fighters, agricultural machinery was smashed, the pond was emptied, and the local sugar refinery was wrecked."⁸

The partisans did an immense amount of damage to the fascist enemy. Minz states that, "In the course of ten months, the guerillas in the Leningrad area killed nearly 21,000 German privates and officers and destroyed 117 heavy and light tanks, 25 armored cars, 91 airplanes, over 100 fuel tanks, and over 2,000 motor trucks. According to the reports of only 28 units in the Smolensk region, the guerillas killed 15,800 German soldiers, officers, spies, and traitors, destroyed 27 airplanes, and 34 tanks, and captured a large quantity of war materiel."⁹ It was estimated, too, that in Byelorussia alone, guerillas killed some 150,000 Germans.¹⁰ Multiply these figures on the many fronts and some idea may be had of the huge damage done by the guerillas.

The psychological damage caused by guerilla fighters was hardly less important than their physical destruction. Zachkaroff says: "Partisans strike such terror into the Nazi hearts that the enemy is afraid to bivouac for the night within village limits, spends his nights outside the village, digs in and puts up elaborate sentry arrangements."¹¹ A typical letter found on a captured German officer reads: "Curse them! I have never experienced anything like it in any way before. I cannot fight against phantoms in

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the forest. As I write this I glance at the setting sun with fear and trembling. It is better not to think. Night is setting in, and I feel that out of the darkness shadows are creeping up silently, and icy horror grips my heart.”¹² One of the most famous of the partisan groups, led by an old man, was called “Grandpa’s Unit.”

“The Germans,” says Minz, “resort to the most ferocious measures to suppress the guerillas. If they capture a guerilla fighter in any village, they usually burn the whole village. Often they take half the inhabitants of a village as hostages and shoot them in batches. The monstrous reign of terror that rages in the Soviet districts temporarily occupied by the fascists is unprecedented in history.”¹³ This terror, however, could not break the iron spirit of the Soviet people, as the wide extent of partisan action testified.

Hitler grossly underestimated the strength of all phases of the Soviet people’s war-in-depth – the unprecedented striking power of the Red Army, the splendid back-of-the-front organization and support of the war effort, and the magnificent fighting capacity of the guerillas. Hitler broke his neck on the solid rock of a social system which, whether in the field of production, of human freedom, or of military action in the field, was incomparably superior to the rotting capitalist system, of which he was the supremely characteristic representative.

THE CHINESE GUERILLAS

In no country were the guerillas a more decisive war force than in People’s China. It was a form of warfare highly adaptable to the conditions prevailing in that country. Mao Tse-tung says of it: “What is guerilla warfare? It is, in a backward country, in a big semi-colonial country, and for a long period of time, the indispensable and therefore the best form of struggle for the people’s armed forces to overcome the armed enemy and create their own strongholds.”¹⁴ The Chinese people made tremendous use of this natural weapon, to the dismay of their enemies.

From the time of the treachery of Chiang Kai-shek in 1927, resulting in civil war, the Communist Party was able to keep strong guerilla forces continuously in the field. In later years these forces took on immense size and they became a menace that the Japanese invaders and the Chiang reactionaries could not handle. In 1938 Chu Teh, chief military leader of the people’s forces, stated

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that, "There are millions of gallant and hardened Chinese fighters in the ranks of the guerilla detachments."¹⁵ All through these decades of bitter warfare, the revolutionary Chinese people, led by the Communist Party, were able to control large territorial areas and to keep a regularly organized army in the field. These were the bases from which the giant guerilla system fanned out. There were also smaller, but important, anti-Japanese guerilla movements in the Philippines, Burma, Indo-China, Indonesia, and other Far Eastern countries.

The guerillas were made up chiefly of peasants, and they were the direct armed expression of the agrarian revolution. There were also many workers and other elements in these units. Chu Teh says that, "Chinese people, irrespective of their social standing, fight in the ranks of the guerilla detachments." The youth were of most vital importance in all these heroic formations. In its guerilla activities, as in so many other phases of the revolution, the Young Communist League covered itself with glory. Women and aged men also played very important parts.

The Chinese guerillas were a very important economic and political as well as a military force. Together with harassing the enemy, they also helped the local peasants, who were their brothers, friends, and neighbors, to cultivate and harvest the crops; they worked, too, as effective propagandists, and they took an active part in organizing the localities politically. They were generally a great school for the development of revolutionary leadership, especially among the peasantry.

The guerillas, above all else, were a people's army. Their whole effectiveness depended upon their expressing the will of the broad masses of the people, in China's case, especially of the peasantry. The guerilla formations were part of the very structure of the people's life. Chen Lin says, "Before billeting their men in the homes of the local inhabitants, the commanders ask their consent. If any property is damaged... the owners are compensated in money.... During engagements, the local population help to transport the wounded and the trophies seized."¹⁶ Such cooperation, of the greatest military value, was the very heart of the guerilla system, and it could not possibly be achieved by foreign imperialist invaders or national reactionaries.

Far from being scattering groups, the people's guerillas in China were well-disciplined and organized. Mao Tse-tung, for ex-

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ample, remarks that, "the guerilla units of the Red Army left behind along the lower Yangtze River were reorganized and named the New Fourth Army of the National Revolutionary Army."¹⁷ Out of these guerilla units were developed regular Red Army formations. Mao thus describes the process in the localities. He calls for "expanding the people's armed forces by developing in due order, first the *hsiang* Red Guards, then the district Red Guards, then the county Red Guards, then the local Red Army, and then a regular Red Army."¹⁸ People's China was a classical land of guerilla action, with these formations growing systematically into a great, solidly organized revolutionary army.

The regular armies of the Japanese and of Chiang Kai-shek, for all their far superior military equipment, were unable to cope with the revolutionary guerillas, who were everywhere behind their lines. With their high mobility, these forces, arming themselves by seizing the weapons of the enemy, avoiding major clashes, and striking unexpectedly at night, did incalculable damage by destroying small military detachments, wiping out transportation lines, sabotaging industry, etc. Chu Teh says, "Guerilla war undermines the fighting spirit of the enemy soldiers; thereby assisting enormously our regular army. In a war of maneuver the guerilla detachments establish the most important conditions for the victory of the regular army."¹⁹ This was amply demonstrated in China.

During the great Japanese incursion, mainly from 1931 to 1945, these invaders were quite unable to control the broad areas which they overran with their armies. They managed to hang onto the railroads and the major population centers, but the vast country regions were more or less dominated by guerillas. To the Japanese this was a tremendous handicap; it represented a steady heavy loss of man-power and, even more disastrous, it prevented the invading armies from living off the country. Chiang, in the long civil war from 1927 to 1935, had much the same experience. By the time of the last civil war, however, from 1945 to 1950, the people's armies, huge, well-organized and well-armed with Chiang's American supplies, were able to capture even the greatest cities, which they did.

Both Chiang and the Japanese fought the guerillas by extreme terrorist measures, indiscriminately torturing and executing peasants, and burning their villages. But this frightfulness failed of its purpose, the revolutionary spirit of the people triumphing over all

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such savage butchery. The enormous spread of the guerilla movement and its decisive importance in the people's ultimate complete victory over the Japanese invaders and the Chiang Kai-shek reactionaries, expressed the bravery of countless peasant heroes.

THE PARTISANS IN EASTERN AND MIDDLE EUROPE

In Eastern Europe, where the fighting influence of the Red Army was particularly strong and the leading role of the Communist parties most developed, the partisan movements were especially vigorous, extensive, and effective. This included Greece, Yugoslavia, Poland, Czechoslovakia, Bulgaria, Rumania, Hungary, and the Baltic states. Generally, these movements got under way very early in the war, and they also became vital forces in the series of revolutions which accompanied the eventual liberation of this whole area by the Red Army. They were all actively supported by the warring Soviet government, and to a lesser extent by the western capitalist governments.

The resistance movements were formed on a broad national front basis, with the Communists in every instance giving the lead in establishing the organizations and in heading the actual fighting in the field. The Greek resistance movement was typical in its make-up, including the Agrarian, Socialist, and Communist parties, the Union of Popular Democracy, the Liberal Youth, the General Unionist Confederation of Labor, various women's organizations, the Pan-Hellenic Organization of Youth, plus a few Bishops, and even former Monarchists. The Yugoslav organization was likewise made up of the Communist, Slovene, Christian-Socialist, Social Democratic, Peasant, and Croat Peasant parties, the labor unions, sokols (gymnastic youth groups), and the left wings of the Serbian Democratic Party and the Serbian Agrarian Party.²⁰ Wherever there were Trotskyite elements, these played a disruptive role.

Generally, the programs of the resistance movements were of the broadest, united-front, anti-fascist character. The Yugoslav program was typical, proposing: "The liberation of the country from the occupation forces and the winning of independence and truly democratic rights and liberties of all the peoples of Yugoslavia.... All important measures in social life and state organizations to be decided after the war by representatives truly and freely elected by the people.... The People's Liberation movement ac-

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cords full recognition of the national rights to Croatia, Slovenia, Serbia, as well as the Macedonians and others.”²¹

The guerilla movements in Eastern Europe did vast damage to the Axis powers and their Quisling agents. In Bulgaria, for example, a police report for the month of June 1944 shows 82 cases of sabotage and 415 armed attacks by partisan forces.²² In Poland, Hungary, and Rumania, the guerillas overran large sections of the country and occupied the attention of many German and Italian divisions. In Yugoslavia the partisan movement, controlling most of the country, tied down some 20 German divisions, and the Greek national movement, which defeated Mussolini's army and balked the *Wehrmacht*, had occupied three-fifths of the country when the British army entered Greece at the close of the war.

In Czechoslovakia there was much underground activity during the war, despite the Nazi terror. This was true also of Austria, where a broad Freedom Front existed. Even in Germany itself, there was far more underground anti-Hitler activity carried on than is generally understood. Allen Dulles, a U.S. government official in Europe, reported in 1944: “There exists in Germany a Communist Central Committee which directs and coordinates Communist activities in Germany. This Committee has contacts with the Free Germany Committee in Moscow and receives support from the Russian government. Its power is greatly enhanced by the presence of millions of Russian prisoners-of-war and laborers.... The drift to the extreme left has assumed stupendous proportions and steadily gains momentum.”²³ In all these countries, however, right Social-Democratic influence was a strong deterrent to militant guerilla activity.

THE RESISTANCE MOVEMENTS IN WESTERN EUROPE

All the countries of Western Europe occupied by fascist forces had more or less well-developed resistance movements – Norway, Denmark, Belgium, Holland, Spain, Italy, and France. There was a broad political character to them, and they included Communists, Socialists, Liberals, Catholics, and other groups, especially the youth. Many opportunist Socialist and bourgeois elements, with an eye to future political developments, attached themselves to the resistance movements, and their influence tended to kill the movement's militancy. It was generally characteristic that in the actual fighting contingents and in the real gue-

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rilla work the Communists were the leading force. This explains why the anti-Communist, Borkenau, had to say that in France the Communists, "finally achieved effective control of most of the military forces of the resistance."²⁴ The allied governments recognized the legitimacy of partisan warfare and they officially encouraged it, giving it a certain amount of arms and funds. The governments-in-exile, located in London, made energetic efforts to control the resistance movements in their respective countries.

In Italy, for over 20 years, the Communist Party had heroically fought the fascist regime. During this bitter fight, Antonio Gramsci, the party's leader, and many others perished. "Of the 140,000 political prisoners sentenced by Mussolini courts, 85 percent were Communists."²⁵ The anti-fascist fight was based upon close cooperation between the Socialist and Communist parties since their pact of 1934. The struggle was greatly stepped up with the entry of the U.S.S.R. into World War II. A broad national, anti-fascist front was established in December, 1942;²⁶ and the National Committee of Liberation was formed in September, 1943. It comprised the Communist, Socialist, Christian Democratic, Activist, Liberal, and Labor Democratic parties, and it directed the expanding underground movement. The Vatican played both sides: while vigorously supporting the Mussolini regime, it also, under pressure of the Catholic masses, affiliated its Christian Democratic Party to the national front.²⁷ In March 1943 the workers in Milan, Turin, and other northern cities, declared a general strike, which brought out 3,000,000 workers, and on April 24-25 the movement culminated in a general insurrection all over northern Italy.²⁸ In July of the same year Mussolini was forced to resign, and on April 28, 1945, at Lake Como, the workers publicly hanged him and his mistress. In the military defeat of fascist Italy, the resistance movement was of decisive importance.

In France, with a Communist Party also strong and well-led, the resistance movement was correspondingly powerful and aggressive. From the outset of the war the underground movement led strikes (in May 1941, 120,000 miners in the Pas de Calais struck) and it was active in slowing up and sabotaging the production of munitions, and in disrupting all branches of Nazi transportation and communication. It also paid special attention to disposing of Vichyite traitors. All this activity greatly increased with the changed character of the war, due to the entry of the Soviet

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Union in June 1941.

The Communists were the initiators of the French resistance movement. In the grave war crisis they stepped forth as the real leaders of the French nation. In May 1941 the Communist Party issued its first call for a national front to fight for national independence. In March 1943 thirteen underground groups, including Communists and De Gaullists, issued a similar call, and in March 1944 there was established the National Council of Resistance (C.N.R.), which was made up of the Communist, Socialist, Radical-Socialist, Democratic Alliance, and Republican Federation parties, the General Confederation of Labor, the Christian labor unions, various armed partisan groups, and, of course, the youth organizations. The general program of the C.N.R. proposed "to deliver our homeland, cooperating closely with the military operations which French and allied armies will undertake."²⁹

The Communists called for a policy of militant action, for only this could really injure the Nazis. The De Gaullist and Social-Democratic leaders, however, who were more interested in controlling politically the resistance movement than in risking their lives fighting the fascists, played down all militancy, arguing that it provoked too severe reprisals. Theirs was a wait-and-see policy, to just organize in expectation that "the day" would arrive sometime in the vague future. The Nazi reprisals were, indeed, terrible, the Communist Party alone losing 75,000 in killed during the occupation. But it was the indomitable spirit of the resistance movement to carry on in spite of all such terrorism.³⁰

The first open guerilla warfare in France developed in Savoy, followed soon afterward in the Central Plateau and in the Pyrenees. These were the famous "Maquis," who were organized by the *Francs-Tireurs-Partisans (F.T.P.)*, led by the Communists. By the beginning of 1944, there were an estimated 30,000 Maquis in the field.³¹ This movement became of vital importance in the entire resistance forces. General Eisenhower declared that the French resistance movement was worth fifteen divisions of troops to him, but others said it equalled twice that many. In September 1944 there were 500,000 armed fighters in the resistance.³² The whole movement, which included large numbers of women, was oriented towards an anti-fascist overthrow, which is why Watson could say that in the final clash with the Nazis, "Paris was liberated mainly by its own resistance forces."³³

49. The Role of the Third International (1919-1943)

On May 22, 1943, the E.C.C.I. made public to the world a resolution proposing, "To dissolve the Communist International as the guiding center of the international labor movement, releasing the sections of the Communist International from obligations ensuing from the constitution and decisions of the congresses of the Communist International." The document stated that, "the Presidium of the Executive Committee of the Communist International, unable owing to the conditions of world war, to convene a congress of the Communist International, permits itself to submit for approval by the sections of the Communist International the following proposal" (for dissolution). It was signed by the members of the E.C.C.I. – Gottwald, Dimitrov, Zhdanov, Kolarov, Koplemig, Kuusinen, Manuilsky, Marty, Pieck, Thorez, Florin, and Ercoli, and endorsed by the following representatives of Communist parties: Bianco (Italy), Dolores Ibarruri (Spain), Lehtinen (Finland), Pauker (Rumania), Rakosi (Hungary). It was adopted in Moscow, May 15, 1943.¹

On June 8, at its final meeting, the Presidium of the Executive Committee of the Communist International considered the resolutions received from its affiliated sections with regard to the decision of May 15, 1943, proposing the dissolution of the Communist International, and it established:

"That the proposal to dissolve the Communist International has been approved by the Communist and Workers' parties of Argentina, Australia, Austria, Belgium, Bulgaria, Canada, Catalonia, Chile, China, Colombia, Cuba, Czechoslovakia, Finland, France, Germany, Great Britain, Hungary, Ireland, Italy, Mexico, Poland, Rumania, Soviet Union, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, Syria, South Africa, Uruguay, Yugoslavia, and the Young Communist International (affiliated to the Communist International as one of its sections).

"That not one of the existing sections of the Communist International raised any objections to the proposal of the Presidium.

"In view of the above-mentioned, the Presidium of the Executive Committee of the Communist International hereby declares:

"1. That the proposal to dissolve the Communist International

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has been unanimously approved by all of its existing sections (including the most important ones) which were in a position to make their decision known.

“2. That it considers the Executive Committee of the Communist International, the Presidium and Secretariat of the Executive Committee, as well as the International Control Commission, dissolved as of June 10, 1943.

“3. It instructs the committee composed of Dimitroff (chairman), M. Ercoli, Dmitri Manuilsky, and Wilhelm Pieck to wind up the affairs, dissolve the organs, and dispose of the staff and the property of the Communist International.”

On behalf of the Presidium of the Executive Committee of the Communist International, the decision was signed by G. Dimitrov, as of June 10, 1943.²

It is to be noted that the dissolution decision also covered the Young Communist International, its representatives signing the document for that body as a section of the Comintern.³ The last issue of the C.I. official journal, *The Communist International*, appeared on July 5, 1943.

Communists all over the world realized the necessity of dissolving the Comintern; hence there was no opposition to it. They considered that the suspension of the highly-prized right of international organization was a real sacrifice that they had to make for the winning of the great war, and to facilitate the preservation of peace in the post-war world. Nevertheless, there was much sadness at the dissolution of their well-beloved international organization, the bearer of all their best hopes and aspirations.

WHY THE COMINTERN WAS DISSOLVED

The dissolution of the Communist International, in the midst of the world war, provoked widespread discussion throughout the world. Generally the opinion of bourgeois journalists and statesmen in the allied countries was that the decision would facilitate international cooperation to win the war. Many labor leaders believed, too, that it would contribute to strengthening labor unity. A sour note was struck by the Nazis, who, with their great stress upon the “Anti-Comintern Pact,” denounced the whole business as the work of Roosevelt, a deceit and a maneuver.⁴ The Trotskyites, who had long since condemned the Communist International, nevertheless yelled that its dissolution was a betrayal of world

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socialism. Many bourgeois elements demanded that the dissolution of the Comintern be followed by similar action with respect to the national parties, which the decision in no sense proposed. Indeed, within a very few months, in the Communist Party of the United States, the opportunist Browder sought to put this bourgeois demand into effect by attempting to dissolve that party.

The specific reasons for the dissolution of the Comintern, as formulated in the original resolution, were that, "long before the war it had already become increasingly clear that to the extent that the internal as well as the international situation of individual countries became more complicated, the solution of the problems of the labor movement of each country through the medium of some international center would meet with insuperable obstacles;" in short, that "the organizational form as chosen by the First Congress of the Communist International," had outlived itself, and that "this form even became a hindrance to the further strengthening of the national workers' parties."

In one of his characteristic replies to questions by newspapermen, Stalin thus summed up the question for Harold King, Reuters correspondent:

"The dissolution of the Communist International is proper because:

"A. It exposes the lie of the Hitlerites to the effect that 'Moscow' allegedly intends to intervene in the life of other nations and to 'Bolshevize' them. An end is now being put to this lie.

"B. It exposes the calumny of the adversaries of communism within the labor movement to the effect that the Communist parties in the various countries are allegedly acting not in the interest of their people but on orders from the outside. An end is now being put to this calumny, too.

"C. It facilitates the work of the patriots in the freedom-loving countries for uniting the progressive forces of their respective countries, regardless of party or religious faith, into a single camp of national liberation – for unfolding the struggle against fascism.

"D. It facilitates the work of the patriots of all countries for uniting all the freedom-loving peoples into a single international camp for the fight against the menace of world domination by Hitlerism, thus clearing the way to the future organization of the companionship of nations based upon their equality."⁵

It is significant that the historic decision was taken right at

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the most crucial moment of the fight to establish the second front. This front was very greatly needed for a quick and decisive victory; but the western reactionaries (who also believed Goebbels' lies about the Comintern) were blocking it. Undoubtedly the favorable impression all over the bourgeois world made by the dissolution of the Comintern helped very decisively to break this deadly log-jam. It was only a few months later (in November-December 1943) that there was held the famous Teheran conference, at which the date for the second front was finally decided.

The growing feeling in Comintern leading circles that the organization had to be dissolved explains why there was relatively so little activity by the Comintern during the early war years. The original proposal for dissolution states that, "The Executive Committee of the Communist International was guided by these same considerations when it took note of and approved the decision of the Communist Party of the United States of America in November 1940, to leave the ranks of the Communist International."*

But the dissolution trend dates back even further than this. One of the most basic elements tending to render the Comintern obsolete "in its existing form" was the coming forth actively of the Soviet Union in the mid-thirties as the world champion of the peoples. Prior to this time the U.S.S.R. was largely on the defensive, and the Comintern led the world fight. But the burning menace of fascism and war, against which the Soviet Union stepped forward on the world arena as the basic opponent, gave that country a world political leadership of the anti-fascist forces. This was clearly expressed in Manuilsky's report to the seventh congress (see chapter 44) when he said that because of the victory of socialism in the U.S.S.R. and because of its fight against fascism and war, "It had become the center of attraction and the rallying point for all peoples, countries, and even governments which are interested in the preservation of international peace." Already therefore, on the eve of the seventh congress, at the supreme height of

* This step was made necessary by the passage of the reactionary Voorhis Act, which virtually outlawed proletarian international political organization. See *Proceedings of Emergency Convention, C.P., U.S.A.*, New York, November 16, 1940.

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Comintern activity, discussions were had at which it was indicated that the new, active world role of the Soviet Union, as the great champion of peace and democracy, tended to render obsolete the world political leadership of the Communist International.

THE HISTORICAL ROLE OF THE COMINTERN

In estimating the role of the three Internationals, Lenin says: "The First International laid the foundation of the international struggle of the proletariat for socialism. The Second International was the epoch of preparing the ground for the widespread mass movements in many countries. The Third International has garnered the fruit of the labors of the Second International, casting off its opportunistic, social chauvinistic, bourgeois and petty-bourgeois refuse, and has set out *to achieve the dictatorship of the proletariat.*"⁶

The First International, functioning in the revolutionary period of the capitalist system, laid the basis for the modern labor movement, both theoretically and organizationally. The Paris Commune was its great monument. The Second International was organized at the time of the rapid growth of world capitalism and imperialism, and it, for the first time, developed the trade unions, cooperatives, and workers' parties into mass organizations. It became overwhelmed, however, with opportunism and degenerated into an instrument of the employers against the working class, which it remains today. The Third, Communist, International was the revolutionary organization of the working class, the peasantry, and the oppressed peoples of the world, functioning in the period of imperialism, of the general crisis of the international capitalist system, and of the beginning of world socialism. It tended to cleanse the proletarian movement of the poison of class collaborationism and petty-bourgeois reformism and to equip it with the program, leadership, and organization necessary for it to carry out its historical socialist mission.

The Communist International, although it was formally organized in March 1919, had solid roots extending much further back into labor history. The whole life work of Lenin, 30 years of brilliant labor, belongs properly to the history of the Comintern. He was to the Communist International what Marx was to the First International, its founder and cultivator. As remarked in chapter 27, the real history of the Comintern therefore goes back at least

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to the second congress of the Social-Democratic Labor Party of Russia, held in London in 1903, when the Bolshevik tendency was first solidly established, even as the history of the First International which was formed in 1864, actually goes back to the Communist League of 1847.

Three great achievements stand out in the historic work of the Communist International. The first of these was that it re-equipped the working class with a body of revolutionary theory. Properly belonging to the general period of the Third International, as defined above, was Lenin's rehabilitation of Marx's revolutionary theories, discarded by the Second International, and the tremendous polemic Lenin waged against the right opportunists. There was Lenin's vast enrichment of Marxism with his profound analysis of imperialism, his presentation of the theory of the dictatorship of the proletariat, his fundamental analysis of the national liberation movement, his development of the alliance of the proletariat and the peasantry, his unfoldment of revolutionary strategy and tactics generally in the period of the decay of capitalism, his masterful development of the principles of "the party of a new type," and his theoretical-practical leadership of the great Russian Revolution. There was also the basic theoretical work of Stalin, especially on the national and colonial question and the building of socialism in one country, based upon Lenin's theory. One of the really great achievements of the Comintern, in a general sense, was the development of a strong body of Marxist theoreticians among the oppressed peoples, the most brilliant example being Mao Tse-tung, theoretical-practical leader of the vast Chinese Revolution and one of the world's best Marxist-Leninists.

The second elementary achievement of the Comintern was the strengthening of Communist parties in all the major countries of the world, called into existence by the intolerable conditions of capitalism. These organizations, together with the many millions of developing Marxists in the youth leagues, trade unions, and other proletarian organizations, are the great international revolutionary force. The C.I. nurtured them, trained them, and taught them.⁷ They are the "little leaven that leaveth the whole lump." They are an altogether higher type of fighting party for socialism than was ever produced by the Second International, even in its best days. They are a growing, expanding power in all parts of the world. Clear-seeing, resolute, tireless, invincible – the Communist

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parties are indeed the grave-diggers of capitalism and the builders of the new socialist world.

The third basic accomplishment of the Comintern was the long series of revolutionary struggles conducted under its banner. These properly include both the Russian Revolution of 1905 and the world decisive Russian Revolution of 1917, for these great struggles had nothing to do with the collaborationist spirit of the Second International. They include, too, the German, Austrian, and Hungarian revolutions, the Spanish Civil War, the broad people's front movements, the establishment of the People's Democracies after World War II, the many liberation struggles in the colonies, and the immense Chinese Revolution, not to mention thousands of strikes and political battles. Let him who wants to measure the achievements of the Comintern, in its true Leninist scope, consider that over one-third of the world is now on a socialist orientation.

The birth of the Third International cannot be dated simply from March 1919, nor did the proletarian internationalism upon which it was based die in June 1943. Although organizationally the Comintern was dissolved at that time, its fighting spirit lives on, and so do the vast body of Marxists and Communist parties which it nurtured. The Third International developed a great revolutionary force which will never lose its momentum until the capitalist system is abolished and the world is brought to socialism. The Third International will forever remain enshrined in the hearts and minds of the working class, peasants and oppressed peoples of the world. When and under what conditions the Third International will be succeeded by another International, much broader in affiliation, and far more powerful politically than any of the three Internationals which have preceded it, only the future can answer.

50. The Aftermath of World War II

World War II, which was an expression of the general crisis of the world capitalist system, also greatly deepened that crisis. It intensified all the major internal and external contradictions which are inexorably undermining the strength of capitalism in all countries. The war was another great milestone on the road of the capitalist system to its inevitable doom.

Among the many post-war manifestations of the deepened character of the capitalist general crisis may be noted the following: (a) the growing reliance of the capitalist countries, particularly the United States, upon munitions production, to keep their industries going in a capitalist world of increasing productive power and decreasing markets; (b) the splitting of the world market into two segments, the socialist and the capitalist, a development which Stalin called the most important economic consequence of the war; (c) the sharpening struggle of the capitalist countries for control of the shrinking capitalist world markets; (d) the intensification of the unevenness in the development of the capitalist countries, the most spectacular aspect of which is the shaky hegemony of the United States over the capitalist world; (e) the break-down of the colonial system, marked by the outburst of revolutionary national liberation struggles in many parts of the colonial and semi-colonial world; (f) the increased tendency of the capitalist system towards economic crisis, fascism and war, because of its profoundly weakened condition; and most decisive (g) the enormous post-war growth of the world democratic and socialist forces, which basically weaken capitalist domination and the capitalist system as such.

After World War I the badly shaken capitalist system still possessed enough vitality so that it could, during the period of 1924-29, achieve a partial and temporary stabilization; but it has been unable to do even this after World War II. The basic crisis elements in the world capitalist situation continue to increase, with further catastrophes for that system looming in the not distant future. So far has the capitalist system degenerated and so greatly

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has its rival system of socialism developed, that the basic world issue of this period, behind the intense and immediate mass struggle to prevent another world war, has become that of socialism versus capitalism. History is categorically solving this question in favor of socialism.

THE GROWTH OF DEMOCRATIC AND SOCIALIST FORCES

World War II, even more than the first world war, was followed by a tremendous growth of the democratic and socialist forces throughout the world. It was a just and progressive people's war, and although it was not fought under proletarian revolutionary slogans, it gave birth to powerful revolutionary movements. The toiling masses, in the colonial lands as well as in the industrial countries, sickened and enraged at the long string of abuses and exploitations of the capitalist system, all of which were greatly accentuated by the horrors, oppressions, and butcheries of the great war, took drastic steps to eradicate them. This was particularly the case in the colonies and in those countries which had been dominated by the fascists.

The great post-war strengthening of the world democratic and socialist forces falls under four general heads: (a) the enormous increase in the political prestige of the U.S.S.R., because it had basically won the war against Hitler Germany and had an extremely rapid rise in its general power, due to its unparalleled post-war economic recovery and development; (b) the establishment of revolutionary People's Democracies in Czechoslovakia, Poland, Yugoslavia,* Rumania, Hungary, Bulgaria, and Albania, and the People's Democratic Republic of East Germany; (c) the growth of powerful national liberation movements in China, India, Indochina, Burma, Korea, Indonesia, Malaya, the Philippines, and various areas in Africa – a vast elemental movement which reached its climax in the great Chinese Revolution; (d) an enormous growth of trade unionism all over the world, together with a huge expansion of the youth, women's, and other mass movements.

These great mass struggles and movements, constituting as a whole an enormous revolt against capitalism, and basically in-

* Later betrayed by Tito.

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spired and led according to Marxist-Leninist principles, were fundamentally indigenous and spontaneous. One and all they were based upon the specific grievances and program of the respective toiling masses and peoples in general. It is stupid, the bourgeois allegation that the many revolutions of the period have been the results of Soviet plots and “infiltration.” But then, the capitalists are congenitally unable to conceive that conditions under capitalism both cause and justify revolution, and that socialism is a superior form of society to capitalism. Stalin swept away the “Russian-plot” drivel in his interview 14 years ago with Roy Howard, when he said: “The export of revolution is nonsense.... Every country will make its own revolution if it wants to, and if it does not want to then there will be no revolution.”¹

THE DRIVE OF AMERICAN IMPERIALISM FOR WORLD DOMINATION

A second great force operating in the post-war situation on the basis of the greatly weakened world capitalist system, in this case profoundly counter-revolutionary, is the drive of American imperialism for maximum profits and world domination. American monopoly capitalism, which has for over half a century been the major capitalist power and which enormously increased its wealth and productive capacity during World War I, is now out to reduce the rest of the world, socialist as well as capitalist, to its domination. All its policies, domestic and foreign, are constructed and geared to the achievement of this supreme imperialist goal.

American monopoly capitalism has long been striving in the general direction of world rulership. This was already clear in the aftermath of World War I. But the trend became especially manifest politically and otherwise during and after World War II. When the great Soviet victory at Stalingrad made it obvious to all that the Allies were going to win the war, Wall Street's drive for world dominion began developing with increasing speed and vigor. At first this imperialist push was accompanied by an elaborate ideological cover-up, to obscure from the world the ultra-reactionary perspective of one country becoming the master of all the rest. The power-hungry Wall Street imperialists at that time spoke “modestly” only of this country's “moral leadership of the world.” But appetite grows with eating, and now every protagonist of American capitalism, from Eisenhower on down, is dining

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into the ears of the peoples everywhere just how and why the United States is the natural economic, political, and military leader of the world. With characteristic hypocrisy, the imperialists tell the masses that this leading position "has been thrust upon us by history" and that "we have accepted it unwillingly" and with much heart-searching as to "our" fitness to perform such a great and unsought role.

The big cynical-minded monopolists who own and control the wealth of the United States and who write this country's basic policies, whether a Truman or an Eisenhower is in the Presidency, know that they have not even a ghost of a chance to realize their program of world conquest short of a great world war. But they are quite ready to take the supreme gamble even of a devastating atomic holocaust. There can be no other interpretation of the violently aggressive policy of United States militarism and war preparations that they have followed ever since the end of World War I. Characteristically, this cold-blooded war program is veiled by the most elaborate pretenses of its being the defense of world peace and democracy.

The United States, under cover of all this blather, is being pushed on to fight for world domination by a number of powerful reactionary forces. In a country such as the United States, controlled as it is by finance capital, these forces are decisive in determining its orientation:

First, the United States, as the most powerful of all the capitalist countries, is by this fact also the most intensely imperialist. Turning out about 65 percent of all the industrial production of the capitalist world, the need of the capitalist United States for more markets, raw materials, strategic military positions, and peoples to exploit, is imperative. Consequently, it undertakes to achieve these goals in the elementary capitalist way, by imperialist aggression, by ruthlessly crashing through all opposition, and by subjugating all other peoples. Inevitably also, as the most powerful capitalist empire ever created, the United States sets for itself the most ambitious imperialist goal ever directly aimed at by any capitalist state, the complete domination of the world. Even Hitler never had as an immediate objective such a grandiose perspective as that of Wall Street. In his imperialist drives he had to contemplate a world in which at least Japan and the United States would be powerful factors, but American imperialism counts on

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ruling the world alone.

Second, a key factor in the drive of American imperialism for world conquest is that the big Wall Street capitalists are undoubtedly alarmed at the realization that the world capitalist system is in danger of falling to pieces and that its basic enemy, world socialism, is growing by leaps and bounds. While they reject the validity of the Marxist-Leninist concept of the general crisis of capitalism, they at least are realistic enough to understand that their system is now showing startling symptoms of deep trouble. Their remedy for this situation is for them, with their vast wealth, industrial and military strength, and technical know-how, to smash the international socialist forces and to reorganize the bankrupt capitalist world, with the United States as the future dominating center and with all the other peoples paying tribute to it.

Third, and very important in impelling American imperialism onto a path of aggressive war and conquest, is the growing conviction in big capitalist circles that, in the present sick condition of world capitalism, the only way they can keep their industries in operation and their own fabulous maximum profits rolling in, is by a vast production of war munitions and eventually by war itself. This is the reactionary end to which the Keynesian policy of pump-priming has inevitably led.

Immediately after the end of World War II, driven on by the above forces, the United States launched out upon its program of world domination. The first major result of this was, by economic pressure, financial grants and loans, and political intimidation, to set up a measure of shaky American control over the capitalist world during the early post-war years. To do this was then not very difficult, in view of the fact that the United States emerged from the war enriched, virtually unscathed, and actually strengthened; whereas the erstwhile great capitalist empires – Great Britain, Germany, Japan, France, Italy, etc. – were in various states of economic war exhaustion, prostration, and devastation, ranging to complete paralysis.

The American capitalist hegemony was something new in the world. In the past one or another country – notably Great Britain in the mid-nineteenth century – has occupied a key, or even decisive, position in the capitalist world economy; but this was the first time in history that any single country had achieved the role of becoming virtually the acknowledged boss of all the other capi-

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talist powers. American capitalist hegemony was definitely a product of the general crisis of capitalism; it could not possibly have come into existence, even in its wobbly and incomplete form, except that the other capitalist powers were in a deep state of crisis. As we shall see later, however, the American capitalist hegemony has been disastrously weakened by the workings of its own contradictions.

THE BASIS OF THE COLD WAR

The Soviet Union entered the post-war period with a definite outlook of living in peace with the capitalist world, and this outlook continues, in line with the fundamental peace policy inherent in its socialist system. The co-existence perspective is in no sense contradictory to the Marxist-Leninist position that the present is a general period of revolution, with the obsolete capitalist system gradually being supplanted in the various countries by rising socialism. This conclusion is possible because, recognizing that socialism is primarily the affair of the peoples of the respective countries, who tend to choose their own system of society, the U.S.S.R. leaders definitely accept the reality that world society, over a considerable period ahead, will consist of both capitalist and socialist elements. Marxist-Leninists are by no means committed to the theory that socialism can be realized only by a simultaneous world-wide revolution or as a result of a great war. The historical fact is that all the countries that have so far embarked upon the road to socialism have done so, one-by-one, of course, with the help, protection, and solidarity of the world's workers against international counter-revolution.

That the U.S.S.R. follows a policy for a post-war world of peaceful co-existence with the capitalist states is made clear from many facts. First, the dissolution of the Communist International was not only a measure to help win the war but also, as Stalin indicated at the time, for thus "clearing the way to the future organization of the companionship of nations based upon their equality."² At the historic Teheran conference of Roosevelt, Churchill, and Stalin in December 1943, Stalin, proceeding on the same principle, signed the joint agreement, which declared: "We express our determination that our nations shall work together in the war and in the peace that will follow."³ Also, when the United Nations was formed in San Francisco, in April 1945, the U.S.S.R.

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took an active part and became a member, although it was vastly outnumbered in votes by the capitalist countries. In accordance with this peace perspective, the U.S.S.R., contrary to all the lies spread in this country, immediately upon the end of the war made drastic reductions in its armed forces.

On this matter Stalin has said: "Demobilization was carried out in three steps: the first and second steps, in the course of the year 1945; the third step, from May to September 1946. In addition, demobilization of the older age-groups of the personnel of the Soviet Union was carried out in 1946 and 1947. And in the beginning of 1948 all the remaining old age-groups were demobilized."⁴ Meyer adds these details: "The Soviet armed forces which crushed Hitler's *Wehrmacht* were close to 12 million strong. By October 1946, the Soviets had demobilized 30 age-groups, or about 83 percent of their wartime forces.... In 1951, France, with less than one-fifteenth of the Soviet frontier, had 22 soldiers, the United States, flanked by two oceans, had 18 soldiers, and the U.S.S.R. 12 soldiers per 1,000 inhabitants."⁵

So generally were the Communists resolved upon cultivating a peaceful co-existence with the capitalist states in the post-war period that this perspective actually gave birth to serious opportunist illusions in many Communist and Workers' parties. The worst expression of this right deviation was expressed by Earl Browder in the United States. Browder developed a crassly opportunist interpretation of the Teheran agreement, in which he not only asserted that the capitalist powers would drop their opposition to the U.S.S.R. and live in friendly cooperation with that country, but that also within the capitalist countries, thenceforth, specifically in the United States, class peace and class collaboration would reign, with the capitalists voluntarily doubling the workers' wages, and making other basic concessions.⁶ Sticking to this absurd conception of a capitalist utopia, led to Browder's expulsion from the Communist Party.⁷

American imperialism, however, with Great Britain as its junior partner, had no intention whatever of living in peaceful co-existence with the U.S.S.R. As we have seen, already during the war the Wall Street monopolists, with their sights definitely set upon ruling the post-war world, had not hesitated to betray the Soviet Union in the face of the common enemy, in the hope that that country, which they knew would refuse to submit to their

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domination, would, if weakened in the war, be unable to offer them successful resistance in the postwar period.

It is a fact, of course, that immediately the war was ended substantial demobilization of American ground forces took place. This, however, had nothing to do with any alleged plans of Wall Street to cultivate friendly relations with the U.S.S.R. It was based on two other quite different elements: First, the demobilization movement was precipitated by a huge, irresistible mass demand that the war being over the armed forces must be reduced – an expression of the basic anti-militarism of the American people. Secondly, the movement rested also upon the fact that the American militarists, founding their hopes for world conquest upon their possession of a supposed atom-bomb monopoly, pinned their faith on the air force and believed that large land armies were obsolete – hence their failure to make more active resistance to the mass demobilization movement.

Historically, it is an indisputable fact that with the cessation of World War II, the United States militarists began to plot and plan for a great anti-democratic, anti-socialist war. This course was facilitated by the death of Roosevelt, April 12, 1945, and the accession to the Presidency of the bitter Soviet-hater, Truman. He at once devoted himself energetically to the cultivation of the cold war, in preparation for a shooting war. The responsibility for the cold war rests primarily upon Wall Street finance capital, which has used the United States government as its facile tool. Succeeding chapters will trace the development of this Wall Street-precipitated cold war, in the light of the three great dynamic forces of the post-war period – the growing decay of world capitalism, the rapid growth of world socialism, and the drive of American imperialism for world mastery.

THE SECOND INTERNATIONAL AND THE COLD WAR

The Labor and Socialist International held its last pre-war general congress in 1933. During the war, with its parties all over Europe liquidated, it was in virtual hibernation. In their own way, the individual Socialist parties generally supported the war of the Allies, but there were also such manifestations as that of the German exile, Stampfer, who in New York brazenly advocated an alliance with Hitler, so that all guns could be turned against the Soviet Union.⁸ The L.S.I. held its reorganizing congress in Frankfurt,

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Germany, in July 1951. Its coming together caused no fear whatever to the world bourgeoisie.

Meanwhile, the rightwing Socialists everywhere, after the end of the war, began actively to support the drive of American imperialism against the U.S.S.R. With nothing of socialism left in their programs except a few radical phrases to fool the workers, they lined up solidly with the world capitalist attempt to save the capitalist system and to halt the growth of world socialism. In turn, they had followed the lead of Wilson, Roosevelt, and Keynes, so it was not illogical for them to become the ardent supporters of Truman and eventually Eisenhower. As they had betrayed the Russian, German, Austrian, and Hungarian revolutions after World War I, so they proceeded to betray everywhere the great socialist upheaval after World War II.

Characteristically, as phrase-making Social-Democrats, they gave their support to bankrupt capitalism in their own special way. They invented what they called "the third force," which was supposed to stand between the contending U.S.A. and U.S.S.R. in the cold war. This was only a thin pretext, however; "the third force" being in reality, an active supporter of American imperialism. In Europe there were many capitalists who, in a spirit of capitalist nationalism, showed a reluctance to put on the collar of Wall Street; but not the Social-Democrats – American capitalism had no more ardent supporters than they.

An important development in the Second International, however, was the growth of a strong left wing, especially in the middle and eastern European countries. This was typified by such men as Fierlinger in Czechoslovakia and Nenni in Italy. They were not wavering centrists, but elements genuinely on the way to the left. They have played a very important role in the post-war revolutionary developments in their respective countries. The Bevan movement in Great Britain, while animated by strong peace sentiments and containing many anti-capitalist elements, is primarily of the centrist type.

The Second International, when it came back into existence in Frankfurt in 1951, put its stamp of approval upon the pro-American, anti-Soviet policy that had already been worked out by the western Socialist parties. Some 33 countries were represented at the congress, 13 by "Socialists-in-exile." Dominant in the new organization was the British Labor Party. Morgan Phillips, one of

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its leaders, stated the political line of the again-resurrected Second International when he called United States imperialist policy “enlightened, progressive, and unselfish,” and declared that the purpose of the new organization was to unite the “non-Stalinist” (i.e., capitalist) world against communism. The outstanding “theoretical” leaders of the “Socialist International” were such rank opportunists as Phillips, Leon Blum (France), and Kurt Schumacher (West Germany) – the mere mention of whom indicates to what low political level the Second International had fallen.

51. Birth of the People's Democracies (1945-1947)

Europe emerged from World War II with the great masses of the workers and peasants in a revolutionary frame of mind. This was inevitable after the terrible slaughter and devastation of the capitalist-generated war. It was another dramatic demonstration of the effects of the obsolescence of the capitalist system, and the masses reacted accordingly. But in developing their revolutionary, anti-capitalist movements after this great war, the workers of Europe faced a very different situation than they did after the first world war. The revolutionary outburst in connection with the imperialist World War I was directed against the despotic governments which the workers held responsible for the war and which were still in office – in Russia, Germany, Austria, Hungary and Turkey. World War II, however, presented quite a different picture. The great national front of the peoples overthrew by military action the fascist governments, war-guilty and profoundly hated by the peoples. Most of the governments which succeeded them and which the workers later had to fight, had thus been members of the wartime national front, but had adopted a reactionary course especially upon the conclusion of the war. These elementary facts generally determined the course of the workers' revolutionary strategy both during and after the war.

The Anglo-American imperialists, even early in the war, especially after Stalingrad gave them a perspective of victory, were quite aware of the danger of revolution after the Hitler regime was defeated. Hence they moved systematically to prevent it. They associated this danger with the tremendous victories and advance of the Red Army. Fear of the Soviet forces occupying hitherto capitalist countries was, therefore, what motivated the Anglo-American invasion of Italy – a drive that was supposed (but failed) to re-conquer the whole Balkan and South European areas which, the reactionaries feared, were especially liable to go revolutionary. This also was the motivating reason causing the United States and Great Britain, at long last, to launch the deliberately delayed western front. They were afraid that if they postponed it any further the Red Army might occupy most of Europe and bring with it general revolution. To halt the revolution, and

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thus to deny the peoples of Europe the right to set up such governments as they saw fit, was the first step in the world-conquest program of Wall Street.

In this work of counter-revolution the American and British monopolists had as their most ardent and effective allies, the Vatican and the right Social-Democrats. As a result of their combined efforts, backed by the military occupation forces, the Anglo-American imperialists managed to check the revolution in France, Italy, West Germany, Belgium, Holland, and Franco Spain. Meanwhile, the Labor Party in Britain, which is Social-Democratic, held everything solid for capitalism in that country, and in the Scandinavian countries also, the Social-Democrats were the guardians of capitalism. In Greece, the British and Americans cynically shot down the revolution, and in Yugoslavia they bought up Tito. In Europe, therefore, the victorious revolution was finally restricted to Czechoslovakia, Poland, Hungary, Rumania, Bulgaria, Albania, and East Germany, involving about 100,000,000 people. With the Soviet Union nearby, these peoples could not be terrorized or deceived by the western powers into maintaining the capitalist system.

THE RISE OF THE PEOPLE'S DEMOCRACIES

The revolutionary countries of middle and eastern Europe, after being liberated by the Soviet Red Army, all set up what have become known as "People's Democracies." The evolving general pattern was similar in the several countries. The parties and other organizations that had been co-operating in the struggle against Hitlerism, especially those participating in the underground resistance movement, proceeded at the close of the war, and sometimes before, to set up national governments made up of all the anti-fascist elements. The resultant People's Democracies were, in fact, a further application of the anti-fascist front policy outlined by the seventh congress of the Communist International in 1935. Earlier forms of this historic policy, as we have seen, were those outlined in the fourth congress of the Comintern (see Chapter 37), the pre-war people's front movements, the great all-anti-fascist people's military alliance during the war, and the broad multi-party wartime underground movements and guerilla formations. The governments of the People's Democracies all definitely took shape in 1944-45 with overthrow of Hitler. They were the revolu-

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tionary continuation of the people's struggle during the war.

The broad character of the People's Democracies was illustrated by the Czechoslovakian government, which consisted of two Communist parties (Czech and Slovak), Social-Democratic Party, Czech National Party, Catholic People's Party, and the Slovak Democratic Party. In Poland the government bloc consisted of the Communists, Socialists, Peasants, and Democrats. The Fatherland Front in Bulgaria had five parties, and Yugoslavia, Hungary, Rumania, and Albania also had several parties each in the anti-fascist alliance comprising their governments.

A basic factor in all these situations was that the Socialist and Communist parties amalgamated, sloughing off their right opportunists in the process. This was true also in the People's Democratic Republic of East Germany. Everywhere the Communists, leaders of the underground, became the leading party in the new democratic governments.¹ There was also a new strong solidarity developed between the workers and the peasants. A striking feature too was the widespread revolt of the intellectuals against capitalist domination. And highly significant was the unexampled cooperation established between Catholic and non-Catholic workers in Poland (90 percent Catholic), Czechoslovakia, Hungary, and other strongly Catholic countries, despite the militant opposition of the Catholic Church.

The Anglo-American imperialists watched with great alarm the advent of the People's Democracies. Among their measures to meet such a contingency, they had prepared an all-around set of hand-picked puppet governments-in-exile, located in London and ready to take over their respective countries at the war's end. But the various peoples had quite other ideas about all this, and they elected their own types of government. The imperialists, however, with active support from the Vatican and Social-Democracy, have never ceased to this day carrying on intrigues and violent plots, to balk and defeat the democratic will of these peoples. In Poland, Hungary, Bulgaria, and Rumania, as the war came to an end, they organized civil wars in unsuccessful attempts to prevent the establishment of People's Democracies; in 1944-1947, they crushed the Greek People's Democracy, first with British and finally with American-equipped military forces; and they managed, with their money, eventually to subvert the willing Tito in Yugoslavia. And it was the American ambassador who, in a desperate effort to regain

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control of Czechoslovakia, caused 17 bourgeois ministers in February 1948 to resign from the national government, in the hope of creating a civil war; but the Czech workers, responding swiftly, defeated this “putsch” and came into decisive control of the Czech people’s state.² The Eisenhower-Dulles policy of “liberation” is a continuation of this civil war program.

THE NEW TYPE OF PROLETARIAN DICTATORSHIP

The new People’s Democracies adopted many far-reaching economic measures, aimed immediately at the reparation of the huge war damages. These policies included the break-up of the big landed estates (including in some cases the church lands) and the distribution of the soil to the peasants; the confiscation of all the lands and industries owned by fascist reactionaries; the nationalization of the major industries and services, including banks, coal, steel, electric power, railroads, inland transport, sea-borne shipping, telegraph, telephone and radio; the systematic cultivation of consumers’ cooperatives, drastic tax reforms, the establishment of state control over foreign trade, and the progressive development of planned production through two-, three-, and five-year plans. The People’s Democratic Republic of Germany also followed this general line.

The People’s Democracies did not set for themselves the immediate goal of socialism, but the basis of their program nevertheless was socialist. It shifted the decisive economic ownership and controls out of the hands of big land-owners and monopolists into those of the working class and other democratic forces. The result was not a “democratic capitalism,” as many believed at the time, but a transitional regime moving towards socialism.³

This people’s democratic state was a new form of the dictatorship of the proletariat. At the outset this fact was not generally recognized, even in Communist circles, but it became clear with the growth and evolution of the new regimes. As they strengthened their programs, both in policy and enforcement, the bourgeois elements in the government tended to be eliminated and the leading role of the working class stood out constantly more clearly. The general political process was that of a steady orientation to the left – towards a more definite form of the proletarian dictatorship and toward a more concretely socialist program. The People’s Democracies constituted, in various respects, “a new road to

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socialism.”⁴

The rise of the People's Democracies taught the Communist movement many valuable lessons of revolutionary strategy and tactics, which, as we shall see, were to have important consequences on later Communist policy. Among other things, the manner of their establishment re-emphasized what Marx had indicated long before, that in situations where bourgeois democratic processes were strongly present, it would be possible for the workers to establish socialism relatively peacefully. As mentioned in earlier chapters, Marx said: “If, for example, the working class in England and the United States should win a majority in Parliament, in Congress, it could legally abolish the laws and institutions which obstruct its development.”⁵ Lenin demonstrated the same principle on the eve of the Russian Revolution of November 1917 when, in the existing democratic situation, he proposed “a peaceful development of the revolution.”⁶

In drawing lessons from the relatively peaceful establishment of the People's Democracies in central and eastern Europe through the development of parliamentary majorities, the elementary facts must not be overlooked, however, that during World War II, through military struggle, the Red Army and the peoples' insurrectionary movements, by defeating the Hitler forces, had already broken the backbone of the big capitalists and landowners, and that the post-war bourgeois governments in these countries were consequently weak and flabby. In Poland, Rumania, and other of these countries, however, the reactionaries did manage to organize small-scale civil wars, despite the efforts of the workers to maintain a peaceful development.

THE COALITION GOVERNMENT IN ITALY

From the closing stages of the war the Italian working class began rapidly to organize its forces. The Communist Party increased from 5,000 members during Mussolini's terror to 2,300,000 members in 1947 under Palmiro Togliatti's brilliant leadership, and it polled 20 percent of the national vote, 4,745,000. The Socialist Party, led by Pietro Nenni, also made a strong growth. The two parties, in their majority, favored fusion, and were working together in close cooperation. And the trade unions, uniting Communist, Socialist and Catholic workers, grew swiftly into the gigantic General Confederation of Labor, with

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6,000,000 members, and with the able Communist union leader Giuseppe Di Vittorio at its head. The Communist Party, which, in Italy, as everywhere else in Europe, had achieved great prestige in its heroic struggles during the war, won the hegemony over the Italian working class and also developed a strong influence among the peasantry and the Catholic toilers generally.

Upon emerging from the war, the Communists in Italy, as elsewhere, moved for a coalition government composed of all the anti-fascist forces. Such a government gradually took shape, after a fashion. In the election of May 1946 the Communists won 104 seats, the Socialists 115 seats, and the Christian Democratic Party (Catholic) 207 seats. In the resultant De Gasperi government, the Communists held four Cabinet posts, with Togliatti as Minister of State. The Socialists had a similar group in the Cabinet. The government turned its attention to the overwhelming problems of reconstruction, with the Communists taking the lead in the reparation of the huge war damages. In May of 1946 the Communist-led referendum knocked out the monarchy and established Italy as a republic.

But powerful forces were at work to prevent Italy from becoming a People's Democracy, as many countries in Eastern Europe were doing. The big Italian employers, of course, were violently opposed to the democratic course of events. The Vatican, as elsewhere in Europe, was exerting all its strength and prestige to keep capitalism from collapsing. The right wing Social-Democrats, actively supported by American and British labor opportunists, were naturally opposed to a course that would eventually abolish Italian capitalism. And dominating the whole scene were the armed forces of Great Britain and the United States, violently anti-socialist.

These combined forces of reaction managed to check the growth of a People's Democracy in Italy. In 1947 agents of the British Labor Party and the American Federation of Labor, together with the Saragat Italian right wing, managed to split the Italian Socialist Party, swinging 50 seats in Parliament definitely to De Gasperi. During the same year the United States, which had been pouring U.N.R.R.A. funds and materials into Italy, made the De Gasperi government a large loan, with the usual strings to it, and also in 1947 that government, the expression of the capitalist-Vatican forces, obediently presented a reactionary agrarian pro-

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gram which forced the Communist and left Socialist ministers to resign. Italy had turned its back upon people's democracy and embarked into the cold war, a feeble satellite of militant American imperialism.

THE FIGHT FOR DEMOCRACY IN FRANCE

In France, as the war approached its conclusion, the situation was somewhat as in Poland, Czechoslovakia, etc., in that the Anglo-American imperialists had a conservative government-in-exile ready to take over once the hostilities ceased. Located in London, this was headed by the former fascist, General Charles de Gaulle, who had distinguished himself from the gang of French militarists by advocating a defense of the country. Despite his shady political record, de Gaulle was groomed to be the head of liberated France. The guerilla fighters, however, had different ideas. As early as August 1943, the National Council of Resistance (C.N.R.) issued a manifesto, which declared, "The C.N.R. claims upon the whole territory, the rights and responsibilities of trustees and provisional organs of national sovereignty."⁷

When the Germans were driven out of Paris, de Gaulle and his provisional government were, however, promptly installed in power, with the backing of the powerful British and American armed forces. Paris was freed in August 1944, and in April 1945 the first general election was held (with 3,000,000 French workers still prisoners in Germany). The results showed the Communist Party to be the strongest party in France. De Gaulle at once moved to disarm the resistance forces, which caused the two Communists in his Cabinet to resign. In the general elections of October 1945, the Communists polled 5,696,000 votes, against 4,760,000 for the Socialists, and 4,580,000 for the Catholic party, the Popular Republican Movement (M.R.P.), giving the C.P. 152 seats, the S.P. 142 seats, and the M.R.P. 141 seats. There were also a few smaller parties.

The two parties of the working class had an absolute majority in Parliament. The Communist Party proposed a government based upon both parties, and their eventual fusion into one organization. As the leader of the largest party, General Secretary Thorez of the C.P. was entitled to the premiership. The General Confederation of Labor (C.G.T.) had grown swiftly to an organization of some 5,000,000 members. Although it had two general

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secretaries, Jouhaux and Frachon, the latter, a Communist, represented by far the bulk of the membership. As Klugmann remarks, "The position was favorable to lead the French people forward, continuing the élan and enthusiasm of the Resistance, towards a new popular democracy and the crippling of the power of the French trusts."⁸

Leon Blum, however, opposed this whole perspective. As a Social-Democratic defender of the capitalist system, he could not support any such revolutionary program. As head of the Socialist Party, he vetoed the question of the amalgamation of the two parties and insisted upon a tri-partite government, including the M.R.P. Henceforth, his line was to maneuver with the de Gaullists against the Communists. During his savage course Hitler had murdered 6,000,000 Jews and many others, but he kept Blum a prisoner near Paris, comfortably lodged, with two servants, while he was destroying Semard, Peri, and countless other Communist fighters. Hitler knew a tool of reaction when he saw one.⁹

In 1944 the National Council of Resistance adopted unanimously a broad plan of nationalization, including "the great monopolized means of production, the fruits of our common labor, of the source of power, of the riches of mineral wealth, of insurance companies and banks."¹⁰ Although paying lip service to this program, de Gaulle had not the slightest intention of carrying it out. In his coalition government there were five Communists, including Maurice Thorez, as Vice-President of the Council. Due to internal friction in his Cabinet, however, the would-be dictator, de Gaulle, was forced to resign in January 1946.

Of the four French governments during the next year, three were headed by Socialists – Felix Gouin, Leon Blum, and Paul Ramadier, a fact which did precisely nothing to advance the course of socialism in France. In the November 1946 elections, the Communist Party, with about 1,000,000 members, increased its seats to 173, while those of the Socialist Party were reduced to 95 as a result of the latter's reactionary policies. As in Italy, the French workers had turned to the Communists for leadership, and the rapidly growing General Confederation of Labor was overwhelmingly left in its sentiments and leadership. In January 1947 Blum, like De Gasperi in Italy, got a big loan from the United States, \$250 million, and also orders to oust the Communists from the government. Therefore, in May 1947 the strike-breaking

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Socialist Premier, Ramadier, with the aid of the de Gaullists, expelled the Communists from his Cabinet.

By this action (which was followed by a similar course in Italy, Norway, Belgium, and Denmark), France was reduced to the status of an American satellite, as Italy had been. Blum's line was to save capitalism, not to eliminate it. The French S.P. left wing, unlike that in Poland, Czechoslovakia, Italy, etc., was not strong enough to shape the party line. Borkenau, the anti-Communist fanatic, is thus able lyingly to boast that "It is by a hair's breadth that France escaped the fate of bureaucracy and Popular Democracy."¹¹ Blum, the champion of the tricky "third force," expressed thus his acceptance of his country's tutelage to Wall Street monopoly capital, "For my part, I believe in the true disinterestedness of the United States."¹²

THE BRITISH LABOR GOVERNMENT

Great Britain did not escape the wave of revolutionary sentiment that swept Europe at the close of the world war. But the capitalists had a faithful force on guard to protect their interests. In the Protestant British Isles the Vatican was in no position to help the bourgeoisie, as it did in France, Italy, Belgium, and Spain; but that other defender of capitalism, the Social-Democracy, in the shape of the Labor Party, was able to do the job.

In the British general elections of July 1945 the Labor Party won a sweeping victory, securing 395 seats out of a total of 640 in the House of Commons. During the war the Labor Party had been in a coalition government with the Churchill Tories, but now it was able to set up a one-party government, the chief figures in which were the extreme right-wingers, Clement Attlee, Ernest Bevin, and Herbert Morrison.

The Communist Party, led by Harry Pollitt, polled only a very small vote, but it exerted a strong influence in the trade unions. Many prominent trade union leaders were either members or supporters of the party, which had a broad rank and file following. Thus, at a *Daily Worker* conference in London in June 1947 there were present 829 delegates representing 2,600,000 trade unionists.¹³

In the election campaign the Labor Party put forward an eight-point program, calling for a partial nationalization of industry, improvements in housing, education, social insurance, etc.

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The official spokesmen called this socialism, but lest the workers expect too much, they added significantly that "Socialism cannot come overnight, as the product of a week-end revolution."¹⁴ In supporting the Labor Party, the workers undoubtedly believed they were voting for socialism. Sharing largely the revolutionary moods of workers elsewhere in Europe, they wanted to put an end to the system which, in the 17 years prior to the outbreak of the war, had kept an average of 14 out of each 100 workers unemployed.¹⁵

The Labor Party was in power from July 1945 to October 1951. During this period, it nationalized the Bank of England, transport, fuel and power, steel and civil aviation¹⁶ – about 20 percent, all told, of industry. But these industries remained under management of the capitalists, Lord Catto continued as head of the Bank of England, Lord Hyndley presided over the Coal Board, shareholders were compensated in full with government bonds, and their dividends were guaranteed by the state.¹⁷

Much was made of all this by the right Social-Democratic leaders, claims being put forth that full employment had been permanently established and that there had been a basic shift in the national income in favor of the workers. Crossman thus sums up the official Labor Party interpretation of what happened under its regime: "By 1951 Britain had, in all the essentials, ceased to be a capitalist country."¹⁸

Harry Pollitt, British Communist leader, explodes this nonsense. He points out that after the British Labor governments "half the wealth of England and Wales is still owned by one percent of the population."¹⁹ And the Marxist economist Eaton refutes in detail the extravagant claims of the British Social-Democrats. Actually the nationalized industries remained under capitalist management and brought them in higher profits than ever. Meanwhile, working class real wages sank. Taking 1938 as 100, wages, by the end of 1951, went up to only 215; whereas profits climbed to 322. "In 1951, the average wage a worker was taking home bought 7 percent less than in 1947."²⁰ The much boasted steady employment was due to the post-war industrial and munitions boom, not to any basic changes made by the Labor Party in the capitalist system. The only real benefit the workers got out of the Labor Party regime, says Eaton, was an improved state health system. What the Labor Party had done in Great Britain was not

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to establish socialism, but to strengthen state monopoly capitalism. Actually, all through the Labor Party period, Great Britain remained in chronic capitalist crisis.

The British Labor Party followed a policy in foreign affairs identical with that of Churchill. The leading party of the Second International, it militantly attacked the Soviet Union, was heavily responsible for the post-war defeat of the democratic forces in Greece, Italy, Belgium, and France, stood guard over the menaced colonial system, and followed the political leadership of the United States.

It was a bit difficult for the untamed monopolists of the United States, to whom even the mildest socialist demagoguery is revolutionary, to realize that the Labor Party of Great Britain was not going to introduce socialism, but was in reality a rescue force for stricken capitalism in Europe. That they soon saw the point, however, was evidenced by the huge loan of almost \$4 billion which they extended the Labor Government in 1945. This loan was the American imperialists' first great step in subordinating England, as they had done to France and Italy. Meanwhile, they maneuvered eventually to bring Churchill back into power, which in 1951 they and the British monopolists were able to do. The Labor Government had served its purpose of cushioning the great shock after the war, and this done, they cast it aside.

MILITARY REPRESSION IN GERMANY AND JAPAN

At the end of World War II, the capitalist powers, wishing to avoid the mistakes made after World War I, proceeded to occupy militarily the defeated countries, especially Germany and Japan. In these countries, as the sequel showed, their main purposes were to prevent, by military domination, the outbreak of revolution, to rescue and preserve the stricken capitalist system, and, eventually, to re-arm these countries and to bring them into the general capitalist anti-Soviet coalition which was already contemplated during the closing phases of World War II.

If left to itself at the end of the war, Germany undoubtedly would have established a People's Democracy on the general pattern of the governments that were being set up in Poland, Czechoslovakia, Hungary, and other countries in eastern Europe. Proof of this was to be seen in eastern Germany, which was occupied by the Red Army and where the people had a free hand in their revo-

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lutionary aspirations. They promptly established there the German Democratic Republic, based upon an amalgamation of the Communist and Social-Democratic parties, and with a program akin to the People's Democracies.

In western Germany, however, occupied as it was by the American, British, and French armies, the American-bossed forces of reaction managed to stave off the threatening revolution. While they tolerated the reorganization of the workers' parties and trade unions, they were keen to block every manifestation of working-class militancy. It was only in late 1954 that the workers in West Germany were having their first post-war major strikes. The line of the Social-Democratic Party, led first by Schumacher and then by Ollenhauer, dovetailed with the policy of the capitalist military occupation. The Socialists refused all collaboration with the Communists, supported the program of the Truman Doctrine, Marshall Plan, N.A.T.O., and the violent American anti-Soviet campaign. Only belatedly did they take a stand against the rearming of Germany. As a consequence of this line, the capitalist program for the rearming and renazification of West Germany, under the general aegis of American imperialism, has proceeded apace.

In Japan the line of the military occupation, which was solely American, has been basically the same as in West Germany. Semi-feudal Japan, whose bourgeois revolution of 1868 was only partial, was ripe for the establishment of a People's Democracy at the end of World War II. Realizing this, the American authorities, headed by the petty despot General MacArthur, undertook, successfully, to subvert the revolution by the introduction of a whole series of bourgeois reforms. They "gave" Japan a "democratic" constitution, reduced the monarchy to a constitutional basis, carried through a limited land reform, and "dissolved" the monster Zaibatsu industrial, financial, and landowning monopolies.²¹

All types of workers' organizations – parties, unions, peasant bodies, cooperatives, cultural societies, etc. – for the first time in Japanese history grew rapidly in the post-war period. The Communist Party, led by Tokuda, Nosako, and others, for many years underground, had heroically fought against the Japanese war-makers ever since the invasion of China in 1931. It proposed to work towards the establishment of a People's Democracy in Japan. But the Socialist Party, like the Social-Democrats in western

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Europe, would have none of this. They proposed only a mild democratization of Japan under the over-rule of beneficent Wall Street. Between May 1947 and February 1948, their leader, Tetsu Katayama, was Premier of Japan in a bourgeois coalition government.²² The general effect of the Social-Democratic policy was to stifle the revolutionary energy of the working class and peasantry, and thus to enable the capitalists and landlords to grab again their industries, lands, and political controls.

When MacArthur felt that the situation was again somewhat in hand for the ruling classes, he opened up his guns against the left. After arbitrarily calling off a couple of general strikes of government employees, in June 1950 he outlawed the Communist Party, which had polled 2,984,627 votes, or 9.6 percent of the total cast in the national elections of a couple of days earlier. This marked the beginning of a wide purge of left and progressive forces on the McCarthy pattern. Meanwhile, under continued American domination, Japan is being readied for its place in the projected American war front.

52. Expansion of Trade Unions and Other Mass Organizations

Besides-producing the People's Democracies of middle and eastern Europe and strong democratic political movements in western Europe, the great post-World War II revolutionary wave brought about an enormous growth of other working class and people's organizations, of which the trade unions are the most elementary. Prior to the war the unions in Hitler-occupied Europe had been almost completely wiped out. But at the conclusion of the war they went into a swift resurgence that carried them to far higher levels of organization than ever before in the history of the labor movement. By the same token, the post-war upheavals also brought about a tremendous expansion of trade unionism in the colonial and semi-colonial areas, particularly in Asia, Africa, and Latin America.

Among the new unions in these areas, the third Congress of the World Federation of Trade Unions listed the following: All-Korea Federation of Labor (1945), All-Indonesia Trade Union Centre (1946), Congress of Labor Organizations of the Philippines (1941), Viet-Nam C.G.T. (1946), All Burma Trade Union Congress (1945), Central Council of Unified Trade Unions of Iran (1943), Egyptian Trade Union Congress (1946), Trade Union of Workers of Iran, General Confederation of Unions of Morocco, Nigerian Trade Union Congress, South African Trades and Labor Council, Transvaal Council of Non-European Trade Unions.¹ In Japan, the trade union movement leaped from practically nothing in 1945 to 6,533,954 in 1948.²

In this vast trade union movement the workers tremendously increased their hold in industry by the establishment of their right to a decisive voice in the setting of their wages and working conditions. A major manifestation of this great sweep of unionization was its predominantly left and Communist leadership. The new, essentially Communist, type of post-war trade unionism, was characterized by a number of marked features, among them: (a) it encompassed vast masses of workers – women, unskilled, Negroes, etc. – hitherto virtually untouched by unionism; (b) it spread into many countries where trade unionism previously had been weak or even unknown; (c) it broke with traditional craft union conceptions

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and put the central stress upon industrial unionism; (d) it was highly political in character and cooperative with all other organized bodies of the working class; and (e) it was animated by a powerful sense of class unity, breaking down all political barriers in the working class and including in its ranks Communists, Socialists, Anarcho-syndicalists, Catholics, and others.

FORMATION OF THE WORLD FEDERATION OF TRADE UNIONS

The World Federation of Trade Unions, the crystallization of the new, broad trade union movement, was born in 1945. Although the pre-war world organization, the International Federation of Trade Unions, headed by the right Social-Democrats, Citrine and Schevenels, as Lorwin says, "at this time claimed 19,000,000 members in 33 countries, it was little more than a name and a memory."³ Already, early in the war, the need for a new organization was felt. This resulted in the formation of the Anglo-Soviet Trade Union Committee in December 1941. The A.F. of L., true to its inveterate red-baiting character, refused to join this; so in July 1942 the Anglo-American Trade Union Committee was established. This dualism was the germ of an eventual split in the ranks of world labor.

Under the growing pressure for a new organization the British Trades Union Congress, at the instance of the Anglo-Soviet Committee, called a general labor conference, which eventually took place in London, February 6, 1945.⁴ In attendance were 230 delegates of 63 organizations from all over the world, representing some 60,000,000 workers. The C.I.O. was present but the A.F. of L. stayed away. At this time the armies of the U.S.A. and the U.S.S.R. were fighting jointly to smash Hitler, but the reactionaries at the head of the A.F. of L. would not let themselves be "contaminated" by contact with the Russian workers.

On September 25, 1945, the world labor congress was held in Paris. This brought together 185 delegates, representing 66,700,000 workers in 65 national and 86 international organizations, and coming from 56 countries.⁵ Again the A.F. of L. ostentatiously held aloof, the only important labor organization in the world to do so. The C.I.O., however, with Sidney Hillman (1887-1946) heading the delegation, sent 20 representatives. The congress definitely established the W.F.T.U. It set up a General

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Council of 71 members. Louis Saillant of France was chosen general secretary, and Sir Walter Citrine of Great Britain, chairman. It also set up an Executive Committee, consisting of nine, including, besides Saillant and Citrine, Leon Jouhaux (France), Sidney Hillman (U.S.A.), V. Kuznetsov (U.S.S.R.), Lombardo Toledano (Mexico), H. F. Chu (China), Giuseppe Di Vittorio (Italy), and Evert Kupers (Netherlands). The *Preamble* stated the purposes of the organization as follows:⁶

“(a) To organize and unite the trade unions of the whole world, irrespective of race, nationality, religion, or political opinion;

“(b) To assist the workers in less developed countries in setting up their trade unions;

“(c) To carry on a struggle for the extermination of all fascist forms of government and every manifestation of fascism, under whatever form it operates or by whatever name it may be known;

“(d) To combat war and the causes of war and to work for a stable peace....

“(e) To represent the interests of world labor in all international organizations, resting upon agreements and conventions concluded between the United Nations;

“(f) To organize the common struggle of trade unions in all countries for democratic liberties, full employment, improvement of wages, hours and working conditions, for adequate social insurance, and for all other measures furthering the social and economic well-being of the workers; and

“(g) To plan and organize the education of trade union members on the question of international labor unity.”

The W.F.T.U. represented a far greater international trade union organization numerically than the workers had ever before been able to create. It not only contained the labor movement of Europe, including such new contingents as Poland 2,000,000, Yugoslavia 800,000, Rumania 1,500,000, Hungary 1,000,000, etc., but it also embraced many colonial and semi-colonial countries where previously the unions were very small, or even non-existent, including Latin America, Asia, and Africa.⁷ This greater breadth numerically also expressed itself politically in the general type of the program, as in the *Preamble*. This document, not raising the question of the ultimate goal of the working class, was purposely framed so as to make possible the affiliation of all political tenden-

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cies of workers – Communists, Socialists, Anarcho-syndicalists, Catholics, etc. It was of the all-anti-fascist front character which had become the general pattern of progressive labor.

THE STRUGGLE FOR WORLD LABOR UNITY

The organization of the W.F.T.U. was a magnificent achievement, a true reflection of the post-war fighting spirit of the workers. There were within it, however, many hostile European right-wing Social-Democratic elements, inveterate enemies of labor unity, whether in the industrial or the political field. But so great was the workers' urge for unity at the close of the war that they did not dare openly to oppose it in the unions. The leaders even had to merge the decrepit International Federation of Trade Unions into the W.F.T.U., a consolidation which took place in December 1945. The A.F. of L., although a member of the I.F.T.U., did not attend the dissolution meeting.

However, the A.F. of L. reactionaries, blatant labor imperialists, dared to take a bolder stand against the W.F.T.U. than their Social-Democratic brothers in Europe. Closely attuned to the policies of the U.S. State Department, they realized that hostility against, not cooperation with, the Russians was to be the monopolists' political line of the post-war period. Nor were the A.F. of L. rank-and-file members militant enough to force the leaders to abandon this disruptive position. With the young and progressive C.I.O., however, in which the Communists and other left forces enjoyed a powerful influence, the situation was very different. The Murrays, Careys, and other conservative elements had to go along. They even wrote a favorable report of the C.I.O. labor delegation to the Soviet Union in October 1945.⁸

From the outset the A.F. of L. leaders brazenly sabotaged the work of the W.F.T.U., and therewith the interests of the world proletariat. In January 1946, when the W.F.T.U. demanded of the United Nations at the first meeting of the General Assembly, that it, as the spokesman of 65,000,000 workers, be granted a seat in an advisory capacity in the General Assembly, and that it be a working member of the Economic and Social Council, the A.F. of L., with the full backing of the American U.N. delegation, submitted similar demands for itself. The result was that not only the W.F.T.U. was given consultative rights in the Economic and Social Council, but also the A.F. of L. and a whole group of other or-

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ganizations, a decision which weakened the entire proposition. The A.F. of L. leadership was preparing new splitting activities, which we shall deal with further along.

THE WORLD YOUTH ORGANIZATION

During the period of the general crisis and decline of capitalism, the epoch of imperialist wars and proletarian revolutions, the youth are playing an increasingly vital role in all phases of the labor movement. This is because the ever-sharpening class struggle demands from the workers and their allies those qualities of imagination, daring, courage, strength, endurance, and resolution, which, above all, are the characteristics of the youth of both sexes. In the broad, sharp struggle against fascism, the fighting working youth is imperative, to meet boldly the hoodlum gangs of the fascists. The youth are needed, too, both in the undergrounds and on the open battlefields, to win the civil and imperialist wars provoked by the imperialists. And when it comes to the building of socialism by the victorious working class, the energy, initiative, and working capacity of the youth are indispensable. These basic lessons have been taught by the struggles of the youth against fascism in France, Germany and Italy; by their valiant participation in the long and hard-fought civil wars in China, and by their activity in the building of socialism in the U.S.S.R. and the People's Democracies. Never were the youth such a key factor in the fighting, creative forces of the labor movement as during these crucial years.

Lenin understood fundamentally this revolutionary role of the youth,⁹ and as the Young Communist International grew and functioned it expressed the new tasks thrown upon the youth of the world by the breaking down of world capitalism and the rise of world socialism. The Y.C.I. cultivated international and national youth organization, a breadth of program, a united-front spirit, and an intense political militancy that were all quite unknown in the weak, anemic, skeleton youth organizations of the Second International. During the 24 years of life of the Y.C.I., from 1919 to 1943,¹⁰ these young men and women fighters proved their indispensability in the people's front political struggle against fascism, in fighting through the democratic wars of the period, and in the building of socialism.

Not unnaturally, therefore, the youth were fully represented

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in the widespread revolutionary outburst of the workers and their allies following World War II. One of the most pronounced aspects of the whole situation was the growth of enormous youth organizations in many countries, the wide expansion of all sorts of organized youth activities, and the development of an international youth movement that dwarfed even the big organizations set up in former years by the Young Communist International.

The post-war youth movement began to take international form in Europe through the establishment in London, in 1942, of the World Youth Council by the representatives of young people of 29 nations. Its successor, the World Federation of Democratic Youth, was organized, also in London, in November 1945, by 437 youth delegates and 148 observers, representing 30 million members in youth organizations in 63 countries.¹¹ Guy de Boisson was elected president. By 1947 membership of the W.F.D.Y. had gone up to 48 million, and by 1953 to 85 million in 88 countries.¹²

The W.F.D.Y. is a broad united-front movement, comprising Communists, Socialists, Catholics, workers, peasants, students – young people of every nation and category. Such an immense youth organization is largely without precedent in political history. During the pre-war fight against Hitlerism two broad youth congresses were organized, through Communist initiative. The International Federation of League of Nations Societies called the first, held in Geneva, Switzerland, in August 1936, representing 32 countries. The second met in Poughkeepsie, New York, in August 1938, representing 54 countries. But the post-war W.F.D.Y. surpasses this by far in numerical strength, breadth of organization, and clarity of program. It also possesses great unity, successfully resisting the Social-Democratic efforts to split it.

The W.F.D.Y. cultivates all the demands and interests of youth – education, jobs, sports, political activities, etc. In 1946, under W.F.D.Y. influence, the World's Student Congress at Prague organized the International Union of Students, with some 3,000,000 members. The W.F.D.Y. carries on elaborate activities among children. Above all, the W.F.D.Y. fights for peace and democracy. It holds great youth congresses and festivals every three years, with mass council meetings in between. These broad gatherings are upon a gigantic scale utterly unknown to the Social-Democracy. Its third congress in Bucharest, July 1953, had 1,515 delegates from 106 countries. The W.F.D.Y. established its head-

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quarters in Paris, and it has played a very important part in the fight for peace during the crucial years of the cold war.

THE WOMEN'S INTERNATIONAL DEMOCRATIC FEDERATION

Like the youth, women also face new political responsibilities and opportunities in the present period. They confront the dread danger of fascist subjugation and, on the other hand, the socialism of the Soviet Union shows the splendid perspectives that await womankind when capitalism is abolished. As workers, women play an immense and growing role in industry and the labor movement; as home-builders, they are acquiring a new dignity; as citizens, they are a powerful constructive force, and as fighters for peace, they stand in the very front line.

The tremendous Women's International Democratic Federation, headed by Madame Cotton, is the world expression of woman's new economic, intellectual, and political role. This splendid organization is the culmination of the work of generations of dauntless women fighters for freedom – Mary Wollstonecraft, Theroigne de Mericourt, Lucrecia Mott, Harriet Tubman, Louise Michel, Clara Zetkin, Nadezhda Krupskaya, Alexandra Kollontai, Mother Jones, Ella Reeve Bloor, Dolores Ibarruri, Anita Whitney, Elizabeth Gurley Flynn, and countless others.¹³

The W.I.D.F. had as forerunners, as we have seen, the preliminary work of the Second International, but especially that of the Third International. In the pre-war fight against fascism a broad Women's World Committee against War and Fascism was also organized and carried on an active fight against advancing Hitlerism. The W.I.D.F., a wide united-front organization containing working women of every group and every category, was organized in Paris in November 1945, with 900 delegates present from 42 countries.¹⁴ By 1947 the organization reported a membership of 81 million in 44 countries, and at its 1953 congress in Copenhagen it had affiliated organizations in 70 countries, "representing hundreds of millions of women in all parts of the world."¹⁵

The program of the W.I.D.F. covers all the general interests of the broad working masses, as well as the specific demands of women. It lays the greatest stress upon the central issue of preserving world peace, and it has been a strong force against the warmongers during the cold war period.

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The great post-war women's movement, as with the youth and the trade unions, expresses under present-day conditions the modern progressive policy of the workers and their allies. This is the broad, all-out, united front against fascism and war, enunciated by the historic seventh congress of the Communist International in 1935 and since then taken up by immense sections of humanity fighting for peace and freedom. The Second International, with its reactionary policy of tailing along after warlike American imperialism, has from the outset looked with hostility upon these enormous mass movements and has spared no efforts to disrupt and to split them.

THE EUROPEAN MASS COMMUNIST PARTIES

Of vital importance in the early post-war growth of broad mass organizations – trade unions, youth, women, etc. – was the expansion of the Communist parties that took place at this time. Some of this growth we have already indicated in passing. At the British Empire Communist Conference, held in London early in 1947, a table of the membership of the world's Communist parties was presented, from which the following figures are mainly taken, to indicate the strength at that time of the Communist parties in Europe: Soviet Union 6,000,000; France 1,000,000; Italy 2,100,000; Czechoslovakia 1,700,000; Poland 700,000; Bulgaria 450,000; Yugoslavia 400,000; Rumania 500,000; Hungary 600,000; Belgium 100,000; Spain 60,000; Denmark 60,000; Finland 40,000; Sweden 50,000; Norway 40,000; and Germany 400,000 in the West and 1,700,000 (united Communists and Socialists) in the East. Many of these parties have since greatly grown. This represented a membership increase for the various parties of from ten to fifty times over pre-war.¹⁶ It dwarfed the weak growth of the Second International parties in western Europe. It was a basic consequence of the sound leadership given by the Communist parties in the long and bitter struggle against Hitlerism.

Generally, the voting strength of these Communist parties ranged from three to ten times their membership. The parties speedily developed a powerful press. Already in 1947, the Communist Party of France had 14 dailies with 1,500,000 circulation, among them the famous *L'Humanite*, with 500,000 readers, as well as 76 weeklies with some 2,000,000 circulation. The Polish Workers (Communist) Party had nine dailies with 800,000 read-

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ers, and a large number of weeklies and monthlies. The Italian Communist Party had 14 dailies, chief among them *L'Unita*, with 500,000 circulation. The Communist Party in Czechoslovakia, with its leading organ, *Rude Pravo*, circulating 500,000 copies per day, had four other dailies, eighteen political weeklies, and many other papers for women, youth, peasants, children, etc. The parties in Bulgaria, Rumania, Hungary, Yugoslavia, Albania, etc. also had a large and growing press.

The Communist parties were composed predominantly of proletarians, the Italian Communist Party, characteristically, having 53 percent of its membership made up of industrial workers. The parties also drew into their ranks at the close of the war unprecedented numbers of women, peasants, and Catholic workers. And all over Europe, save in the Social-Democratic strongholds of Scandinavia and the British Isles, the strong turn of intellectuals of all kinds to the Communist parties was one of the most striking features of the whole post-war mass upsurge. The Communist parties were and are of an entirely higher grade than those of the Second International. Parties of Lenin's "new type," they were proletarian, unified, energetic, and possessed of a revolutionary spirit and program utterly unknown in the Second International. They universally had won the respect of the workers and the fear of the employers.

To sum up the early post-war situation in Europe: The European capitalists, aided by Anglo-American armed forces and financial help, and especially with the devoted service of the Vatican and the Social-Democracy, had managed to retain control of western Europe, with, however, only a very precarious hold upon France and Italy. But generally the position of capitalism in Europe was very greatly weakened as a result of the post-war revolutionary movement. In the Baltic states and the People's Democracies of middle and eastern Europe, capitalism had lost control of another 100,000,000 people and much of the richest territory in Europe. Besides, in those parts that remained capitalist-controlled, there was a tremendous growth of the Communist parties, trade unions, and women, youth, cultural, and other mass organizations – all of them constituting a vast anti-capitalist force. Another great blow like this and European capitalism would be only a memory.

53. The Revolution in the Colonial World (1945-1949)

World War II had as its aftermath a great intensification of the national liberation movement throughout the world, particularly in Asia. The vast struggle, involving over one-half of the human race, is tearing away the very foundations of world capitalism, the colonial and semi-colonial regimes. This has weakened the capitalist system even more than the loss of the European countries to socialism, the splitting of the world market in two, and the enormous growth of the world trade union and other mass movements during the post-war period. Lenin has taught us (see chapter 34) that without colonies capitalism is doomed.

The broad colonial revolution, which still continues to develop, is caused by the attempts of the national capitalists and petty bourgeoisie in the colonies to break or relax the restrictions placed upon their growth and development by the foreign imperialists, and beneath this force is the elemental revolt of the working class and the peasantry against the unbearable conditions of destitution, oppression, and exploitation enforced upon them by the imperialists and the big national capitalists and landlords.

Generally, it is a bourgeois democratic revolution, which is in varying degrees of maturity in the several countries. In China, however, with the masses definitely on the road to socialism, it passes beyond the scope of a bourgeois democratic revolution. The colonial revolutionary development depends, among other factors, upon the degree of industrialization attained and especially upon whether or not the working class, with the Communist Party at its head, has achieved the leadership of the movement. When the workers lead, as in China, the revolution tends to an open break with imperialism and the big national capitalists, and to the establishment of a progressive regime and real national independence; but where the national capitalists retain the hegemony, as in India, the movement tends to remain within the scope of bourgeois national reformism, that is, to retain many ties with the imperialists, to continue the bitter exploitation of the workers and peasants, and to stop short of real national independence.

Among the many profound effects of the colonial revolution upon the imperialist countries three are outstanding. First, their

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growing internal crises are thereby all greatly accentuated, especially in respect to Great Britain, France, and Holland. This is because of the relative loss of colonial markets and privileges, a vast curtailment of the areas in which they gain super-profits, the ruinous costs of maintaining puppet governments and of the many colonial wars of this period. Colonialism has largely lost its profitability to the imperialist powers. Second, the imperialist powers, in trying to save something from the burning, are generally being forced, in place of their earlier methods of direct domination and control, to adopt the specifically American forms of colonialism (see the Philippines, Cuba, Puerto Rico, and many other countries of Latin America), where the colonial peoples are permitted a shadow of national independence through puppet governments, while the imperialist country retains the substance of economic, political, and often military, domination. Third, the breakdown of the world colonial system is causing a greatly sharpened struggle among the imperialist powers for a larger share in the dwindling markets of the newly-independent and semi-independent countries. The villain in this piece is the United States. All the other imperialist powers are now engaged in desperate struggles to keep American imperialism from encroaching disastrously upon their erstwhile colonial preserves.

The most inveterate and relentless enemy of the colonial revolution is the United States, dominated by Wall Street. Completely violating its own revolutionary traditions, this country is to be found everywhere lined up with Great Britain, France, Holland, Portugal, and other imperialist powers, trying to stamp out or to shoot down the revolutionary colonial movements and to grab for itself control over the rebellious peoples.

In the vast colonial revolution now going on the influence of the Second International naturally is to be found on the side of beleaguered imperialism. Characteristically, as Dutt says, "All the colonial development programs of the [British] Labor Government were supported and endorsed by the Conservative Party."¹ Generally, as we have seen, the Social-Democrats, in their narrow concentration upon the skilled labor aristocracy, tended over the decades to confine their organizations and activities mostly to the imperialist countries, and it is from this basis mainly that they cooperate with the imperialists. The relative weakness of the Social-Democracy in the colonial world redounds to the great ad-

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vantage of the struggling colonial peoples, and by the same token, it is a disaster for the imperialists struggling desperately to maintain their dying system of colonial exploitation. It was only in late 1952 that the Socialist parties of Asia held their first conference, nine of them, mostly small, in Rangoon, Burma. Although themselves tailing after the respective capitalist classes, these colonial parties at once fell foul of the European Socialist parties because of the latter's rankly imperialist policies.²

THE CHINESE AND INDIAN REVOLUTIONS

One of the most elementary aspects of the revolutionary situation in the colonial world is the difference in degree of revolutionary maturity achieved by the Chinese and Indian peoples respectively. In a later chapter the Chinese revolution will be dealt with more fully; here suffice it to indicate that that revolution, which has shaken the capitalist system of the world from end to end, has made a complete break with imperialism, has smashed the power of the big landowners and the national capitalist monopolists, has established genuine national independence, and has set for itself a goal of eventual socialism.

India, on the other hand, although split in two when it achieved formal independence in 1947, retains many ties with the British empire and specifically with British capitalist interests. It also still clings in practice to the reactionary and impossible perspective of building itself into a strong capitalist regime, despite Nehru's assertion that India's goal is socialism.³ The Indian Communist Party thus characterizes the situation in India: "The Nehru government keeps India as part of the British Commonwealth of Nations, under the British king, in many areas of which Indians are treated worse than pariahs. Our navy and air force are under British command. Our army is under the control of British advisors and experts, our arms are designed and manufactured by the British. The British continue to own or to exercise control over our coal mines, our oil deposits and refineries, our jute factories, many of our engineering plants and concerns. They control our foreign trade, our banks and our finances. With their capital investments, which amount to six billion rupees, and through their administration agencies, they reap millions of rupees in profit, hold our economy in their murderous vise...."⁴ Meanwhile, the peasants have not been given the land, the working masses live in

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a poverty without equal anywhere else in the world, and harsh repressive measures are used by the Nehru government against every militant movement of protest. In 1951 the C.P. reported that "hundreds of party members were shot or tortured to death in prisons. The number imprisoned exceeded 25,000."⁵

The difference in tempo in the development of the Chinese and Indian revolutions is to be ascribed to a number of basic factors. As Dutt says, "China was a semi-colony, India a full colony for two centuries. Imperialism never penetrated China, but was only established on the coasts with its tentacles extending through trade into the interior. In India imperialism established and consolidated a complete administrative structure, controlling every detail of the life of the country throughout its territory.... Imperialism in relation to India was a single British imperialism. Imperialism in China was divided: various imperialist powers sought to partition China between them but were hampered by their own differences; this gave greater opportunity for the early advance of the Chinese national struggle.... Under the conditions of the long-continued imperialist rule in India, a considerable bourgeoisie and even big bourgeoisie developed with strong roots within the country and mass influence entirely different from the *compradores* in China.... The contrast between the development of the India National Congress and the Kuomintang was an expression of the different relations of the character and basis of the bourgeoisie in the two countries."⁶

Dutt also remarks that, "It was not a question of the Chinese Communists opening a phase of armed struggle after a previous bourgeois-led passive struggle, but on the contrary, carrying forward the national armed struggle after it had been betrayed by the Kuomintang leadership."⁷ The armed attempt of the Japanese imperialists to subject China outright also came at a time when the Chinese national movement was well-developed, a fact which favored armed struggle, whereas India was subjugated long before the birth of such a movement, and in World War II the Japanese did not reach India.

Gandhism, that employer-inspired pacifism which paralyzed the revolutionary initiative of the masses and enabled relatively a handful of British imperialists to dominate some 350,000,000 Indians, played no role in China. Dutt calls Gandhi, "This Jonah of revolution; this general of unbroken disasters, who could un-

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leash just enough of the mass movement to drive a successful bargain for the 'bourgeoisie,' and at the same time save India from revolution."⁸

Social-Democracy also played its part in checking the Indian revolution, mainly from the British end. The British Labor Party, with the active cooperation of Churchill's Tories, worked effectively to avert any cleansing revolution in India, and to save all that could be saved for the British and Indian capitalists. The Socialist Party of India, organized in 1934, and of which Nehru was a member, was not, as such, a decisive factor nationally. In China, the Social-Democracy was a relatively small force.

Another basic handicap of India was that it lacked the strong Communist Party and Communist leadership that has characterized the Chinese revolution during the past quarter century. Especially harmful in India, too, was the disruptive work and outright betrayal by the renegade Roy in the early, crucial years of the Communist Party.

THE REVOLUTION IN OTHER ASIAN COUNTRIES

The great colonial revolution in Asia deeply affected not only China and India, but every other country in this vast area – Indochina, Indonesia, the Philippines, Malaya, Burma, Ceylon, Korea, Thailand, and Tibet. In their big drive after Pearl Harbor, the Japanese overran practically all of these countries, thus spurring into action powerful national liberation movements, which are still running their course.

The pre-war situation of these countries was everywhere basically the same. The whole area, rich in natural resources – tin, rubber, tungsten, jute, and other valuable commodities, the source of huge profits for the exploiters – was completely dominated by British, French, Dutch, Portuguese, Japanese, and American imperialists, with the usual results of destitution, illiteracy, disease, and oppression for the broad toiling masses. During the war the advancing Japanese swept away all their imperialist rivals, and everywhere super-imposed their own no less harsh and brutal system of imperialist exploitation.

This new suppression provoked and stimulated the national liberation movements in the various countries. Guerilla activities began on a wide scale. They played havoc with the Japanese forces. As in Europe, these movements were on a national front scale

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and they were largely led by the Communists. The Communist parties in these countries, whose founding we have noted in passing, already had won much prestige because of the many struggles they had led in the past and also because of the progressive policies of the Soviet Union towards oppressed peoples. The local Socialist parties were tiny and negligible in influence.

The European and American imperialists, aside from many "collaborators," fled before the Japanese armies, but they all came back with the advance of the American armed forces. It was, therefore, a decisive military-political task of the pro-fascist American commander in the Pacific, General MacArthur, to see to it that they were all reinstated in control, with American limitations. This brought about collisions with the national democratic forces, and the outbreak of various armed struggles and two major wars, in Korea and Indochina. The Asian peoples took seriously the Atlantic Charter, which provides for national self-determination, but which, Churchill hastily added, did not apply to the Pacific peoples.

To reconstruct the shattered Asian colonial empires of Great Britain, France, and Holland, the American imperialists had a plan, as well as endless arms and munitions for the imperialists. This plan was to set up puppet, quasi-independent regimes in the respective countries, with the real economic, political, and military power in the hands of the imperialists. This was on the model of the Philippines, which had enjoyed their "independence" since 1946. This system had two advantages: First, it was the only possible one for the imperialists, the pre-war primitive type of colonialism having obviously become obsolete; and second, it would facilitate the economic and political penetration of these rich areas by aggressive Yankee imperialism. The British, French, and Dutch imperialists looked askance at this American-brand of colonialism, but for the most part they have had to adopt it.

This was the general plan for the organization of the "independent" governments in the "freed" British colonies of India, Burma, and Ceylon. It was also the basis upon which the United States was instrumental in getting the Dutch to recognize the new government of Indonesia in 1945,⁹ and in securing the endorsement of the American puppet Bao-Dai in Indochina in 1949 by the French.¹⁰ As the past several years have so amply demonstrated, this attempt of the United States to force its brand of colonial op-

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pression upon the Asian peoples has served to inflame Asian national sentiment and to provoke long and bitter wars.

Churchill once made a statement to the effect that he was not called upon to preside over the dissolution of His Majesty's empire and the Social-Democrats of the respective imperialist countries could truly express similar sentiments. For everywhere they have labored diligently for the reconstruction of the shattered Asian colonial empires, even at the cost of armed repression of national liberation movements. The British Labor Party was in office when British imperialism began its murderous war to suppress the independence struggles of the Malayan peoples.¹¹ And the French and Dutch Socialist parties have servilely supported every desperate step of their governments to reinstate their imperialist controls in Indonesia and Indochina. The Social-Democrats, like the renegade Communist Browder, hailed the American system of colonial oppression as "progressive."

The United States, as the imperialist gendarme of Asia, has succeeded in winning the deep hatred of the broad Asian masses, at which situation the spokesmen for Wall Street moan and complain. Thus William H. Mallory, "authority on Asian affairs," sadly comments that, "Americans are not popular in South and Southeast Asia, and what the inhabitants in that wide area take to be American policy is liked even less."¹²

NATIONAL LIBERATION MOVEMENTS IN AFRICA AND LATIN AMERICA

The African continent, long the heaven of the exploiters and the hell of the toiling masses, is now aboil from end to end with national liberation spirit. Only a small portion of Africa was overrun during the war, hence the national revolution did not develop as swiftly and sharply there after the war as it did in Asia. But it is well on its way, nevertheless. Keith Irving, an African specialist, lets out this cry of imperialist anguish in a Social-Democratic paper, "We in the Western world are faced with the alternatives of a revolution in our policies or a revolution throughout the Dark Continent."¹³

In North Africa, the row of countries along the Mediterranean share the great national liberation upheaval that is shaking the whole poverty-stricken Moslem world, all the way from Morocco to Pakistan. Many of these Moslem countries, which have partly

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broken the shackles of colonialism from their erstwhile masters, mainly British and French, are fighting to achieve a status of real national independence. But they now have a new enemy, American imperialism, which is striving to implant its own domination over this entire vast area. These countries also have a powerful friend, the U.S.S.R. The Communist parties play a considerable role in many of them, but in most instances they are illegal under the prevailing undemocratic regimes.

In Middle Africa, the broad areas where the slave-traders of old stole millions of Negroes to wear themselves out working as slaves on the plantations of the Americas, the peoples are now going through a tremendous national awakening. Conditions of life under imperialist rule are terrible. The land has been stolen from the people and is in the hands of a tiny minority, mostly British and Belgian, and wages are only a few cents a day on the plantations and in the mines. Meyer says that, "In the whole of Nigeria, with a population of approximately 30,000,000 people, there are only six secondary schools, 96 hospital beds, and one doctor for every 133,000 people.... The population of the Belgian Congo has declined 50 percent since the coming of the European colonizers."¹⁴ But the masses are now on the move to change all this. "In Central Africa," says Meyer, "an African Democratic Union has arisen, two millions strong. On the Ivory Coast, 800,000 out of a population of less than 2.5 million have joined the movement."¹⁵ Strikes and political movements are taking place all through the region, of which the famous Mau Mau movement in Kenya is only one example.

In South Africa the national ferment is no less intense than elsewhere on the Continent. The near-fascist white government of the Union of South Africa is striving desperately to keep 8,000,000 Negroes enslaved to a handful of British and Boer big landlords and industrialists. But this terrorism does not prevent a swift rise in the national movement, in which the workers are the leading element. These peoples are on the way to freedom, and nothing can halt them. The Communist Party is an important factor in this vital situation.

Dutt thus summarizes the general situation in Africa: "Throughout Africa, from Morocco in the north to Capetown in the south, and from French Equatorial Africa, Sierra Leone, the Gold Coast, and Nigeria on the west, to Kenya, Uganda, and Tan-

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ganyika on the east, this period has seen the upsurge of popular indignation against colonial subjection and the color bar, and against alien appropriation of the resources of their countries.”¹⁶

Latin America has also long been a happy hunting ground of American imperialism. Since the war, with its former powerful rivals in this field – Britain, Germany, Japan – in chronic crisis, the United States has been extending its imperialist domination. In 1952 direct American capital investments in Latin America reached \$5.7 billion, or twice the figure of 1943.¹⁷ Nearly all of the 20 countries of Latin America have U.S.-dominated puppets at their head. Here the specific American type of colonialism prevails, that is, the countries possess a semblance of independence, but actually they are dominated by the United States. This system is also being fully developed in the one old-style American colony, Puerto Rico, which has now been extended its “independence.” This oppressed country is a shocking example of American colonialism.

In its efforts to strengthen its colonial hold on Latin America, the United States has the same two powerful aides that it has in Europe, the Vatican and Social-Democracy. All the churches in the capitalist countries, Protestant and Jewish included, of course, actively support the regime, but none so powerfully as the Catholic Church, especially in Europe and Latin America. This church is particularly conscious of the dangerous position of world capitalism and is sparing no effort to save the system and to strengthen its own position in the process. That is why, tying its fortunes to American imperialism, the Vatican is particularly active in cultivating Wall Street’s war drive and in furthering fascist development everywhere.

Social-Democracy plays an important role in Latin America. While the Socialist parties themselves generally are very weak, opportunism is strong in the trade unions. But United States imperialism gets most of its Social-Democratic help for Latin America from its own home base, from the A.F. of L. and C.I.O. top leadership. These elements, thoroughly imperialist, are always at hand to do whatever Wall Street requires of them in Latin America. They split the Latin American Confederation of Labor (of which more anon) and, as a settled course, they support the various other economic, political, and military measures used by Yankee oppressors to tighten their hold upon the Latin American peoples. In all the Latin American countries there are Communist

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parties, but 13 of the 20 parties have been illegalized by the local semi-fascist dictators.

Latin America is a powder keg. The vast masses of the people live at starvation levels and are a prey to sickness and illiteracy. Their discontent, unlike that of Asia, did not burst into revolutionary flame at the end of World War II, because Latin America did not suffer the tragic war devastation and military occupation, and it lacked the strong national anti-fascist movement that most of the Asian countries had. Besides, the United States colonial system in Latin America, with its false slogans of "democracy" and "national independence," is much more tricky than the primitive type practiced by British, French, and Dutch imperialists in Asia. But that working class revolts and national liberation sentiment are growing in Latin America needs no further demonstration than the powerful movements now developing in Brazil and elsewhere, and especially the democratic anti-imperialist governments established recently in British Guiana, British Honduras, and Guatemala, but brutally overthrown by British and American imperialism. Latin America will soon be the scene of broad independence movements against the extreme arrogance and domination of Yankee imperialism.

54. Early Phases of the Cold War (1947-1950)

The cold war, initiated by American imperialism in its drive for maximum profits and world conquest, began to take shape, as we have seen, during the latter years of World War II in the deliberate attempt of the United States and Britain to weaken the Soviet Union. Also, as soon as the great war was over, President Truman began more intensive cultivation of imperialist anti-Soviet hostility. "Within a week of Roosevelt's funeral," says Marzani, "Truman had begun to reverse Roosevelt's foreign policy"¹ of peaceful co-existence with the U.S.S.R. Such action was to be expected from a man who during the war had said: "If we see that Germany is winning we ought to help Russia and if we see that Russia is winning we ought to help Germany...."² But, of course, this was the policy of Wall Street and would have been such whether Roosevelt had lived or not. The complex of cold war policies that Truman proceeded to develop in behalf of Wall Street, particularly after 1947, aimed: (a) at destroying the U.S.S.R., (b) at establishing American hegemony over all capitalist countries, and (c) ultimately at Wall Street's establishing its mastery of the whole world. A third world war was taken for granted in the development of this grandiose imperialist perspective.

ATOMIC DIPLOMACY

The Washington warmongers at first believed that in the atom-bomb they had an absolute weapon, one that would guarantee them world dominion. In this conception "conventional" arms largely lost for them their earlier significance. This explains why the militarists made so little resistance to the early post-war demand of the American people that the "boys must come home," with a consequent substantial slashing of infantry forces. It explains also the arrogance used towards the U.S.S.R., the get-tough-with-Russia policy, which had already begun to show itself in 1945 at the founding of the United Nations in San Francisco. "Brandishing the atomic bomb" thenceforth became the main means of American "diplomacy" with the Russians.

The question of the control of this fearsome weapon came to be an international issue immediately after its outrageous use up-

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on helpless Hiroshima and Nagasaki in 1945. With the end in view of protecting its “monopoly” of the bomb, on June 13, 1946, the United States presented the “Baruch plan” to the first meeting of the Atomic Energy Commission of the United Nations. This plan was carefully designed so that the Russians could not accept it. As the English expert Blackett says, it “would have put the Soviet Union in a position where she would have been subservient (in her nuclear development) to a group of nations dominated by America.”³ The United States moved aggressively to grab uranium deposits all over the capitalist world.⁴

The atomaniacs of Washington figured that they could intimidate the Soviet Union with the bomb threat, or if need be, a shower of A-bombs upon her cities would bring her to book. This was the “preventive war” theory, then brazenly advocated in the American press and elsewhere. The possibility of the U.S.S.R. herself getting the bomb was dismissed as being negligible, a matter of 5, 10, or 20 years, if ever. This was a typical capitalist underestimation of the technical capacity of socialism.

The Soviet people, however, refused to be browbeaten by the bomb-brandishers. The Soviet government proposed a sane solution of the A-bomb problem by the stringent prohibition of its manufacture or use and the destruction of stockpiles then on hand – all of which was anathema to Washington, which was basing its world conquest plans upon the A-bomb “monopoly.” Meanwhile, the U.S.S.R. in self-defense proceeded to break the “monopoly” by making atom bombs. By 1947, it had nuclear weapons,⁵ but this was not generally known until 1949, when President Truman made the announcement.⁶

Although failing to establish Wall Street world dominion, the atom-bomb nevertheless did perform important services for American imperialism. Brandishing the bomb helps to maintain world tension, which facilitates the present enormous American military build-up, and by preventing any international production control, the Baruch plan opened the way to the development of the hydrogen bomb and the present alarmed state of humanity over this grave menace to civilization.

Eisenhower’s “atoms for peace” program is essentially part of the protective demagoguery built around the use of the atom bomb for aggressive war. Unlike the U.S.S.R., the United States is only secondarily interested in the use of atomic energy for peace pur-

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poses. Its whole program of world conquest is based upon the bomb for war aggression.

THE TRUMAN DOCTRINE

On March 12, 1947, President Truman, appearing before a joint session of Congress, demanded and got a loan of \$200 million for military assistance to the Greek and Turkish governments, both of which were fascist dictatorships. This meant especially the building of a strong army and bases in Turkey for action against the U.S.S.R. and the taking over of the counter-revolutionary war against the people of Greece, which bankrupt Britain was no longer able to handle. It was the beginning of the notorious Truman Doctrine, which is the self-asserted right of the United States to interfere in the internal affairs of other countries to determine what kind of government they may or may not set up. At the same time, American militarists greatly intensified their aggressive and warlike policy of surrounding the U.S.S.R. with air-bases in many countries. The growing imperialist offensive against the socialist and democratic forces of the world had taken another momentous step forward. The New York *Herald-Tribune* of February 15, 1955, says that the United States now has 1,370,000 troops overseas, stationed at 950 bases.

“The Truman Doctrine,” says Perlo, “not only marked the beginning of open American imperialist violence against a European country, but was the signal for a new stage of intensified political domination by Washington over western Europe.”⁷ This step greatly increased American aggression in the Mediterranean area, at the expense of the local people and of Great Britain and France. It was the first phase in the building of an American puppet war alliance in Europe which later was to become the North Atlantic Treaty Organization. And it stepped up American economic penetration of western Europe. Bolsover points out that, as the price of this military aid to Greece, United States corporations took over control of that country’s communications system, tobacco, airlines, water supply, hydro-electric power, and other industries.⁸

The original gross aggression under the Truman Doctrine was followed by other arbitrary American interferences in the life of various European countries. It was only two months after this, as remarked earlier, that the Communists of France, Italy, and Belgium, were forced out of their respective governments upon

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American insistence. And in the Italian elections of April 1948 American interference was blatant and arrogant, Washington even going so far as to send warships to Italian waters and to threaten armed intervention if the Italian people should dare to elect a democratic government. The Truman Doctrine got a tremendous setback, however, in Czechoslovakia, when in February 1948 American agents brought about the resignation (see chapter 53) of a big group of ministers from the people's government, with the aim of setting up a government without the Communists. But the scheme back-fired, with a complete defeat of the counter-revolution and a basic strengthening of the People's Democracy in the country.

The United States was arrogantly asserting its developing hegemony over capitalist Europe. The fire-eater Churchill, who saw what was coming, tried by his notorious Fulton, Missouri, speech of March 5, 1946, to write in Britain as a strong junior partner (unavailing as it proved) in the growing drive of American imperialism for world mastery. With the guns of the great world war hardly stilled, Churchill proposed in substance an Anglo-American military alliance directed against the U.S.S.R. and for world domination. It was here that Churchill first used the term "iron curtain," which he had pilfered from Goebbels' propaganda arsenal. Truman, who was present at the Fulton meeting, was obviously pleased at this formal declaration of the "cold war."

The initiation of the Truman Doctrine and the cold war caused a big increase in American military activities, which already were based upon the theory of the inevitability of an anti-Soviet atomic "preventive" war. The American Secretary of Defense at this time, with full charge of the entire armed forces, was James Forrestal, a violent Soviet-hater, who in the midst of his war preparations went violently insane and leaped to his death from a hospital window. An auspicious beginning this, for the crazy policy of attempted world domination, which was then getting well under way.

Fittingly enough, also, the beginning of the cold war marked an unprecedented attack in the United States upon the Bill of Rights and against traditional American democratic freedoms. Only ten days after his Congressional speech, in which he outlined the Truman Doctrine, the President issued his first Executive Order (No. 9835), decreeing "loyalty tests" for some 2,000,000 gov-

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ernment workers. This was the beginning of the shameful and unprecedented campaign of political intimidation and fascist-like thought-control and witch-hunting, which in the shape of McCarthyism was soon to reach such dangerous heights.⁹

THE MARSHALL PLAN

Two months after the United States government announced the Truman Doctrine, it took the next major step in the development of a foreign policy of aggressive American imperialism. This was the so-called Marshall Plan, initiated by Secretary of State George C. Marshall on June 5, 1947, in a speech at Harvard University. In substance, Marshall stated that the United States would extend "assistance" to Europe, provided that "a number, if not all European countries, would jointly prepare a program of 'recovery' agreeable to the United States." President Truman later spoke of a figure of \$17 billion in "aid" over a period of four years.¹⁰

As usual with such plans of aggression, the Marshall Plan was put out to the accompaniment of many fine-sounding phrases of American generosity and disinterestedness. All that the U.S. government (i.e., Wall Street) wanted to do, it was said, was to put Europe back on its feet again and to make its people free and happy. The real purposes of the move, however, were less philanthropic. They proposed to rescue bankrupt Europe from developing socialism, to facilitate American economic penetration of the European capitalist powers and their colonies, to cultivate American hegemony over the capitalist world, and to arm and organize the capitalist countries for an eventual all-out military assault upon the Soviet Union and the new European people's democracies. The Marshall Plan was put through the U.S. Congress on a strong bi-partisan basis.

To facilitate its conquest of the undeveloped countries, American imperialism also put out what came to be known as "Point Four." During his inaugural speech on January 20, 1949, Mr. Truman proposed to "embark on a bold new program for making our scientific advance and industrial progress available for the improvement and growth of undeveloped areas." This plan, which has been decorated with the most elaborate trimmings of American "generosity" is, in fact, nothing but an imperialist device for establishing American influence and controls throughout the co-

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lonial world.

The capitalist rulers of Europe and their Social-Democratic stooges snapped at the alluring American Marshall Plan bait. They got together in Paris in July 1947, representing 16 western European countries, and laid the basis for what became known, for a while, as the European Recovery Program (E.R.P.), which was in the hands of such notable Wall Street humanitarians as W. Averell Harriman, Paul G. Hoffman, James Forrestal, John W. Snyder, and Robert A. Lovett. The substance of the final agreement, most of it made backstage, was that the countries "benefiting from the American largesse" would submit their currencies to American control, raise substantial recovery funds themselves, curtail trade with the socialist world, place the whole European Recovery Program virtually under American management, combat all steps towards the nationalization of industry in the several countries, and keep the Communists out of the various national governments. Thus, American hegemony over the capitalist world took a long stride ahead.

At this early date Wall Street did not consider it wise to break outright with the U.S.S.R., in view of the latter's broad popularity because of its magnificent war record; hence, ostensibly, that country too was made eligible for Marshall Plan funds. But when, at the initial meeting of the European powers to consider the whole project, Molotov, for the U.S.S.R., "proposed an approach that would guard the national independence of the receiving countries against what he declared was an 'inadmissible infringement upon their sovereignty,' " this was cynically rejected by Britain and France, which had made their agreement beforehand with the United States. The result was that the Soviet Union and the People's Democracies took no further part in the Marshall Plan business. The Americans had succeeded in driving a wedge between the European wartime allies and in virtually splitting the world into two camps.¹¹

Through the Economic Cooperation Administration (E.C.A.), the Marshall Plan was in effect until December 31, 1951. During this time it squandered some \$12 billions in American funds for European "recovery." Whereas the European countries badly needed machinery and other basic commodities, all sorts of surplus odds and ends were dumped upon their markets. "Since 1945," says Bolsover, "Britain has received about £900 million

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from the Washington loan and £800 million from the Marshall Plan – a total of £1,700 million. But under U.S. pressure, Britain is now spending nearly that amount – £1,490 million in war preparations *every year*.” And, “Under the Marshall Plan, 1948-51, France received 875 milliard francs.... During the same period the French expenditure on arms was 1,950 milliards.”¹² Italy and other countries similarly went into the hole. Not surprisingly, therefore, the rate of recovery of the West European capitalist countries fell far behind that of the Soviet Union and the People’s Democracies, which had received not a cent of American money. Living standards for the masses sank all over the capitalist West.

The monster Marshall doles greatly facilitated the building of American domination over the European capitalist countries. All over the world the bourgeois politicians, in order to get their paws into the gigantic American slushpot, proceeded to peddle away the independence of their countries to Wall Street. This situation reflected itself in a disgraceful American domination over the United Nations. *Business Week*, a Wall Street mouthpiece, cried exultantly: “The U.S. has commanded bigger and bigger majorities in the U.N. to justify its crusade against Communism.... Basically, U.N. is a U.S. structure.... The U.S. gets what it pays for.”¹³ To make assurance doubly sure, however, the United States bypassed the U.N. with its entire economic political-military set-up of the Truman Doctrine and the Marshall Plan.

THE NORTH ATLANTIC TREATY ORGANIZATION (N.A.T.O.)

N.A.T.O. was organized in Washington in April 1949, made up of a dozen western capitalist nations, to which Greece and Turkey were later added. Its avowed purpose was “to safeguard the freedom, economic heritage, and civilization of their peoples, founded on the principles of democracy, individual liberty, and the law.”¹⁴ Its real objective, however, was the creation of a militant capitalist war alliance, directed against the Soviet Union and the People’s Democracies. The force behind the organization was aggressive American imperialism, with its program of world conquest.

The foundation of N.A.T.O. marked a new shift and development in United States foreign policy. This was caused primarily by the breaking of the American atom-bomb “monopoly” by the Soviet Union. Previously, as we have seen, the Wall Street war-mongers had depended almost completely on the A-bomb in their

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war plans, but now that Russia had the bomb, a new stress was laid again upon "conventional" arms. A feverish drive was launched to build and arm big land forces in western Europe. Thenceforth, American economic aid was slashed and military aid was stepped up to about \$5 billion per year. The excited armaments race was carried on to the tune of incessant warnings that Russia was momentarily about to overrun Europe; but why it did not do so while Europe was "helpless" nobody in the capitalist camp could explain. The fact that the Soviet Union was completely devoted to peace, was, of course, ignored or denied by the warmakers.

The heart of N.A.T.O. was and is a re-militarized Germany, aimed against the U.S.S.R. and working under American direction. There are three general phases to the scheme – economic, political, and military. The economic phase is the so-called Schumann Plan, based upon a consolidation of the coal and steel industries of western Germany, France, Italy, Belgium, Netherlands, and Luxembourg. This has been formally ratified, after much jockeying about. Western Germany is the strongest European element in it, with Wall Street in the background as the overlord. The United States has previously seen to it that all plans to nationalize German industry were defeated, and that the Krupps, Thyssens, and other German monopolists were reinstated to full control of "their" industries.

The political phase of N.A.T.O. is the setting up of a "United States of Europe," in which Germany will be the key power. This is tied in with N.A.T.O.'s military aspect, which, until it collapsed in 1954, was the main purpose of the whole organization. The general plan was to build a united European army of the six most important western European powers. Of this, Germany, rearmed and with its old-time Nazi generals in charge, was to be the main force. All this constituted the so-called European Defense Community (E.D.C.). General Eisenhower, in December 1951, was charged with being the general American superintendent of this whole economic-political- military project.

Bolsover thus sums it all up: "The kind of European Union now being mooted is certainly not an international federation of equal peoples; it is the creation of a collection of satellite states under the control of American capitalism with West German capitalism as the future general manager and chief executive."¹⁵ Brit-

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ain and France are looking very much askance at the American build-up of their powerful imperialist rival, Germany, realizing well that this is being done not only against the U.S.S.R., but as a strong American counter-weight against themselves. But we shall return to this question later on.

SOCIAL-DEMOCRACY AND AMERICAN IMPERIALISM

For American imperialism, in its program of economically, politically, and militarily recruiting the countries of Europe in its drive against the Soviet Union and for world mastery, it was imperative that it should have the support of the Social-Democratic parties of western Europe. The workers in Europe were in a revolutionary mood following the war and the only possible way that their sure opposition against American war plans could be confused and broken up was with the assistance of those experienced misleaders of labor, the right Social-Democrats.

Therefore, American post-war foreign policy had as one of its main cornerstones a working arrangement with the Social-Democrats. The first real step in this direction was the nearly \$4 billion loan to the British Labor Government as early as 1946, despite the fact that that government was then allegedly introducing a program of socialism in the British Isles. From then on the British opportunist laborites were the most ardent organizers for American imperialism in the Socialist parties of Europe. Nor was their work difficult among the Blums, Jouhaux, Spaaks, Schumachers, Ollenhauers, Saragats, and other hidebound Social-Democratic opportunists. The latter were only too anxious to put on the collar of Wall Street. Decisive in determining their stand on the American program was that it was aimed to save world capitalism and to attack the Soviet Union. Along with these two ingredients, they were quite ready to swallow American domination.

In the United States, Wall Street imperialism no less worked out a post-war collaboration with the Social-Democrats, the main section of whom are the top leadership of the A.F. of L., C.I.O., and the conservative independent trade unions. The basis of this class collaboration is twofold: First, the big employers are continuing to deal freely with the unions, thus guaranteeing for the time being the sinecure posts of these reactionary leaders – although they dealt them, as a reminder, a resounding blow through the Taft-Hartley Act, which was adopted in 1947, the year also of the

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Truman Doctrine and Marshall Plan. Secondly, the trade union bureaucrats, going along with Wall Street, are getting some of the crumbs that fall from the imperialists' table.

The American top union leaders themselves are mainly rabid imperialists and they are hoping to share bounteously in the hoped-for American domination of the world. Indeed, they have already made themselves the dictators of the post-war conservative trade union forces in Europe and elsewhere in the capitalist countries. On this general basis, the American Social-Democratic trade union leadership took up a position of servility to the Truman Wall Street government and later the Eisenhower government and faithfully followed their every twist and development in foreign policy.

The Social-Democrats of Europe and America became the most ardent peddlers of Wall Street's imperialist slogans. In their subservience to American imperialism, they were not to be outdone by the capitalists themselves. None surpassed them in extolling the "sincerity" and "generosity" of American foreign policy. They glorified the Marshall Plan, N.A.T.O., Point Four, the Schumann Plan, E.D.C., and the re-arming of West Germany, obscuring the whole aggressive Wall Street program under seductive slogans of peace and democracy. They did more than thus seek to confuse the workers with American imperialist propaganda, and, as we have seen, in France, Italy, and Belgium, to expel the Communists from the government; they also set out to split and demoralize the magnificent trade union movement that the workers had built up during and after World War II.

55. The Communist Information Bureau (1947)

The violent intensification of American imperialist aggression in Europe in 1947, marked by the promulgation of the Truman Doctrine and the Marshall Plan, inevitably caused grave concern in working class circles. Naturally, it was the Communists who stepped forth to give leadership to the world's workers to repel this new attack upon international peace and democracy. The Communist International having been dissolved four years previously, nine leading European Communist parties came together in informal conference in Poland, in September 1947, to consider the dangerous situation. The parties were of Rumania, Hungary, Yugoslavia, Soviet Union, France, Czechoslovakia, Bulgaria, Italy, and Poland.¹

Zhdanov (1896-1948) made the main report at the Conference. The resolution adopted clearly outlined the aggressive role of American imperialism, with its program of world domination and war. "The Truman-Marshall plan," it said, "is only a constituent part, the European section, of the general plan of world expansionist policy carried out by the United States in all parts of the world.... The aggressors of yesterday – the capitalist magnates of Germany and Japan – are being prepared by the United States for a new role – to become the instrument of the imperialist policy of the United States in Europe and Asia. Anglo-American aggression has split the world into two camps – "the imperialistic and anti-democratic camp, which has as a main aim the establishment of world domination of American imperialism and the smashing of democracy; and the anti-imperialistic and democratic camp, which has as a main aim the undermining of imperialism and the strengthening of democracy and the liquidation of the remnants of fascism."²

The resolution also declared that the course of American imperialism is resulting in "a further sharpening of the general crisis of capitalism." It pointed out that, in view of the strong will for peace of the peoples of the world, "It is necessary to remember that between the desire of imperialists to develop a new war and the possibility of organizing such a war there is a great gap." The resolution excoriated the right opportunist Socialists, notably

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those of England and France, for their support of Anglo-American expansionism.

Calling upon all the democratic and anti-imperialist forces of Europe to stand firm in the face of this new war-fascism threat, the resolution declared that, "it follows that a special task falls upon the Communist parties. They must take into their hands the banner of defense of the national independence and sovereignty of their countries." It warned, too, that "The main danger to the working class at present consists in underestimation of its forces and in overestimation of the imperialist camp." It declared that if the forces of peace and democracy will stand firm, "the plans of the aggressors will suffer complete collapse."

The conference resolution, deploring the lack of cooperation among the Communist parties since the dissolution of the Comintern, set up an Information Bureau to improve this situation. Headquarters were established in Belgrade, and a weekly journal was issued, *For a Lasting Peace: For a People's Democracy*. It is still published, although no effort has been made to extend the Information Bureau (Cominform) beyond the original constituent parties. This did not mean the reconstitution of the International, but only the setting up of informational contacts. Many Communist parties throughout the world, keenly feeling the need of an international organization, wanted to develop the new Bureau by affiliating with it. Such a trend towards another strong international, however, would have greatly sharpened current world tension, and nothing was done about it. The American Communist Party, while supporting the Bureau, declared that reactionary legislation in the United States made it inadvisable for it to affiliate.³

The nine-Communist party conference was one of the most significant meetings in the history of the international labor movement. It gave a clear warning to the workers of the world of the dangers of fascism, war, and national enslavement inherent in the drive of American imperialism to master the world, and it also provided a clear line as to how to counter and defeat this menacing threat. Wall Street imperialism was not going to be allowed to subjugate humanity to American big business.

THE TITO BETRAYAL

Overwhelmingly, the Communist movement of the world re-

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sponded to the policy outlined in the 1947 conference of the nine Communist parties. But not Yugoslavia. Although at the conference the Yugoslav delegates supported the resolution, it was soon made clear that the Yugoslav party had no intention of resisting aggressive American imperialism. This position was developed in the later heated exchange of letters with the C.P.S.U.⁴

Late in June 1948 the Cominform met in Bucharest, with the Yugoslavs not in attendance. The conference unanimously criticized the Yugoslav Communist Party for following a line on home and foreign policy, "which represents a departure from Marxism-Leninism." Among the incorrect policies of the Yugoslav leaders was singled out a hostile attitude towards the U.S.S.R., including the worst forms of Trotskyite slander. Numerous anti-Leninist policies were also pointed out in the domestic sphere, including failure to differentiate between the various categories of the peasantry, basing the party upon the peasantry instead of upon the working class, liquidating the party into an amorphous people's front, development of a narrow bureaucratic regime in the party and the government, refusal to accept comradely criticism from brother parties, and otherwise following a leftist, nationalist, and petty-bourgeois adventurist policy.

"In view of all this," says the resolution, "the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Yugoslavia has placed itself and the Yugoslav party outside the family of the fraternal Communist parties, outside the united Communist front, and consequently outside the ranks of the Information Bureau." The Bureau called upon the Marxist-Leninist elements within the Yugoslav party "to compel their present leaders to recognize their mistakes openly and to rectify them, to break with nationalism, to return to internationalism; and in every way to consolidate the united socialist front against imperialism."

The Tito-Rankovic group in Yugoslavia rejected the position of the Cominform and, with their firm control of the peasant army, were able to suppress the Marxist-Leninist opposition inside the party. They threw as many as 250,000 in jail.⁵ Their action was greeted by the capitalist world, and they hastened to sew up an alliance with the Anglo-American imperialists. Consequently, in its meeting in Budapest, in November 1949, the Information Bureau, characterizing Tito's ideology as "fascist," declared that "the Yugoslav Government is in a state of complete dependence

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on foreign imperialist circles and has become a tool of their aggressive policy, which has resulted in the liquidation of the sovereignty and independence of the Yugoslav Republic. The Central Committee of the party and the government of Yugoslavia have completely joined forces with the imperialist circles against the entire camp of socialism and democracy, against the Communist parties of the whole world, and against the People's Democracies and the U.S.S.R."⁶

Tito became a favorite of the capitalist world, and "Titoism" was hailed as a new and deadly weapon against international socialism. Tito's Yugoslavia was taken into the ranks of the Anglo-American war alliance, and from 1950 to the present time it has received an estimated \$700 million of American money.⁷ In return, the Tito forces became violent anti-Soviet elements and also set about liquidating many steps taken earlier toward socialism in their country, by denationalizing industries, liquidating the collective farms, and the like. They cynically abandoned the Greek revolution, which then went down to defeat.

Tito's defection had far more dangerous implications than swinging Yugoslavia out of the peace camp. It was nothing short of an attempt to sever the relations between all the People's Democracies and the U.S.S.R. and to lead the former into the imperialist camp. This was brought out in the trials of Rajk, Rostov, and others in Budapest and Sofia in 1949. The Tito plot was nipped in the bud, however, by the prompt and decisive action of the Information Bureau. All that Tito could muster in the other People's Democracies was a thin scattering of concealed bourgeois nationalists, who were readily defeated.⁸ G. Dimitrov played a key role in this vital fight. Of recent months, Yugoslavia has shown some tendencies to soften its violent attacks upon the U.S.S.R., and to normalize its relations with that country.

THE RIGHT SOCIAL-DEMOCRATS SPLIT THE WORLD TRADE UNION MOVEMENT

The Anglo-American imperialists used the right Social-Democrats, not only to peddle their imperialist slogans among the working class and to form part of French, Italian, and other governments that would do Wall Street's bidding; they also employed them in an effort to cripple the splendid trade unions that emerged immediately after World War II. These unions were

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powerful barriers in the way of American monopoly capital and had to be removed. This union-smashing was one of the most disgraceful acts in the whole history of the Second International.

In Europe, from 1948 on, the rights concentrated their attack upon the broad labor federations in Germany, France, and Italy, which were developing policies of democracy, peace, and the workers' general welfare. The chief American disrupters were such men as Irving Brown (A.F. of L.) and James B. Carey (C.I.O.), who lavishly spent millions of dollars directly under U.S. State Department supervision. As a result, with the support of the employers, the governments, the Socialist parties, and the Catholic Church, they succeeded in developing minor break-away movements in all three of these countries, shamelessly betraying several major strike movements in the process. The German labor movement was badly split, but in Italy and France the two federations emerged solid from the struggle. Today the Italian left-led C.G.T. contains about 90 per cent of all the organized workers in Italy, and that of France some 80 percent.

In the United States the union-wreckers, at the same time, paid special attention to crippling the then progressive Congress of Industrial Organizations (C.I.O.). In the building of this 6,000,000-strong federation, Communist and other left and progressive forces had played a big part, and their voices remained powerful in the leadership. But Murray, Reuther, Carey, and other conservatives, aided by all the forces of reaction, succeeded in splitting the organization in 1949, when they arbitrarily expelled eleven progressive unions with some 900,000 members, because they refused to endorse the Marshall Plan and the rest of the war program of American imperialism. The forces of American capitalism enthusiastically hailed this treachery and called Murray and company great patriots, but the C.I.O. has never recovered from the blow.⁹

Meanwhile, the Social-Democratic union splitters also turned their attention towards wrecking the Latin American Confederation of Labor (C.T.A.L.), the finest organization ever produced by the workers in this immense territory of semi-colonies. In this shameful work, the A.F. of L. and the C.I.O., erstwhile bitter enemies, worked hand-in-hand, again under direction of the U.S. State Department. Their aim was to force Wall Street's war line upon Latin America. In 1948, in Lima, Peru, they succeeded in

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tinkering together the Inter-American Confederation of Workers (C.I.T.), mostly based on the A.F. of L., C.I.O., and scattered groupings of Latin American strike-breakers. This organization, quickly discredited, was reorganized in Mexico City in 1951, into the Inter-American Regional Workers' Organization (O.I.R.T.) The O.I.R.T. is dominated from top to bottom by United States imperialist labor agents. All this disruptive work has done grave injury to the workers of Latin America, and made much easier the path of oppressive American imperialism in the area. The C.T.A.L., nevertheless, although weakened by the splits, remains the strongest labor organization in Latin America.

The main union-smashing task of the Social-Democrats, however, was their attempt to destroy the powerful World Federation of Trade Unions. Here again, the leading union-wreckers were Americans, known agents of the government. American imperialism, as a first condition for the subjugation of Europe to its war program, had to remove the militant and progressive W.F.T.U. from its path. The C.I.O. undertook to do this major job of union-smashing, with the A.F. of L., which was not affiliated to the W.F.T.U., helping from the outside. The chief union-smashing agent of the C.I.O., A.F. of L., and State Department, was James B. Carey, secretary-treasurer of the C.I.O. This is the man who, at a reactionary New York meeting, stated: "In the last war we joined with the Communists to fight the fascists; in another war we will join with the fascists to defeat the Communists."¹⁰

As in the cases of the C.I.O., the C.T.A.L. and the labor federations in Germany, France, and Italy, Carey raised the question of endorsement of the Marshall Plan as the splitting issue. With the active help of the leadership of the British Trades Union Congress, he demanded in April 1948 that the W.F.T.U. come out in favor of Wall Street's Marshall Plan. The W.F.T.U., instead, to preserve world labor unity, decided to leave the matter to the respective national union centers to resolve for themselves. This action, of course, did not satisfy Carey and his co-conspirators, who had orders to wreck the W.F.T.U. at whatever cost. Hence, on January 1, 1949, at the W.F.T.U. Executive Committee, then meeting in Paris, they arrogantly demanded that the W.F.T.U. "suspend its operations for a year," a move clearly designed to kill the organization. This proposal was rejected; whereupon the C.I.O., British, and Dutch union delegates walked out. The split

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was thus made an accomplished fact, and the Social-Democrats had added another act of deepest treachery to their long list of labor betrayals. Carey, Deakin, and the others who struck this body blow at world labor, were hailed as real labor statesmen by the capitalist world.¹¹

The Social-Democratic labor splitters, financed by the U.S. government and aided actively by all the other Marshall Plan European governments, then proceeded to launch a new world labor organization. This was done in London in November 1949, when there was formed the International Confederation of Free Trade Unions (I.C.F.T.U.), with J. H. Oldenbroek as general secretary. This organization, bossed (with some difficulty) from top to bottom by American labor imperialists, has since followed the general line of the U.S. State Department in the latter's efforts to develop a general war against the Soviet Union. The extremest forms of labor disruption, violent denunciation, and strike-breaking are its accepted weapons against the W.F.T.U. and other militant unions everywhere. The I.C.F.T.U. now claims 54 million members. But its actual membership is far less – at its 1953 congress in Stockholm, the voting strength shown was for 39 million members.¹² Over half of its membership is located in the United States and Great Britain. The Catholic unions, which also tended to separate themselves from the main stream of labor – in their International Confederation of Christian Trade Unions – have small organizations in fourteen countries, with a total of about two million members.¹³

Meanwhile, the W.F.T.U. has proceeded along its course, functioning and growing vigorously. The Wall Street-inspired attempt to destroy it failed dismally. At its second congress, Milan 1949, after the split, it reported 72 million, and at its third congress, Vienna, October 1953, the total number of workers represented, as reported by its general secretary, Louis Saillant, was 88 million, of whom eight million – although with delegates present – were not actually affiliated. Thus, as things now stand, the W.F.T.U. is at least twice as large numerically as the I.C.F.T.U. Its general policy is one of cooperation with all other labor organizations for a class struggle policy.

The above developments go to demonstrate the very important reality that the decisive leadership of the world trade union movement, which for many decades during the life of the Se-

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cond International had been definitely in the hands of the right Social-Democrats, has, since the period of World War II, passed to the Communists and other left forces. Significant in the world line-up of organized labor are the facts that the I.C.F.T.U. has its main stronghold in the United States and Great Britain, countries where imperialism is still strong and the labor aristocracy continues to play a big role; whereas the strength of the W.F.T.U. lies in the Socialist nations, in the colonial and semi-colonial lands, and in those capitalist countries that are feeling most sharply the effects of the ever-deepening general crisis of world capitalism. The basic course of the world labor situation tends increasingly to shift the center of trade union leadership irresistibly to the left.

THE IDEOLOGICAL DECAY OF WORLD SOCIAL-DEMOCRACY

In this and previous chapters it has been pointed out how the parties of the Second International in the post-World War II period attached themselves to the war chariots of American imperialism and became Wall Street's most reliable collaborators. As we have seen, this led them to such anti-working class depths as the shameless propagation of imperialist war slogans among the masses, the breaking of strikes, the splitting of unions, and the management of governments in the interest of their national bourgeoisie and the Wall Street would-be world conquerors. Their ideology, once professedly Marxist, underwent during this period a corresponding further decay.

Now as always, the right-wing Social Democrats are what Lenin called them many years ago, "the agents of the bourgeoisie in the ranks of the workers." Their special job is to make bourgeois policies palatable to the workers, or to sections of them, by dolling them up in labor and socialist phraseology. As Kuusinen says, "It would be impossible for the Social-Democratic reformists successfully to do their job as servants of the bourgeoisie, if they did not at the same time take care to retain the confidence of the workers who still follow them. That is why they use the flag of socialism."¹⁴ But today the Second International parties have become so saturated with the bourgeois spirit that their pretense of socialism is growing thinner and thinner. In the United States the Social-Democrats have long since abandoned even a pretense of socialism, and have become the most open and noisy defenders of capitalism.

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This bourgeois decay affects not only the Socialist parties in the imperialist nations, but also in the colonial and semi-colonial world, where generally they play a lesser role. Thus, in India, where the bourgeoisie are in deadly fear of the developing proletarian revolution, the Social-Democrats, as their faithful servants, are busily amalgamating “Marxism” with paralyzing Gandhism. They are preaching a “revolution of love,” glorifying petty hand production, and opposing every form of militant struggle by the working class, all of which perfectly suits the big British and Indian capitalists.¹⁵

The right Social-Democrats have everywhere unceremoniously thrown aside the whole system of Marxian economics. They have become ardent advocates of bourgeois Keynesism, with its conceptions of a “managed capitalist economy” and “progressive capitalism.” The class struggle, another foundation of Marxism, has gone the same way. Today the right Social-Democrats are not to be outdone by even the most blatant defenders of capitalism in their denial of class struggle and their advocacy of class collaboration. Dialectical materialism has also been rejected, piecemeal and in general. Nowadays, the Second International parties are the hospitable hosts to every form of bourgeois obscurantism. Their old-time professions of internationalism, too, have given place to the crassest nationalism and imperialism. Revolution is, of course, also a thing of the past; and the Laborite, Mr. Crossman, informs us that, “Capitalism is undergoing a metamorphosis into a quite different system.”¹⁶

A generation ago Kautsky, Bernstein, Bukharin, and others within and close to Social-Democracy, were talking about an “organized capitalism” and “super-imperialism” which would put an end to the violent internal contradictions of the capitalist system. Now their successors are trying to realize these hare-brained reactionary theories by supporting American imperialism, with its program of world domination. Aggressive American imperialist war policy, they universally hail as progressive.

Social-Democracy all over the world, turning its back altogether upon the brilliant theoretical work of Marx and Engels, is tending, like the veriest bourgeois pragmatists, to ignore theory altogether. Characteristically, in the West German Socialist Party there does not now exist a precise and authentic statement of “socialist” ideology, but only a program of action adopted by a party

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convention in 1952. Its late leader, Kurt Schumacher, told us that Marxism is only one of the ways to approach socialism.¹⁷ These are but a few of the innumerable signs of the bourgeoisification of the Social-Democratic parties everywhere.

Since the end of World War II, the right Social-Democrats have, from time to time, headed most of the governments of western Europe – Great Britain, France, Belgium, Holland, Norway, Denmark, Sweden and Austria – as well as in Japan, but this has not advanced the cause of socialism one whit. These Socialist-led governments have in fact been only caretaker administrations until the times were propitious for the capitalists themselves once more to take charge directly. Such governments are a hindrance to the workers in winning their way towards socialism. The Second International, a tool of the imperialists and warmongers, is not only an obstacle to the workers' securing socialism, but also to the achievement of their most urgent practical needs – the defense of their living standards, the protection of their national independence, and the guarding of world peace and democracy.

56. Victory of the Chinese Revolution (1950)

The history of the Communist Party in the Chinese Revolution is one of virtually continuous armed struggle from 1924 to 1950. In 1926 Stalin pointed out that necessarily the Chinese Revolution had to be fought through by military means, and so it has turned out in reality.¹ The great Chinese revolutionary wars fall under four general heads: (a) the war of the Kuomintang (K.M.T.) and C.P. united front against the reactionary war lords, 1924-27; (b) the war of the people's forces led by the C.P. against K.M.T. reaction, 1927- 36; (c) the patriotic war of the K.M.T. and C.P. forces against Japanese aggression, 1936-45, and (d) the war of the people's forces against the K.M.T. and American imperialism, 1946-50, which culminated in a world-shaking victory for the people and the establishment of the Chinese People's Republic.

Previously (see especially Chapters 39, 43, 45, and 47), we have traced the course of the earlier three of these wars. In the first war, 1924-27, we have seen that the Communist Party loyally went along with the Kuomintang until Chiang, believing he could take over China for the industrialists, bankers, big landlords, and imperialists, turned upon the Communists with an incredible savagery. We have also seen the long, heroic struggle of the Chinese people during the war of 1927-36, against Chiang Kai-shek and the Japanese, most of it waged while the Japanese were invading the country and with Chiang constantly refusing to make a united front with the people's forces against the common enemy, until after the famous Sian kidnapping incident. Finally, we have reviewed the national resistance war against the Japanese during 1936-45, with Chiang fighting against the people's forces more than he did against the Japanese. It now remains for us to trace the course of the civil war of 1946-50, precipitated by Chiang and in which he met his downfall at the hands of the Chinese people.

CHIANG LAUNCHES THE CIVIL WAR

Upon the conclusion of the victorious war against the Japanese imperialists, the Chinese Communist Party, on August 25, 1945, issued a declaration outlining plans for a united front people's democracy in China. To this purpose Mao Tse-tung went to

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Chungking and conferred for more than a month with Chiang. Agreements were made to safeguard internal peace, but Chiang signed them only for the purpose of winning public support. He had not the slightest intention of carrying them out,² and he proceeded at once to violate them by attacking the People's Liberation Army.

Chiang had behind him American imperialism. The would-be world conquerors in Wall Street and Washington, already actively embarked upon their program of aggressive expansionism, were paying close attention to the great, hoped-for prize of China. Chiang was their willing puppet. With American support and in violation of the agreement he had just signed, Chiang began to seize those large parts of China previously held by the Japanese. In taking over various of the big cities of northern China he had the active help of U.S. warships, transports, and airplanes, which moved his soldiers and supplies. Meanwhile, he attacked the troops led by the Communists, with the result that many armed clashes developed.

At this juncture the Communists took the initiative in calling for a truce, on January 10, 1946. A conference was assembled, with all groups represented. The United States sent as its representative, General George C. Marshall, to replace Patrick J. Hurley, in the role of "mediator." In his instructions to Marshall, Secretary of State Byrnes said, "We believe as we have long believed and constantly demonstrated that the government of Generalissimo Chiang Kai-shek affords the most satisfactory base for a developing democracy."³ The Communist-led People's Liberation Army was much too powerful, however, to be summarily brushed aside, as President Truman would have liked, so maneuvers had to be made. Consequently, an agreement was worked out for the calling of a National Assembly under Chiang's control. Marshall used his influence to cut down Communist representation in the Assembly and to reduce the role of the People's Liberation Army in the proposed new national military set-up. The Communists refused to walk into this trap.

Meanwhile Chiang proceeded at once to violate all their agreements by militarily seizing as much as he could of the formerly Japanese-occupied territory. Like the Korean Syngman Rhee of later years, he understood that his military aggression would have the support of American imperialism, whose aim,

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above all, was to prevent the formation of a genuine people's regime in China. During 1946, therefore, upon Chiang's initiative, the civil war got under way. On January 7, 1947, Marshall left China (to return later for a short time in April), criticizing Chiang (for the record's sake), but falsely placing the main responsibility upon the Communists for the outbreak of the civil war.

THE VICTORY OF THE PEOPLE

Superficially, Chiang seemed to have much the better of the situation and he glowed with optimism.⁴ His army was fully equipped with the very best American armaments, including a big fleet of airplanes (of which the Communists had almost none), and his army was two-and-a-half times as large as the People's Liberation Army. Chiang also occupied by far the largest part of China, including most of the main railroads and the big cities, and he had the backing of American imperialism. (All told, up till then, the United States had given \$6 billion to Chiang and zero to People's China.) But Chiang lacked one vital element, the support of the Chinese people. They were thoroughly disillusioned by the rotten graft with which his government was saturated, and with the corrupt landlords, usurers, and monopolists who controlled it. They hated Chiang for his treasonous failure to fight the Japanese, and they rightly blamed him for starting this latest civil war. Hence, workers, peasants, students, middle class and many smaller capitalists increasingly swung their vast support to Mao Tse-tung and the People's Liberation cause.

Full-scale fighting got under way in July 1946. Against Chiang's vastly heavier forces, the People's Liberation Army, following Mao's approved strategy and tactics, withdrew from many larger cities and concentrated, with success, upon inner lines. As Chu Teh says, "By the time the war was eight months old, over 700,000 of Chiang Kai-shek's bandit forces had been wiped out.... During the first year, over 1,000,000 Kuomintang troops were annihilated, whereas the People's Liberation Army grew in strength from 1,300,000 to 2,000,000."⁵ In July 1947 Mao's forces took the offensive, and during the next year they won many important victories. The morale of the Kuomintang troops sank and large bodies surrendered, with their brand-new American equipment.

During the period from September 1948 to January 1949 the

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People's Liberation Army delivered three powerful offensives against the Kuomintang's forces, putting 1,540,000 out of action. Great Chinese cities fell one after another before the people's armed forces – Tientsin, Peking, Nanking, Shanghai, and others.⁶ With the fall of Nanking, Chiang's capital, the K.M.T. regime was basically defeated. By June 1950 the rest of the country was mopped up, and Chiang and the remnants of his forces were driven to the island of Taiwan (Formosa), where they still remain, living upon American handouts. The great Chinese Revolution, foreseen by Lenin and Stalin and supported by the Third International, had won.

The four-year civil war, one of the greatest ever fought, resulted in a glorious victory for the people. The latter's armies roared across China, sweeping before them all the trash of feudalism and imperialism. During the fierce struggle the People's Liberation Army destroyed or captured 8,700,000 of Chiang's troops, won over some 1,700,000 more, and seized from Chiang 50,000 pieces of artillery, 300,000 machine guns, 1,000 tanks, 20,000 motor vehicles, and many other kinds of military equipment, nearly all American-made.⁷ The 25 years of war in China were at an end. The forces of Chinese reaction and American imperialism were wrecked, as had been those of Japanese imperialism. The vast Chinese nation had broken the fetters that had so long enslaved it and was now embarked upon the road the goal of which is socialism.

With the oldest contemporary civilization in the world, China is an immense country. It has 4,300,000 square miles of territory, or one-sixth more than the United States. Its population, rapidly growing, amounts to some 600,000,000, the largest in the world and about one-fourth of all humanity. It is a country rich in agricultural and industrial resources, having vast stretches of fertile land and large deposits of tungsten, copper, nickel, magnesium, aluminum, zinc, and other minerals. China has coal deposits of 400 billion tons; it is especially rich in iron ore; its oil deposits far exceed those of Iran, and in its water-power facilities it is superior to the United States and second only to the U.S.S.R.⁸ China was a very great prize indeed for the imperialist looters and exploiters to fight for.

The capitalist world, especially the big industrial barons in the United States, stood amazed and aghast at the epic people's victory developing in China. But, in view of the elemental trend of the

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people to the new People's Republic, they were utterly unable to change the course of events. All they could give Chiang was further weapons, and he already had more of these than he could use. What Chiang needed was not munitions, but the confidence of the Chinese people, which he had long since forfeited. But if the world's capitalists were shocked at what was taking place in China, the revolutionary and progressive workers of the world hailed it with rejoicing. The loss of China by revolution was a fundamental and irretrievable disaster to the world capitalist system.

On October 1, 1949, the Central People's Government of China was proclaimed, with Mao Tse-tung as Chairman and Chou En-lai as Premier. On this same day, the Soviet Union diplomatically recognized People's China and extended it a hearty welcome to the free peoples of the world. With a wary eye to Hong Kong and its other colonies in the Far East, Great Britain recognized the new regime on January 5, 1950. As for the United States, it was profoundly shocked by the whole turn of events and felt itself to be hardly less defeated than was the Kuomintang itself. Therefore, inasmuch as it had arrogated to itself the autocratic right to decide what kind of governments all other peoples may have, the United States refused recognition to People's China. It also opposed the admission of the new regime into the United Nations. No sooner was People's China established by the overwhelming will of the great Chinese people than the Wall Street monopoly capitalists, hoping frantically to turn back the wheels of history, began to unfold a policy of hatred towards it, and they are planning for an eventual war against that country to undo the great Revolution.

THE CHINESE PEOPLE'S DEMOCRACY

Mao thus characterizes the great Chinese Revolution: "The historical process of the Chinese Revolution must be divided into two stages: first the democratic revolution and then the socialist revolution – two revolutionary processes quite different in character.... Before [the Russian Revolution of November 1917], the Chinese bourgeois democratic revolution belonged to the category of the old bourgeois democratic revolution of the world, and was a part of it. Since then, the Chinese bourgeois democratic revolution has changed its character and belongs to the category of the new bourgeois democratic revolution. As far as the revolutionary

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front is concerned, it is a part of the world proletarian Socialist revolution.”⁹ The old-type revolution was led by the bourgeoisie; the new type by the proletariat. Mao defines the new regime as “a dictatorship of the people’s democracy based on an alliance of the workers and peasants and led by the working class (through the Communist Party).”¹⁰ He also says, “The working class must lead the dictatorship of the people’s democracy, for only the working class is the most far-sighted, just, unselfish and consistently revolutionary class.”¹¹ And Chen Po-ta adds, “It was precisely the leadership of the proletariat and the alliance of the working class and the peasantry brought about by it which made possible... the victory of the revolution against imperialism, feudalism, and bureaucratic capitalism.”¹² Mao justifies the new regime thus: “In a certain historical period, the Soviet-style Republic cannot be fittingly practiced in colonial and semi-colonial countries, the national policy of which, therefore, must be of a third type – that of the New Democracy.”¹³

The new People’s Democracy is genuinely democratic. Mao thus outlines it: “The democratic system must be realized among the people, granting them freedom of speech, assembly, and organization. The right to vote is granted only to the people and not to the reactionaries. These two aspects, namely, democracy for the people and dictatorship over the reactionaries, represent the dictatorship of the people’s democracy.” And Mao adds, “At the present stage in China the people are the working class, the class of the peasantry, the petty bourgeoisie, and national bourgeoisie.”¹⁴ There is obviously a close political kinship between the People’s Democracy in China and the People’s Democracies of eastern Europe.

The basic legislative body in China during the five years pending the holding of a broad national Congress was the Chinese People’s Political Consultative Conference. This was officially described as follows: “The Chinese People’s Political Consultative Conference (C.P.P.C.C.) was an organization of the democratic united front of the entire Chinese people. It embraced the representatives of the working class, the peasantry, the revolutionary armymen, the intellectuals, the petty bourgeoisie, the national bourgeoisie, national minorities, the overseas Chinese, and other patriotic, democratic personages.” Ten political groups went to make it up. The leading party in this preliminary government was

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the Communist Party, which in 1952 had some 6,000,000 members.¹⁵ There were other parties and great mass organizations behind it – the trade unions with 10,000,000 members, the youth with 8,000,000, large women’s organizations, etc. It was the C.P.P.C.C. organized in 1949, which proclaimed the People’s Republic of China.

The People’s Republic of China adopted its national constitution at a great congress in September 1954 in Peking. The constitution proclaims the new government as “a people’s democratic state, led by the working class and based on the alliance of workers and peasants.” The constitution proclaims socialism as its goal. It states that, “The period from the founding of the People’s Republic to the attainment of a socialist society is one of transition. The central task of the state during this transition period is to bring about, step-by-step, the socialist industrialization of the country and to accomplish, gradually the socialist transformation of agriculture, handicrafts and capitalist industry and commerce.” The economy now existing is of four types: 1. State ownership, ownership by the whole people; 2. cooperative ownership; that is, collective ownership by the working classes; 3. ownership by individual working people, and 4. capitalist ownership. The whole national economy is based on planned production.

The government guarantees full social rights and liberties to the people. Women are the equal of men in every sphere, economic, political, and social. The various nationalities making up the Chinese people are all upon an equal basis. The government, nationally, has but one chamber, which meets annually in the Congress. The interim leading bodies are the Standing Committee (Cabinet) and the State Council. The Chairman of the Republic is Mao Tse-tung, the Vice-Chairman is Chu Teh, and the Premier is Chou En-lai.¹⁶

New China’s objective, as Mao says, is “to develop from an agrarian country into an industrial country and to pass from a New Democracy to a socialist and communist society, in order to abolish classes and to bring about world communism.”¹⁷ This does not mean, however, that the land has been collectivized and all industry nationalized; this will take time. Land collectivization will depend upon a considerably higher degree of industrialization than yet exists. It is officially estimated that land collectivization will be “basically achieved” in 1958.¹⁸ While industrialization

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by the state is proceeding, certain forms of capitalism will be tolerated and encouraged (much as under the N.E.P. in early Soviet Russia). The industries of the imperialists, the *compradors* (their agents), and bureaucratic capitalists (monopolists), have been nationalized.

With the workers and their allies in firm control of all the key sectors of the national economy,¹⁹ as well as of the state power, they can permit a certain growth of capitalism, as an addition to the decisive industrialization carried on by the government. As Mao says, "Our present policy is to restrict capitalism but not to destroy it." The new constitution specifies these restrictions and declares that, "The state forbids capitalism to endanger the public interest, disturb the social economic order, or undermine the national economic plan by any kind of illegal activity." But this element of national capitalism is only temporary, as the country proceeds to industrialize itself. Mao points out that the petty bourgeoisie and the national capitalists, as proved by history, cannot possibly lead the Revolution. As he also warns, "The people have in their hands a strong state apparatus, and they do not fear a revolt on the part of the national bourgeoisie."²⁰ During the later years of the great Chinese Revolution the belief spread in American bourgeois circles that the Chinese Communists were not really revolutionary, that they and the movement they were leading were only of an agrarian reform character. But this was nonsense, a form of bourgeois self-deception in the face of this elemental movement of the powerful Chinese people. From the outset the Chinese Communists, cleansing their party of all renegades and deviators, have drawn their inspiration and understanding from the works of Marx, Engels, Lenin, and Stalin, and they very plainly said this all along. They are especially lavish in their appreciation of Stalin, who for many years was a close advisor on the Chinese Revolution. And of Lenin, Shih Chek says: "It is with the warmest love and deepest admiration that the Chinese people... honor this brilliant leader of all progressive mankind, their own best friend and teacher – V. I. Lenin."²¹ And in presenting the constitution to the Congress, Liu Shao-chi, General Secretary of the Communist Party, declared, "The road our country will take, as laid down in our Draft Constitution, is the road that the Soviet Union has traversed."

The Chinese also have always worked in close cooperation

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with the other Communist parties of the world, especially during the period of the Third International. In his great article, so often quoted here, Mao thus expresses the powerful spirit of internationalism of the Chinese Revolution in the policy of the new government: "Unity in the common struggle with the countries of the world which regard us as an equal nation, and with the peoples of all countries. This means alliance with the U.S.S.R. and with the People's Democracies in Europe, and alliance with the proletariat and the masses of the people of the other countries to form an international united front."²²

The laying of the economic basis for socialism is now proceeding very rapidly in People's China. This is because the Chinese are being greatly helped economically by the Russians. Thus, at the first National People's Congress in Peking, Mao declared, "We must strive to learn from Soviet Russia, in the constitution of our country, economically and culturally, to make China a superior state."²³ The Soviet Union militarily is also a great protector of People's China from the imperialists.

THE ROLE OF MAO TSE-TUNG

The great leader of the Chinese Revolution possesses many of the qualities of leadership that characterized Marx, Engels, Lenin, and Stalin. A man of resolution, initiative, and boundless energy, Mao is a brilliant theoretician, an exceptional organizer, and a very powerful leader of the masses in open struggle. These were the qualities that enabled this creative Marxist genius, in the face of prodigious difficulties, to lead the more than half a billion of the Chinese people to decisive victory.

Mao's theoretical work ranges over a vast scope. It sums up to an adaptation of the basic principles of Marxism-Leninism to the specific conditions prevailing in China, a monumental task which he has done with profound skill and thoroughness. The basis of this work was a Marxist evaluation of the character, over the years, of the developing Chinese Revolution – his differentiation of the new-type bourgeois democratic revolution from the old type, and the establishment of its relationship to the socialist revolution, constitute major contributions to the general body of Marxist theory. Mao also paid close attention to the Marxist analysis of class forces in China and the relation to each other of democratic forces in united-front movements, his work in this respect

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being one of the classics of Communist political writing.²⁴ Classical, too, are Mao's writings on military strategy and tactics, in the situation of a guerilla army gradually growing into a mass military force and carrying on the struggle in the face of a vastly stronger enemy.²⁵ Splendid also is Mao's development theoretically of the leading role of the small Chinese proletariat especially in the midst of the vast sea of peasants. Another of Mao's many theoretical achievements was his skilled utilization of the three principles of Sun Yat Sen,* which are widely popular among the masses, as part of the minimum program of the Communist Party,²⁶ thus taking over the democratic traditions of the famous Chinese bourgeois revolutionist. Brilliant also were his innumerable polemics with every sort of deviator and enemy. Mao's theoretical work extended not only into the fields of economics, politics, and military strategy, but also into literature, and philosophy. His work *On Contradiction*²⁷ is a comprehensive, profound and popular exposition of the Marxist-Leninist theory of knowledge.

Mao is also a splendid mass organizer and administrator. He is not one merely to throw out broad slogans; he also knows how to go to the masses and organize them to realize these slogans. His works are filled with consideration of the most detailed questions of organizational work, in the building of the Communist Party, the people's army, the trade unions, and all other organizations of the people. And it is all written in the simplest of language. A classical example of this is his work *On the Rectification of Incorrect Ideas in the Party*,²⁸ dealing with such errors as "the purely military viewpoint, extreme democratization, non-organizational viewpoint, absolute equalitarianism, subjectivism, adventurism, etc." Mao himself, born in 1893 of a poor peasant family in a village of Hunan, has had a hard life as a worker, soldier, student, and political leader. He is, indeed, a true son of the Chinese people, living their lives, knowing their thoughts and needs, and speaking their political language.

In the tradition of Marx, Engels, Lenin, and Stalin, all of

* Originally these three principles were: "Nationalism, Democracy, and the People's Welfare," but later Sun reinterpreted them to provide for alliance with Russia, cooperation with the Communists, and assistance to the peasants and workers.

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whom were fighters as well as great thinkers and organizers, Mao is also a superlatively good general, whether in the economic or political struggle or on the field of military battle. Along with Chu Teh and other leaders, Mao made the "Long March"; he was a noted guerilla fighter as well as tactician, and he took personal part in innumerable military campaigns. Mao's greatest political achievements have been in the sphere of the direct leadership of vast masses of the people in direct struggle against oppressors of every type.

When the Chinese people won the leadership of their country, there were very many elements in the capitalist world who said with final assurance: "Well, maybe it is not so bad after all; China is a vast, impossible chaos, and the Communists will break their necks trying to organize and govern it." But this was only wishful thinking, typical capitalist underestimation of the revolutionary abilities of the Chinese Communists, and especially of their great leader, Mao Tse-tung. Now such remarks are rarely heard. Already, the Chinese Communists, with Mao at their head, have clearly demonstrated that they can organize and lead forward their huge people. This adds just one more to the many "impossibilities" that they have accomplished in their epic struggle for freedom.

57. Wall St. Wants War: The World Wants Peace

During the post-war period the central struggle taking place in the world is the effort of American imperialism to organize a third world war, and the counter struggle of the peoples of the world, mainly led by the Communists, to maintain peace. This world fight is being won by the peoples.

In the years following the end of World War II American imperialism, stepping up the cold war on all fronts, has, as we have seen earlier, steadily developed its drive for maximum profits, for war, and for world conquest. In Europe by the end of the 1940's the United States, pouring out its billions and deeply penetrating the economies of the capitalist countries, had patched together the half-wrecked capitalist system of Europe into the wobbly N.A.T.O.-E.D.C. war alliance, and by means of Marshall Plan doles and its domination of Latin American puppet governments, had set up what appeared to be a firm control over the United Nations. Like robots, large numbers of delegates in the U.N. voted the American capitalist master's wishes.

Increasingly, Wall Street turned its attention to Asia, always sought as a rich imperialist prize and now the scene of very dangerous colonial revolts. The United States, it is true, had actively intervened from the outset in the various post-war revolutionary wars in Burma, Indonesia, Malaya, Indochina, and the Philippines against the peoples and for the former imperialist masters, but its interest in Asia was enormously intensified by the shocking loss of China. This major disaster had to be retrieved at all costs. The first fruit of Wall Street's new ultra-aggressive Asian policy was the war in Korea.

THE KOREAN WAR

The war in Korea, begun on June 25, 1950, was designed to be the initial step in the reconquest of China and the establishment of American domination of Asia, the first general phase of a third world war. It has been established that the war was started by the Syngman Rhee clique in South Korea. The war had been long in preparation under the supervision of General MacArthur, U.S. military despot in Japan. The South Korean leaders openly boast-

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ed that they could wipe out the ill-armed North Korean forces in the matter of a few days. John Foster Dulles, now Secretary of State, but then a special agent of the Truman Administration, pulled the trigger for the war. He conducted conferences with South Korean leaders, including a front-line trench visit, and on June 18, only a week before the war began, he declared publicly that "the United States was prepared to give all the moral and material aid that South Korea needed in its fight against Communism."¹ The first reports of the war that came to Tokyo clearly stated that the South Koreans had begun it – an interpretation, however, which was quickly discarded.² In 1953 the South Korean Representative to the United Nations nonchalantly conceded on a television broadcast that, "We started the war."³

Things turned out radically different in Korea than the Wall Street warmakers had planned. The South Koreans, although equipped with the best American arms, had no will to fight, and the North Koreans drove them back pell mell. In a panic, President Truman on June 27, even without consulting Congress, autocratically ordered American forces into the war. The United Nations speedily gave this aggression its blessing and took responsibility for the American war. Truman displayed his chauvinistic contempt for the Asian peoples by calling his Korean military campaign merely "a police action." The superior weight of American troops tended to overwhelm the little North Korean army, and when MacArthur went storming North, obviously with China as his goal, this brought in the Chinese volunteers, in October 1950, who drove back MacArthur helter-skelter. To break the military stalemate that later developed, both Truman and MacArthur wanted to use the A-bomb. Truman, who had cold-bloodedly ordered the atomic bomb dropped upon Hiroshima and Nagasaki, wanted to repeat this outrage upon the crowded Chinese cities. This was clear from his statements at the time. Inasmuch as People's China has a mutual security pact with the Soviet Union, the Truman-Mac-Arthur proposal was tantamount to launching a third world war. But the world outcry against the Truman-MacArthur proposal was so great that the President had to give it up, there being danger otherwise that N.A.T.O. would fly to pieces. The removal of General MacArthur from his command in Japan was chiefly because of the menace that this firebrand would drop the bomb simply upon his own initiative.

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Meanwhile, American reactionaries made hay on the basis of the Korean war. President Truman declared a "national emergency," government war appropriations leaped from \$18.5 billion in 1950 to \$53 billion in 1953, the developing economic crisis was liquidated by the flood of war orders, profits soared from 100 to 1,000 percent in the war industries, a feverish building of the armed forces was launched, peace-time conscription was introduced, and air bases were multiplied all over the world, until now about 950 encircle the Soviet Union. With a vengeance, monopoly capital reaped maximum profits. The wildest war hysteria was cultivated, witch-hunts were organized on all fronts, the Communist Party and many trade unions and other progressive organizations were proscribed and large numbers of their leaders jailed, the people were intimidated by new and menacing forms of thought-control, McCarthyism flourished like a bay tree, and the country moved rapidly and dangerously towards fascism.

In November 1952 General Eisenhower was elected President on the basis of his peace demagogy, for the American people, like all others, are opposed to war. But no sooner was he in office than he, like Truman, as a loyal servant of Wall Street, took up the latter's war program where it was left off. Except that Eisenhower attempted to apply it even more aggressively. He and his Secretary of State launched the so-called "liberation" policy, which is the Truman Doctrine under another name. It aims to launch civil and colonial wars in the countries opposing Wall Street. Eisenhower and Dulles promulgated, too, their theory of "instant massive retaliation," which claimed for the President the right to launch a major war at will, without consulting Congress or the people. The Eisenhower Administration also tried desperately to continue and expand the Korean war, threatening to A-bomb Chinese cities and to inject Chiang Kai-shek's Formosan army into the struggle. But the world demand for peace in Korea was so overwhelming that the Eisenhower government was not able to defy it and it had to sign the armistice, on July 27, 1953, which it had so long sabotaged in the negotiations. This was a disastrous blow to the whole world imperialist program of Wall Street.

Thus the horrible Korean war was halted. It had cost the United States 142,175 casualties⁴ (the real figure was vastly higher), not to mention the huge human losses of the Korean, Chinese, and other peoples. It utterly devastated the whole country. In no

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modern war was there more savage brutality shown, the U.N. (U.S.A.) forces using germ warfare, slaughtering unarmed prisoners, indiscriminately bombing unfortified cities, and constantly threatening to use the atomic bomb.

THE WAR IN INDOCHINA

Stopping the Korean war was a basic setback for the Wall Street warmakers, and accordingly their stock-market took a nose-dive. It was not long, however, until Dulles and his war partners found another opening which they believed would give them a chance to develop their much-wanted third world war, under conditions that would leave them at least some of their present allies to help make the fight. This was the war in Indochina, where ever since 1946 the French imperialists had been trying in vain to shoot down the liberation revolution of the people led by Ho Chi Minh and to win control again over this very rich country.

The Communist Party of Indochina was formed in 1930 under the leadership of Ho Chi Minh. It led the guerilla fight against the Japanese invaders in World War II. Ho Chi Minh became President of the Democratic Republic, formed at the end of the war. The war against France began when the French imperialists tried to take over again after the Japanese had been defeated. Up to 1954, the war cost the French an estimated 250,000 casualties, of which they admit some 40 percent.⁵

The United States, which considers itself to be the leader (i.e., ruler) of the world, moved sharply into the Indochina war, without even asking the consent of the United Nations, sending money, planes, tanks, and military advisors to aid French imperialism. By the beginning of 1954, the United States was paying 78 percent of the financial expense of this deadly war which, altogether, cost this country three billion dollars.⁶ The Eisenhower-Dulles line was to intensify and to spread the war,⁷ meanwhile superseding French influence in the whole area.

The establishment of a cease-fire in Indochina, on July 20, 1954, in spite of the undisguised efforts of the United States to continue the war, was another crucial defeat for American foreign policy. The Eisenhower government was exposed to the peoples of the world as following an aggressive war line, and its imperialist leadership over the capitalist world was shaken to its foundations by its futile attempt to force Great Britain and France into a great

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Asian war for which they had no taste.

Undeterred by their defeats in Korea and Indo-China, however, the American imperialists are outdoing themselves in trying to provoke an Asian (and hopefully, a world) war over Formosa.

In desperation at their growing loss of Asia, American imperialists have set up a South East Asian alliance, S.E.A.T.O., which is a sort of N.A.T.O. war front in that continent. But so bankrupt has their international influence become and so determined is the growing revolt of the peoples that so far they have been able to recruit into S.E.A.T.O. only imperialist-dominated Asian countries. China, India, Indochina, Indonesia, Burma, Ceylon, etc., representing the overwhelming majority of these huge populations, remain hostile to the bare-faced imperialist plan. Their people's central slogan is "Asia for the Asians," a conception which spells disaster to the western imperialists.

THE HYDROGEN BOMB

Meanwhile, a tremendous event had happened, the appearance of the hydrogen bomb in the hands of the reckless American militarists. This caused a wide shift in American strategy. The N.A.T.O. had proven essentially a failure, with many of its component countries showing a marked reluctance to carry out Wall Street's plan for an all-out attack upon the socialist world, much along the line of the fascist anti-Comintern pact of Hitler's time. With the new and dreadful bomb at their disposal, however, the reactionaries dominating the United States government believed that they had the means that would provide them with world domination. At once, the H-bomb became the center of Pentagon war preparations and also of State Department diplomacy, with Dulles sending repeated H-bomb threats to the Soviet Union and People's China. The aim became to build the Indochina war into an H-bomb war.

The Wall Street imperialists had at last got hold of a weapon with which they could kill several million people simultaneously, could wipe out the world's greatest cities with one blast, and, as some fanatics declared, even destroy the human race or the planet itself. And they have given the most positive indication that they are quite resolved upon using the H-bomb, even as they did the A-bomb at Hiroshima and Nagasaki. With sadistic lust, they revel in the statistics of the perspective of mass slaughter and widespread

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destruction.

But there are two flies in the ointment of the would-be users of the terrible hydrogen bomb. The first of these is the fierce protest from the peoples all over the world against the H-bomb, notably upon the occasion of the bomb tests at Bikini in March of 1954. This mass outcry has weakened the N.A.T.O. and renders vastly more difficult the manufacture and use of the H-bomb. But still worse for the Wall Street warmongers is the fact that the Soviet Union also has invented the H-bomb and is reportedly even farther advanced in its development than the United States. On August 20, 1953, the U.S.S.R. exploded an H-bomb, and on March 12, 1954, Premier Malenkov warned the Washington bomb brandishers against the terrible disaster of an H-bomb war.⁸ The loss of the H-bomb monopoly, like that of the A-bomb, constituted another catastrophe for American foreign policy. But the wild atomaniacs in Washington go ahead nevertheless with their attempts to build up the world situation for the launching of an A- and H-bomb war.

THE COLLAPSE OF THE E.D.C.

One of the serious defeats suffered by American imperialism during the post-war period, after the Chinese revolution of 1949, was the breakdown of the European Defense Community (E.D.C.) in August 1954. The E.D.C. was the military phase of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (N.A.T.O.), the major expression of the U.S. effort to mobilize the nations of western Europe on the basis of a re-armed Germany for an eventual all-out capitalist attack upon the U.S.S.R. and the People's Democracies of eastern Europe. It collapsed when the French National Assembly refused to ratify this attempt to organize the armed forces of Germany, France, Italy, Belgium, Holland, and Luxembourg into a unified anti-Soviet army under American control. The reasons for the E.D.C. debacle were the vast mass peace pressure in France and the antagonisms among the respective imperialist powers, chief of which were the conflict in policy between Great Britain and the United States and the acute hostility between French and German imperialism.

Following the collapse of E.D.C., the capitalist statesmen scurried about like ants in a panic, finally cooking up the Paris Agreement of October 23, 1954. The heart of this agreement, as of

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E.D.C., is the re-armament of Germany, in total violation of the Potsdam treaty. Great Britain increased its continental commitments, which made the new agreement possible. West Germany, tongue-in-cheek agreed to limit its troops to twelve divisions, and not to produce atomic, bacteriological, or chemical weapons. This war pact could not have been formulated without the active support of the Social-Democrats, particularly of Great Britain and France. The new set-up will face many obstacles in its aim of a militant anti-Soviet war alliance, although it nevertheless constitutes a serious war danger. The pact's fibre is weakened by the same forces which eventually brought down E.D.C. in a crash – internal capitalist contradictions and the pressures of the great world peace forces. This is why the United States, disillusioned by its untrustworthy “allies” – Great Britain, France, and Italy – tends more and more to rely for its war alliance upon such “reliable” countries as West Germany, Japan, Pakistan, Turkey, Spain, Greece, the Philippines, and certain Latin American countries, all of them on the American dole. As this is written, the fight still goes on over the re-armament and re-nazification of Germany.

THE FIGHT FOR WORLD PEACE

While the big monopolists of the United States, with their cold war and through their agents – Eisenhower, Truman, Dulles, Acheson, et al. – have gone ahead furiously preparing for a third world war, the peace-loving peoples of the world have been no less active in striving to prevent them from carrying out their destructive purposes. Never has the world seen such a tremendous peace movement as that carried on in the past several years by the socialist sector of the world and by the peace-loving masses in the capitalist countries.

The first phase of this great peace struggle was the building up of a powerful military defense by the U.S.S.R., People's China, and the European People's Democracies, which now, in the face of the rearming of Western Germany, is becoming a defensive military alliance.⁹ Although Socialist countries are inherently peace-loving, they have no alternative than to defend themselves in a war-crazed capitalist world, while carrying out a diplomacy based on peace, the banning of atomic bombs, and general disarmament. This military readiness is what has so far balked the imperialist warmongers of the West. The capitalist war firebrands learned in World War II to

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have a wholesome respect for the fighting qualities of Socialist peoples, a respect which was greatly enhanced by their recent experience in Korea and Indochina. Especially decisive so far in maintaining world peace has been the breaking of the American A- and H-bomb monopoly by the Soviet Union. Had this not been done, undoubtedly by this time the world would have been plunged into a devastating war. Those who A-bombed Japanese cities would not have hesitated to bomb Russian cities, if they could have done so without atomic retaliation.

The second phase of the people's great fight for peace during the cold war years is the vast peace work carried on all over the world by various progressive-led mass organizations. Among these are the World Federation of Trade Unions, the World Federation of Democratic Youth, the Women's International Democratic Federation, the Communist parties, and a host of other mass organizations and individuals. These huge movements, with tens of thousands of groups in virtually all countries, are carrying on an immense peace propaganda. Finally, there is the powerful World Council of Peace, which unites all the peace forces of the entire world in periodic great congresses and in continuous struggle for peace.¹⁰

The First World Peace Congress was held in April 1949 simultaneously in Paris and Prague; the Second Congress took place in Warsaw in March 1950, and the Third Congress in Vienna in December 1952. These were enormous meetings. The first congress assembled delegates representing some 600 million people from 72 countries; the second was even larger, and the third had 1,859 delegates from 85 countries representing at least 700 million. The chairman of this vast movement is Frederic Joliot-Curie, the eminent French scientist and Nobel Prize Winner, and the general secretary is Jean Lafitte.

The World Peace Council has held other interim world conferences, as well as broad national conferences in the respective countries. It has also convened enormous regional conferences in Latin America, Asia, and elsewhere. The conference of the Asian and Pacific Regions, held in October 1952, brought together 367 delegates from 37 countries. The delegations to the conferences and peace congresses come from every walk of life, from the capitalist as well as from the socialist countries. Thus, of the 1,817 delegates to the Vienna Peace Congress, 1,019 were from the capital-

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ist world, including British 157, Italian 198, and French 176. The British delegation contained 50 Labor M.P.'s, 93 trade union officials, and 10 clergymen.¹¹ There was also an American delegation.

This vast peace movement fights generally and in the respective countries for peace and against every feature of the program of the warmongers, for whom Wall Street is the world headquarters. The Council fights to ban the A- and H-bombs, to slash the various nations' war budgets, against the re-arming of West Germany and Japan, for the development of East-West trade, against chemical and biological warfare, for military disarmament, for the national independence of the various countries against American domination, for the development of the United Nations as a genuine peace organization instead of an American war alliance, etc. The Council has carried on a tremendous world-wide campaign to end the Korean and Indochina wars.

Two especially gigantic peace campaigns of the World Peace Council were the Stockholm mass petition, put out on March 19, 1950, for the unconditional prohibition of atomic weapons, which amassed about 500 million signatures; and the February 1951 appeal of the Council for a Five-Power Peace Pact, which secured some 610 million signatures.¹² These unprecedented mass campaigns aroused tremendous enthusiasm in the various countries. In the U.S.S.R. almost every adult person signed, in the capitalist countries scores of millions attached their names, and in People's China, 224 million signed the Stockholm petition and 344 million signatures were collected in three months for the petition for the Five-Power-Peace-Pact.¹³

The gigantic World Peace Council movement is having an enormous effect in cultivating the mass peace sentiment which is now so pronounced in every country of the globe, and which is wreaking havoc with American war plans. It was a basic factor in preventing the use of the A-bomb in China, in slowing the re-arming of western Germany and Japan, and especially in forcing the Washington warmongers to allow the Korean and Indochina wars to be brought to a halt. The World Peace Council, along with the sturdy diplomatic peace stand of the U.S.S.R., People's China, and the European People's Democracies, is helping to teach the Wall Street war incendiaries that it is one thing to plot a war and quite another to bring it to pass.

Incidentally, these vast democratic forces, including the great

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liberation movements in Asia, by their incisive condemnation of the Jim Crow system in the United States, have been a decisive force in compelling the American Negro-baiters to make certain concessions, to attempt to smooth over this monstrous outrage, including a soft-pedal on lynching, the desegregation of the armed forces, and the desegregation of the public schools. Even arrogant Wall Street imperialism (which tries to appear in a garb of democracy) has been compelled to back up on Jim Crow in the face of almost universal world condemnation.

In this critical moment of world history, with the world menaced by a devastating atomic war, characteristically it is the Communists, in first line the U.S.S.R., who come forward with real peace leadership for the harassed world's peoples. They are militant initiators and supporters of the great peace movement all over the world, a movement which is unique for its militant spirit, clarity of program, and immensity of size. This situation is in accord with the basic fact that the Communists are now the leading progressive force in the world. Just as characteristically, too, the bankrupt right Social-Democracy is opposing the World Peace Council and is servilely supporting the war line of the Wall Street imperialists. Champions of capitalism, these lackeys unhesitatingly follow the leaders of world capitalism in their desperate efforts to save that obsolete and bankrupt system. This is why the American top trade union leaders so ardently supported the Korean and Indochina wars, why the French Socialist Party backed the French government's vain attempt to drown the Indochina revolution in blood, and why the right-wing Laborites in England tail along after every crook and turn in the war policy of the Tory Churchill. The right Social-Democrats, traitors to the working class and socialism, are the most blatant of warmongers.

A THIRD WORLD WAR IS NOT INEVITABLE

Although world tension is very high, it can be diminished. Wall Street's insane policy is being defeated in many parts of the world. A third world war can be avoided, despite the American imperialist striving to the contrary. The world's peace-loving masses can prevent the Eisenhower-Dulles forces of American imperialism from launching an atomic world war if they will but exert their strength. They halted the Korean war; they blocked Wall Street's attempt to develop the Indochina war into a general

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atomic war on the eve of the Geneva Conference of May 1954,¹⁴ and the collapse of the European Defense Community at Brussels was primarily the result of their peace pressure. They can also halt Wall Street's projected third world war. But only by great mass pressure can they prevent war, for Wall Street has firmly resolved upon organizing such a war if it can.

The cumulative effects of all the defeats suffered by U.S. imperialist foreign policy during the past couple of years have badly shattered Wall Street's master strategy of achieving world domination through a great anti-Soviet war. Under the double pressure of rising mass peace sentiment all over the world and the sharpening up of antagonisms among the capitalist powers, the all-capitalist alliance with which Wall Street hoped to carry out its war plans, is groggy and tottering. Despite their growing defeats, however, the Wall Street imperialists have not abandoned their projected war program. In a tense world situation, where every war is a potential world war, American imperialism remains a serious menace to the peace of the world.

It has long been clear to Communists that war is inevitable so long as imperialism lasts. That is to say, imperialism is an inveterate breeder of wars. But this does not mean that every period of international tension must inevitably end in war, or that a great third world war is now inescapable. On the contrary, the world's peoples, if they so decide, as Stalin has pointed out, can prevent any individual war, even the war that Wall Street is now trying so feverishly to organize. But Stalin also made it clear that, "To eliminate the inevitability of war, it is necessary to abolish imperialism."¹⁵

Communists maintain not only that a world war can be prevented, but also that socialist and capitalist countries can and must live peacefully in the world together (see Chapter 50). Lenin, Stalin, and Malenkov have all laid the greatest emphasis upon these conclusions, as the very basis of Soviet peace policy. This perspective is anathema, however, in American capitalist circles, where the decision has been made that war is unavoidable and that socialism and capitalism cannot live in one world. And any one who dares to argue to the contrary is promptly labelled a subversive.

In stressing the need and practicability of socialist-capitalist coexistence the Communists, true to their role as the progressive

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political force in the world of this period, are giving all humanity the guidance necessary to avoid a measureless disaster. The alternative to peaceful co-existence is wholesale mass slaughter on a scale never before approached even by blood-soaked capitalism, with its successive world butcheries for imperialist conquest.

THE DEATH OF STALIN

On March 5, 1953, in his 74th year, Joseph V. Stalin died as the result of a stroke suffered during his sleep a few days before. This ended over half a century of revolutionary struggle on the part of one of the greatest fighters ever produced by the world's working class. His death was a tremendous loss to the Soviet people and to the international movement for peace and freedom.

Stalin, as we have seen above, was a major theoretician. Perhaps his greatest theoretical work was on the national question, on which he was the world's leading expert. His epic ideological battle with the Trotsky-Zinoviev-Bukharin wreckers also constitutes a Marxist classic. And just on the eve of his death he gave a last example of his profound capacity as an economist by working out the basic economic laws of capitalism and socialism, in his last work, *Economic Problems of Socialism in the U.S.S.R.*

Stalin was also a magnificent organizer. His building of the Communist Party, the Soviets, and other immense mass organizations of the Soviet people was a real masterwork. His leadership of the party in the mobilization of the people for the driving through of the successive five-year plans, with their building of industry and collectivization of farming, was organizational work beyond compare.

Stalin, too, was a militant fighting leader of the masses. His whole life was one long relentless battle against the enemies of socialism, both within and outside the party. He was a tower of strength as a military commander in the civil war of 1918-20, and in leading the Soviet people to victory over the Hitler barbarians in 1941-45 he displayed a peerless fighting spirit and outstanding military genius. During the cold war, the arrogant capitalist imperialists also came to dread the indomitable spirit and brilliant diplomacy of Stalin. He was indeed a man of steel, as his name signified.

At Stalin's funeral, Malenkov said of this brilliant and courageous leader: "Comrade Stalin, the great thinker of our epoch,

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creatively developed the teaching of Marxism-Leninism in the new historical conditions. The name of Stalin rightly stands alongside the names of the greatest men in human history – Marx, Engels, Lenin.”¹⁶

58. The General Crisis of World Capitalism

Decay and decline are characteristic of the world capitalist system in its present and final stage of imperialism, due to the working of its internal and external contradictions. Once progressive in laying the foundations of industry, the world capitalist system has now become obsolete and reactionary; it is in process of disintegration and is marching toward its death – at the hands of the revolutionary proletariat and its allies. The world is moving rapidly from capitalism to socialism.

The fatal flaw in the capitalist system lies in the fact that whereas modern production is fundamentally a social process, under capitalism the great industries and national resources are privately owned. This causes chaotic production, leading to overproduction and to periodic economic crises. It also leads to an uneven rate of development in the capitalist countries, which, under imperialism, is a basic cause of war. Capitalism is founded upon intensive exploitation, political subjugation, and widespread destitution of the workers. Inevitably the capitalist system generates conflicts between workers and employers, between big monopolists and small capitalists, between farmers and industrialists, between imperialist states and colonial peoples, between the imperialist powers themselves, and between the world forces of socialism and of world capitalism.

With the development of the imperialist phase of capitalism and the intensified drive for maximum profits, all these contradictions and antagonisms inevitably grow deeper and broader. They also produce recurring major social explosions, such as world imperialist wars, devastating world economic crises, fascism and the breakdown of capitalist democracy, and proletarian and colonial revolutions. The current major manifestation of these capitalist explosions is the cold war, with its dangerous threat of becoming a great third world war. All these conflicts sum up to the general crisis of the world capitalist system, a crisis which constantly tends to deepen and to become more catastrophic. The supreme manifestation of the general capitalist crisis is the growth of a powerful world-wide Communist and labor movement and the loss by the capitalist system, through revolution, of one-third of the world to the camp of socialism.

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CAPITALISM CANNOT AUTOMATICALLY RECOVER

The capitalist system, by the working of its inner economic laws, cannot recover from its general crisis. This is basically because all the factors that have contributed towards developing the general crisis continue still in effect and in more marked degree. Thus, there remains the chronic tendency, now accentuated, to over-production, through narrowing of the markets and intensified exploitation of the workers. The present so-called boom in the capitalist countries is highly artificial, being based upon the repairing of the war's damages and upon mass arms production.

The uneven development of capitalism in the various countries, a breeder of imperialist war, is also now worse than ever with the lopsided industrial expansion of the United States. And so, too, is the world capitalist struggle for markets; the famished and crisis-stricken industrial countries are now entering upon a dog-eat-dog battle for markets and sources of supplies of raw materials. This struggle must grow ever more intense. Such projects as the Schumann Plan and the European defense scheme will increase, not diminish capitalist competition.

The loss of a big section of the world by capitalism through socialist revolution is a fatal weakness of world capitalism for a generation past. Now it is far greater than before, with one-third of the world gone anti-capitalist. And the imperialist powers, especially the United States, also make this situation far worse for themselves by placing an economic embargo against the socialist countries, thus cutting off their nose to spite their face.

The break-up of the colonial system, now more advanced than ever, is also an irreparable disaster to world capitalism. Not only does this mean the loss of many preferred markets in these countries to the imperialist powers, but also that the new societies, too, are beginning to appear on the world markets as competitors to the older monopolized lands. Those who think that world capitalism will have a basic renaissance through great growth of the capitalist system in the erstwhile colonial and semi-colonial countries of Asia, Africa, etc., are in for disappointment. These countries cannot become industrialized (imperialist) capitalist nations under conditions of the deepening crisis of that world system. This is primarily because they face a stultifying, strangling competition from the older, imperialist powers, above all, from the United

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States. Consequently, the only practical perspective of national independence and a rounded-out industrial system for them is to begin to orient towards socialism, as China is now doing. Capitalism, which is dying of old age and senility in its birthplace, western Europe and the United States, can never have its youth renewed in Asia, Africa, and Latin America.

THE FUTILITY OF KEYNESISM

The bulk of the bourgeois economists, following the lead of the late Sir John Maynard Keynes of Great Britain, have learned that the old-time bourgeois conception that capitalism is an infallible system, self-regulating and bound ever-upward on a progressive scale of development is a delusion. While rejecting the scientific Marxist theories of value and surplus value, Keynes understood that Say's law, the erstwhile capitalist gospel to the effect that capitalist production automatically produces a sufficiency of customers to purchase this production – i.e., that production and consumption inevitably balance each other – is a fraud. Keynes argued instead that because of the tendency, especially under monopoly conditions, towards a big accumulation of uninvested capital, there tends inevitably to develop a shortage of markets, which causes overproduction and joblessness. This condition, if uncorrected, said Keynes, could lead to increasingly devastating economic crisis, gigantic unemployment, ruinous imperialist wars, and eventual socialist revolution.¹

To overcome this basic flaw in the capitalist system, as he saw it, Keynes proposed to stimulate the investment of capital by government intervention through a variety of means – by manipulating the interest rate, prices, and taxes, by the initiation of public works, etc. Keynes contended that thus full employment would be maintained, and cyclical economic crises either abolished or greatly minimized. The ultimate effect, he declared, would be to cure the general crisis of capitalism. It was a theory of “progressive capitalism,” “managed economy,” and the “welfare state.”²

The basic error in Keynesism is that, dealing primarily with the question of consumption, it leaves untouched the basic relationships in capitalist production which are the fundamental cause of mass unemployment and economic crises. Keynesism cannot abolish the “gap between production and consumption.” As the British economist, Eaton says, “If the gap is to be filled by

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public expenditure by the state, again the gap reappears, because production remains production for profit.... What it gives with one hand, it takes away with the other.... In a system of which profit is the motive power, there must always be the profit gap. This is the 'gap' which is the root source of crisis."³ Contrary to Keynes, mass unemployment can be finally abolished only by the abolition of capitalism itself, as demonstrated by the experience of the Soviet Union.

Strongly anti-Marxist, Keynesism is the bourgeois economics of the period of the general crisis of world capitalism. Most bourgeois economists, while rejecting the name of Keynes and also many of his specific proposals, accept his main idea, the heart of his system, that is, the necessity in this period of deepening capitalist crisis for the government to intervene in industry in order to stimulate production and to prevent a huge mass unemployment that could become revolutionary. Although usually dressed up in radical phrases, Keynesism is basically an expression of monopoly capital. Eaton says, "Keynesian theory is in harmony with the dominant interest of monopoly capital."⁴ And the Soviet economist Bliumin states that, "All discussions among bourgeois economists during the recent period have revolved primarily around the works of Keynes."⁵

In their economic policies all the big capitalist powers, notably the United States, follow the general principles of Keynes. President Eisenhower, for example, characteristically declared, "Never again shall we allow a depression in the United States." The United Nations also reflects the policies of Keynesism characteristic of this period. Capitalists, as Marx pointed out long ago, always move to have a reserve army of unemployed. But they dread the revolutionary consequences of such mass unemployment as that of 1929-33.⁶ Hence Keynesism is their policy.

The Social-Democracy of the world has also adopted Keynesism as its basic system of economics. For them Keynes has definitely supplanted Marx. Right opportunism has long held to the conception of a capitalism that is automatically growing into socialism. Keynesism, with its illusions about "progressive capitalism," fits right into the opportunism of Social-Democracy.

Keynesism is fundamentally reactionary. It develops in two general variants: First, there are those Keynesians, direct spokesmen of monopoly capital, who in order to prevent or min-

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imize economic crises would subsidize the corporations directly, on the grounds that this stimulates the whole economic system. This is what Secretary Wilson meant with his famous statement that "What is good for General Motors is good for the United States." This, the program of Eisenhower and all other representatives of monopoly capital, is the infamous Hoover "trickle down" policy. In this period, it manifests itself basically by an enormous, maximum profits production of war materials, which dovetails perfectly with the aggressive world conquest program of American imperialism. It is quite possible, too, for such Keynesian statesmen as Eisenhower to launch big programs of road- building, flood control, etc., but all organized strictly upon the maximum profits-trickle down basis. The other, the petty-bourgeois variant of Keynesism, while advocating the strengthening of the purchasing power of the workers through improved wages, social insurance, tax reduction, etc., in reality joins militantly with the monopolists in supporting the wholesale munitions production program, as the chief means of keeping industry going through government intervention. Often, the Social-Democrats even outshout the monopolists for government war orders. War preparation, with all its deadly dangers, is the basic expression of Keynesism, both in its "reactionary" and "reformist" variants.

Keynesism is not a "managed economy," as its proponents claim. Its dabbling with the tax and interest rates to influence production, and its system of government stimulation of industry through war orders, in no basic sense alter the fundamentally anarchistic and chaotic character of capitalism. Planned or "managed" production is impossible under capitalism. Keynesism cannot cure the cyclical crisis, as we have seen from Roosevelt's futile "pump-priming" during 1933-1939. Indeed, instead of curing cyclical economic crises, Keynesism, with its desperate program of war production, must in the long run make the cyclical crises and the general crisis of capitalism far worse. That capitalism has not been made crisis-proof by Keynesian measures, which only give industry a temporary shot-in-the-arm, is amply demonstrated by the increasing signs now of economic crisis throughout the capitalist world, including the United States. Munitions-making, especially on its present gigantic scale, is fundamentally wasteful and tends ultimately to undermine and weaken the whole capitalist economy.

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Keynesism also is not the “welfare state,” as asserted. The basic objective of the present capitalist government policy, as Stalin points out, is not to advance the welfare of the people, but to wring the maximum profits from the producers for the monopolists. He says: “Monopoly capitalism demands not any sort of profit, but precisely the maximum profit. That will be the basic economic law of modern capitalism. The main features and requirements of the basic economic law of modern capitalism might be formulated roughly in this way: the securing of the maximum capitalist profit through the exploitation, ruin and impoverishment of the majority of the population of the given country, through the enslavement and systematic robbery of the peoples of other countries, especially backward countries, and, lastly, through wars and militarization of the national economy, which are utilized for the obtaining of the highest profits.”⁷ Keynesism does not and cannot repeal this basic law of monopoly capitalism.

By the same token, Keynesism does not represent the introduction of a “progressive capitalism.” It is a reactionary expression of the capitalist system in decay. Keynesism, a product of the general crisis of the world capitalist system, cannot cure that crisis, but must still further deepen it.

AMERICAN HEGEMONY NO SOLUTION

In Chapter 50 we have outlined the drive of American imperialism for world domination and also the inner compulsions behind this drive. We indicated, too, that the United States, in this imperialist push, established a certain shaky hegemony over the capitalist world and that its central aims were to solidify this hegemony and to extend it over the entire world, socialist as well as capitalist. Behind this determination to establish American domination, among its basic motivations, was a deadly fear of the monopolists for the safety of the world capitalist system and a conviction that only the United States, with its great wealth and industrial efficiency, can save it by taking it all over.

As remarked earlier, the American capitalist hegemony to the extent that it now exists, is economic, political, and military. The United States, with its tremendous production apparatus, now far outweighs economically any other capitalist government and it is able in considerable measure to enforce its economic policies upon them. American arrogance economically is fully matched in its

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political dealings with the capitalist countries, not only in the scandalous way the United States has dominated the proceedings of the United Nations, but also in the arbitrary manner by which it dictates the policy of individual nations – even of big imperialist powers. Pollitt says of his country, “Britain’s naval, air, and land forces continue to be controlled by American generals and admirals. American politicians insult Britain every day and lay down the law as to what Britain’s policy shall be at home and abroad.”⁸ American economic and political domination has made the fight for national independence a living issue in every capitalist country in the world, not excepting Great Britain, West Germany, Japan, France and Italy. The immense world-wide military machine of the United States is not only directed against the socialist lands, but it also serves to intimidate the capitalist world. Between June 1941 and June 1953, the United States has provided gross foreign aid, without repayment provisions, of \$94,558 millions,⁹ yet today it is the most hated country in the world.

What the great monopolists of Wall Street are driving at is the creation of an American-dominated world, in which the bulk of decisive basic industry would be situated in the United States, where Washington would be the capital of the world, and where the overwhelming military power of this country would reduce all other countries to the position of mere satellites. It would be an American-fascist world. Hitler’s ideologists expressed brazenly such reactionary dreams; the Wall Street pro-fascists, more cunning, say little about them openly, but they have made further progress in this general direction than Hitler ever did. “The sun never sets on the U. S. flag,” cries Wall Street. “Today troops fly it in 49 nations abroad.”¹⁰

There are three basic reasons why this fantastic dream of “the American Century” is unrealizable. First, the United States itself is a capitalist country; hence despite its present seeming great strength, it is subject to the laws of capitalism and of the world decline of that system. In view of its increasing internal and external contradictions, the United States will not be able to preserve its own capitalist system, much less save that of the world. The current theories of “American exceptionalism,” to the effect that capitalism in this country is inherently different and fundamentally stronger than that of other countries are nonsense. Capitalism in the United States is basically the same as in all other

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countries; historical conditions have, however, for the time being, favored it more, but the general crisis of capitalism is wiping out this long-continued advantage.

Second, the other capitalist nations cannot and will not indefinitely submit to American domination. As Stalin pointed out shortly before his death, referring particularly to West Germany and Japan, "These countries are now languishing in misery under the jackboot of American imperialism. Their industry and agriculture, their trade, their foreign and home policies, and their whole life are fettered by the American occupation 'regime.' Yet only yesterday these countries were great imperialist powers and were shaking the foundations of the domination of Britain, the U.S.A. and France in Europe and Asia. To think that these countries will not try to get on their feet again, will not try to smash U.S. domination and force their way to independent development, is to believe in miracles."¹¹ Stalin emphasizes the danger of wars among these powers. At this writing, as we shall see further along, signs are multiplying, bearing out Stalin's analysis of growing capitalist resistance to American domination over the capitalist world. American capitalist hegemony, what there is of it, is itself a product of the general capitalist crisis and it can only operate further to sharpen and deepen that crisis.

Third, American imperialist world domination is impossible because of the opposition of the socialist countries and the revolutionary working class of the world. The U.S.S.R., People's China, and the European People's Democracies are immune to the American economic penetration that has wrought such havoc in the capitalist world; they are also not to be dominated by the political pressures that have enslaved so many capitalist countries, and they cannot be intimidated by H-bomb diplomacy. By the same token, the workers' anti-capitalist movement is constantly growing throughout the capitalist world. The international socialist movement, led by the Communist parties, is an irresistible barrier to American imperialist domination of the world.

THE INSANITY OF IMPERIALIST WAR

For dozens of centuries the ruling classes, to further their own greedy ends, have not hesitated to butcher the common people by the millions in their endless wars. Since capitalism has come upon the world scene this organized slaughter of the people for the

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benefit of the exploiters has become more widespread and more awful than ever before. The great holocausts of World War I and World War II, products of the capitalist system, are utterly without parallel for bloodshed in the whole course of human history.

In order to try to solve the insoluble problems of the general crisis of the world capitalist system, American imperialism, with its allies and camp-followers, is getting ready once more to grasp at the hoary weapon of war. There can be no other rational interpretation of the complex of aggressive policies now being applied by the arrogant monopoly capitalists who control the United States and shape its program. These anti-social elements – parasites – are planning to send the millions of youth to die in masses, so that their own blood profits of capitalist exploitation may be increased and their rights to rob and repress the people secured and expanded.

But these warmongers will not find war to be the convenient instrument for their class purposes that it once was. The world's working class and its allies will no longer tolerate this savagery. After World War I they made capitalism pay for that monstrous crime by smashing it throughout one-sixth of the earth, Russia; after World War II, they wiped out capitalism from another sixth of the earth, and no doubt, after a third world war, if monopoly capital succeeds in forcing a war, they would finish off the system altogether.

Already signals are flying all over the world indicating that a third world war would encounter the strongest mass opposition. Thorez and Togliatti have declared that their peoples would not fight against the socialist world – France and Italy would be of no help to the United States in case of a war. The same will be largely, if not wholly, the case also with Great Britain and other important industrial countries. And the help Wall Street would get from the colonial world would be negligible. The opposition of the peoples to the Korean and Indochinese wars was only a foretaste of the tremendous resistance they would make to an atomic world war.

If the Wall Street warmongers succeed in launching the third world war for which they are striving so hard, the United States will have to fight the war virtually alone, with a most unwilling American people in the rear. The United States, even if it had the backing of the whole capitalist world, which it cannot possibly get,

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could not militarily defeat the socialist world. Hitler, with the entire industrial system and man-power of Europe behind him, went to complete disaster when he attacked the Soviet Union. And since then, while capitalism has grown very much weaker, the forces of socialism have trebled and quadrupled their strength. Wall Street could not possibly overthrow socialism by a third world war; instead it would devastate humanity and destroy what is left of the world capitalist system.

Replying to repeated insane threats by President Eisenhower and Secretary Dulles that they would atom-bomb the U.S.S.R. and People's China unless they bend the knee to Wall Street, the Soviet Premier made it very clear that such an attack would be repaid in kind. He said: "If the aggressive circles, banking on the atomic weapon, should resort to madness and should want to test the strength of the Soviet Union, there can be no doubt that the aggressor would be crushed by the same weapon."¹²

But this dread perspective of a terrible hydrogen devastation, with certain disaster for them in the end, is not enough of itself to stay the hands of the reactionary and increasingly pro-fascist Wall Street warmongers now controlling the powerful United States. In their growing desperation they have decided upon war, and only the restraining power of the people can defeat their plans. The people can check the warmakers within the framework of capitalism, but the United States will never be safe from the danger of fascism and a murderous atomic war until the people drive the agents of big capital out of power, establish a truly democratic government of the workers, Negro people, farmers, and other democratic elements, and reorient the country upon a genuine policy of peace and socialism.

The capitalist system, in this country as well as elsewhere, faces a blank wall as its future. It cannot pull itself out of its deepening world crisis by the normal operation of its inner laws; Keynesian blood transfusions cannot rescue it; American hegemony can only deepen the crisis; and a third world war would be fatal. The capitalist system is historically doomed. "All roads lead to communism."

59. Inevitability of World Socialism

The basic reason why socialism is inevitable, why in fact it is now rapidly supplanting world capitalism, is because capitalism cannot solve the needs of the people, whereas socialism can and does. Capitalism has proved incapable of extending industrialization throughout the world, without which higher standards of living are impossible. Its industrialization is confined almost exclusively to a small minority of the peoples, and the great masses in the world have yet to learn the advantages even of steam and electricity. By the same token, capitalism cannot utilize for peace the great atomic power resources of uranium, which are 25 times as great as the resources of coal and 100 times as great as those of oil and gas.¹

Capitalism cannot feed the people. Today the great bulk of humanity remains at the poverty level, including the masses in the industrial countries. Capitalism likewise cannot free the people. It enslaves the vast colonial peoples, in its home countries it reduces the working masses to the domination of a comparative handful of exploiters, and in this period of its decay it confronts the world with the dread threat of fascism. Capitalism also cannot bring peace to the world. Capitalism cannot educate the people; after two to three centuries of capitalism half the people of the world are still illiterate. Its whole existence has been marked by a series of the most terrible wars in human history, and now, in its war madness, it is actually dreaming of wiping out civilization and the human race.

Socialism will end all these and the other evils that capitalism inflicts upon mankind. It will industrialize not a few favored countries, but every country; it will, by abolishing capitalist exploitation, eliminate mass starvation and bring well-being to all; it will forever do away with tyranny and establish genuine freedom and democracy; and it will finally put an end to war and establish a reign of peace worthy of civilized beings.

Socialism has a scientific economic system. In fundamental contrast to the crisis stricken countries of the capitalist world, the nations of the socialist world, with sound economies, are marching ahead at an unprecedented pace, industrializing themselves and improving the living standards of their peoples. This is because – with political power in the hands of the workers and their

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allies, with the industries and natural resources owned and controlled by the nation, with human exploitation abolished, with production planned and carried on for the benefit of the people and not merely for a comparative handful of exploiters – they have eliminated all the inner contradictions such as cyclical crises, mass unemployment, and struggles over markets, that are wrecking the world capitalist system.

Socialism has been compelled to demonstrate its economic superiority over capitalism under peculiarly severe conditions. This is because, on account of specific conditions, the socialist and peoples' democratic regimes of the world have been established in countries that were relatively undeveloped industrially. Capitalism was both unable and unwilling to industrialize these countries, but socialism is accomplishing this brilliantly. This is an historical achievement of the greatest magnitude.

The fact that it has had to build its industrial bases from the ground up and at a great speed has been a serious handicap to socialism in raising the living standards of its peoples, all the more so because of the warlike attitude of capitalism towards the new regimes. This has resulted in the socialist areas being ravaged by war, and it has forced the socialist governments to maintain huge and wasteful military establishments. These are a burden to the people and are fundamentally alien to socialism, which is a regime of peace. Costly military forces have also required the maintenance of strong, disciplined governments, which have hindered the process of the "withering away of the state," which is inherent in socialism. Despite these burdens imposed by reactionary and dying capitalism, the new socialist regimes have made swift economic headway.

The socialist lands have utterly shattered all the bourgeois arguments that have been made to show the "impossibility" of socialism – contentions that the working class could not lead the nation, that under socialism there would be no incentive for production, that the workers could not build or operate modern industry, that the peasants would never accept socialism, that the people would not defend the U.S.S.R. against armed attack, etc. They have shown that in all these respects, as well as in many others, socialist states are far more effective and viable than capitalist regimes.

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A RECORD OF UNPRECEDENTED ECONOMIC PROGRESS

The history of the socialist industrialization of the Soviet Union is one of the greatest epics in the life of mankind. The young Soviet Republic took over an industrial and agricultural system that was weak, primitive, and wrecked by years of imperialist and civil war. It had to be rebuilt completely on pioneer socialist lines, creating a whole new army of technicians as it went along. And all this was done in the face of a violently hostile world capitalism. This enmity came to deadly expression in World War II, when half the industries of the U.S.S.R. were wiped out in that capitalist-generated war. Nevertheless, triumphing over all these monstrous difficulties, the Soviet people have already made their country into a great industrial nation, which before long will be industrially the first in the world. This growth has, of course, enormously increased the military strength of the country in the face of aggressive-war-minded American imperialism.

The Soviet Union is now producing 21 times more steel, 19 times more coal, and 45 times more power than was produced in 1924-25.² So swift is the tempo of Russian industrial development that not only has all the terrible property damage done by the war been repaired, but in 1953, the third year of the fifth five-year plan, the U.S.S.R. was producing 70 percent more oil than in 1940, 100 percent more coal, 100 percent more steel, 280 percent more electric power, and 380 percent more machinery.³ The 1954 national budget is more than three times larger than the budget revenue of the pre-war year 1940.⁴ "Industrial production in 1954," says Soviet Deputy Premier, M. Z. Saburov, "is 63 percent higher than in 1950, and in the two current years 74,000,000 additional acres (equal to the total sown area of France and Italy) will be brought under cultivation."⁵ A bourgeois commentator makes this characteristic remark of Soviet industrialization: "Stalin set Russia's goal as only 60 million tons of oil by 1960; the sights have now been lifted to 70 million by 1955."⁶

Soviet industrialization has produced various projects larger than anything ever done by capitalism. Among them are great power developments on the Volga, Amu Darya, Dnieper, and Don rivers. "The scale of the new power and irrigation developments has no parallel in history."⁷ The Kuibishev and Stalingrad power stations outstrip anything in the world, including the biggest sta-

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tions in the United States. At this time a number of vast projects are also going on to revolutionize agriculture.

The following is the general table of the percentage growth of capitalist and Soviet industrial output over the years 1929-1951:⁸

	1929	1939	1943	1946	1947	1948	1949	1950	1951
U.S.S.R.	100	552	573	466	571	721	870	1082	1266
U.S.A.	100	99	217	155	170	175	160	182	200
Britain	100	123	—	112	121	135	144	157	160
France	100	80	—	63	74	85	92	92	104
Italy	100	108	—	72	93	97	103	118	134

People's China, with its people's democracy, planned economy, and capable Communist leadership, is also industrializing itself at a very rapid rate. Wu Teng-hsi says, "The tempo of industrialization of China in her first five-year plan will know no parallel. The industrial levels which the capitalist countries of the West took thirty to fifty years to reach will be attained by China in five-years' time."⁹ The whole country is pushing ahead with the building of basic industries, nine new railroads are in construction, vast irrigation projects are under way, and China's great rivers are gradually being brought under flood control. "State-owned industry," says Wang Hua, "is expanding by leaps and bounds. The total value of its output in 1950 was 52 per cent above the 1949 figure. In 1951, it grew by 59 percent over 1950, and in 1952, it was 45 percent more than in 1951."¹⁰

A basic advantage which the Chinese have over the Russians in their early stages of industrialization is that they now have the benefit of the latter's long experience and their close technical cooperation. Tseng Wen-ching reports that, "The Soviet government has agreed to assist China in the construction of 141 big projects, including iron and steel plants, non-ferrous metallurgical enterprises, coal mines, oil refineries, machine-building plants, automobile and tractor plants, and power stations. With the completion of these enterprises, China will have her own heavy industry, and a firm foundation for her industrialization."¹¹ Within a very few years the miracle will be accomplished of making "backward" China into a powerful industrial nation.

In the European People's Democracies a characteristic rapid rate of industrialization also obtains. In Poland, hitherto largely undeveloped industrially, great advances have been made. Since

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the end of the war, “From a backward agrarian country in the past, an agricultural raw materials appendage to the imperialist states, Poland has been transformed into an industrial socialist state with a big and ever-growing economic potential.... Industrial output in 1953 was 3.6 times the 1938 level – calculating per capita of the population, it was 4.8 times greater.”¹² “Germany has never known such a tempo of industrialization,”¹³ as is now going on in the German People’s Republic. In Bulgaria, at the end of 1952, the rate of industrial production was over four times greater than in 1938.¹⁴ In Rumania, “In 1953, the volume of industrial production will be about 2.5 times greater than in 1938, and 3.5 times greater than in 1948.”¹⁵ Comparable increases in production are being registered in Czechoslovakia, Hungary, and Albania. In 1951 in the People’s Democracies industrial output increased over 1950 as follows: Poland 24 percent, Czechoslovakia 14.9 percent, Hungary 30 percent, Rumania 28.7 percent, Bulgaria 19 percent, and Albania 47.1 percent. All these countries are in close economic cooperation with each other, and they have many advantageous mutual trade agreements.

SOCIALISM SOLVES THE PEOPLE’S PROBLEMS

As stated by Stalin, “The essential features and requirements of the basic law of socialism might be formulated roughly in this way: the securing of the maximum satisfaction of the constantly rising material and cultural requirements of the whole of society through the continuous expansion and perfection of socialist production on the basis of higher techniques.”¹⁶ The whole history of the Soviet Union, as well as that of the new People’s Democracies of Europe and China, completely confirms the verity of this law, which is in flat contradiction to the basic law of modern monopoly capital, as also stated by Stalin – to squeeze maximum profits from the exploited.

Under socialism and people’s democracy the toilers have achieved vast advances in their living standards, despite the gigantic efforts that have been required to build their basic industries and to construct powerful armed forces to ward off the attacks of militant monopolist imperialism. Unemployment has been completely abolished among them. At this time – with the capitalist world in war fever and with real wages being slashed and the social services drastically curtailed – in the Soviet Union wage rates ad-

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vance, one price reduction follows another, and health, education, and social insurance appropriations are climbing.¹⁷

The introduction of socialism in the United States, Great Britain, Germany, France, Japan, and other industrialized countries would bring about a steep rise in the living standards of the workers. This is because it would end the intense exploitation of the toilers now prevailing in these countries. About one-half of the product of the American workers, now at least \$180 billion a year, finds its way into the hands of the parasitic classes through the devious capitalist channels of interest, rent, and profit. In the United States, for example, in 1953, the du Pont company made a profit of \$6,315 upon each of its 91,260 workers.¹⁸ Other corporations made similar fabulous profits.

In the capitalist world, particularly in the United States, democracy is also being rapidly undermined and the fascist danger is now real and menacing; but in the socialist regimes democracy is constantly strengthened and is altogether on a higher plane. Besides the rights of free speech, free assembly, and the like, the masses there have the guaranteed rights to work, to leisure, to education, to social insurance. Women and youth have rights and opportunities to a degree unheard of in the capitalist countries. Equality prevails among the various peoples making up the nation, anti-Semitism is a crime, McCarthyism is unthinkable, and such a disgrace as the American Jim Crow system is utterly impossible.

In the field of culture there is likewise a general retrogression throughout the capitalist world, above all in the United States, with its cultural mess of pragmatism, psychoanalysis, neo-Malthusianism, and other systems of superstition and obscurantism, with its swamp of "comic" books, oceans of sex, crime and horror stories, printed and on the radio and television.¹⁹ Expressive of this cultural decadence are the enormous increases of juvenile delinquency, crime, gambling, and insanity – all indications of the thoroughly sick capitalist system. For example, "One of every ten New Yorkers can expect to spend some part of his life in a state mental institute."²⁰ In the socialist lands, however, there is nothing of all this mental, physical, and cultural rot. The several countries with a socialist program are making tremendous strides in wiping out illiteracy, in the development of culture, and in the elimination of crime and insanity. Their whole life is being developed upon a progressive, scientific, and humane basis.

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Higher education, for example, is proceeding at a swift rate in the countries of socialism. The U.S.S.R. in 1953 turned out 50,000 engineers as against 20,000 in the U.S.A. There are twice as many students of scientific courses in Soviet universities as there are in similar schools in this country. The U.S.S.R. also has 3,700 secondary technical schools, with 1,600,000 students; in contrast to 1,000 of such schools, with 50,000 students, in the United States. China, with 250,000 students of higher learning (150,000 in engineering courses) is also making tremendous strides. And the People's Democracies of eastern Europe, with 266 institutions of higher learning and 401,000 students, are away ahead of the capitalist nations of western Europe.²¹

Socialism wipes out the robbery of the workers and the peasants by the abolition of capitalists and landlords. By the very nature of its system, socialism also destroys imperialism, the basis of colonialism. The U.S.S.R., People's China, and the European People's Democracies are, along with the colonial peoples themselves, the great organized force in the world making for the elimination of every form of colonialism and semi-colonialism and for the establishment of self-determination of all peoples. By the same token, the nations now living under socialist regimes or approaching that status are also the inveterate enemies of war. The central political struggle now going on in the world is the resolute fight of the socialist peoples and their working class and other allies in the colonies and the capitalist countries to do away with war, in the face of an insane American imperialism which sees in war its great hope for survival and world mastery.

In its period of general crisis and decay, capitalism is undermining the very fibre of the human race. The system is sick and is breeding neurotic and psychotic people. Socialism, on the other hand, is advancing the people to new and higher levels of mental, moral and physical well-being. The seventh congress of the Communist International thus described the new socialist citizen: "On the basis of the new attitude toward work and society that is gaining firm hold, a new mode of life is being created, the consciousness and psychology of people are being remoulded, new generations, healthy, able-bodied and of universal development, are coming into being. From the very midst of the people, organizers, leaders, inventors, bold explorers of the uncharted elements of the Arctic, heroic conquerors of the stratosphere, the air and the

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depths of the sea, of the summits of the mountains and the bowels of the earth, are coming forth in vast numbers. Millions of working people are storming and mastering the once inaccessible citadels of technique, science, and art. The U.S.S.R. is becoming a country of new people, full of purpose, buoyancy, and the joy of living, surmounting all difficulties, performing great feats.”²²

As socialism grows into communism, and the U.S.S.R. is now on the verge of doing this, the peoples will increasingly undertake new tasks, impossible under capitalism, in raising humanity to new levels of development and achievement. This trend is already to be seen in socialism’s abolition of human exploitation, in its fight against intellectual superstition and obscurantism of every sort, in its current tremendous struggle to abolish war, and in many of its gigantic projects revolutionizing the production of food and industrial goods. But once the outworn capitalist system, now befouling the life of humanity, is done away with, then vast plans of human betterment, now hardly dreamed of, will be undertaken as matters of course. These will include such as the general application of atomic energy, the elimination of the great deserts of the earth, the restoration of the despoiled forests of many countries, the conservation and development of the national resources of the earth, the scientific regulation of the size and disposition of population, the sociological up-breeding of the human species, and a host of other achievements, all impossible under the narrow-minded, dog-eat-dog system of capitalism.

Socialism is inevitable because in every phase of social life it is incomparably superior to capitalism. This is why one-third of humanity has irresistibly taken the road to socialism, and the rest will not be long in following suit. The great social trend of our times, expressed in the will and basic interests of the overwhelming mass of workers, peasants, and other useful producers of all countries, is from capitalism to socialism. Nor can Wall Street, with all its wealth, industrial power, bayonets, Social-Democratic agents, and Vatican allies, reverse this historic current.

Ever since the Russian Revolution of 1917 the capitalists of the world have carried on a tremendous lying campaign to obscure from the masses of their peoples the true achievements of socialism. And it must be admitted that they have largely succeeded. They have been aided by the fact that socialism has had to advance in the face of monumental difficulties – forced upon it by

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decadent capitalism – including civil war, imperialist war, devastated countries, the need to create a new socialist economy from the ground up, and the maintenance of heavy burdens of military armaments. Now, however, socialism is making such gigantic strides in production, in raising mass living standards, in developing culture, and in defending world peace, that the great reality of socialism is shattering the tremendous web of anti-socialist lies that have been built up over the years. This increasingly powerful example of socialism-in-action is bound to have far-reaching progressive effects during the coming period in all the capitalist countries of the world.

THE ROAD TO SOCIALISM

Decaying though it is, the capitalist system will not automatically collapse; the exploiters will use every desperate effort to keep in existence their means of robbing the working masses. Capitalism can be abolished only by the conscious political action of the working class and its allies, led by the Communist Party. Marx and Lenin made all this very clear decades ago, and the proletarian revolutions that have since taken place in Russia, eastern Europe, and China have demonstrated the correctness of this foresight.

The working class is the great peace force in the world and it always tries to accomplish the advance to socialism by the most peaceful means possible. In chapters 28, 51, and 56, we have seen the workings of this peace-striving in the revolutions in Russia, eastern Europe, and China. In all these instances it was the ruling classes that precipitated such violence as took place. It is an axiom of working-class experience that the ruling classes, when facing a rising revolutionary movement even when this is proceeding along peaceful and legal lines, always guts its established democratic procedure and grasps at every violent means to repress the workers.

Nevertheless, especially since the famous seventh congress of the Comintern in 1935, the Communist parties in many countries have recognized the increased possibility of their establishing socialism in a peaceful way. This is in line with the seventh congress' "new tactical orientation" (see Chapter 44), the policy of the people's front. By the development of a broad united front of workers, farmers, national minorities, professionals, small business elements, etc., making up a vast majority of the population, it becomes possible in certain cases, to hold in check the inevitable capi-

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talist domestic violence, and, in spite of it, to elect a progressive people's government. Such a government, to put its program into effect in conditions of the deepening general capitalist crisis, would find it necessary to orient either by the regrouping of its forces or by new elections, in the general direction of a people's democracy and socialism.²³ The government would have to be prepared to restrain and defeat capitalist violence as it proceeded to demobilize capitalism in its economic and political strongholds.

In the industrialized capitalist countries, where there prevails bourgeois democracy, the Communist parties have programs based upon this conception. Thus, the Italian Communist Party seeks to achieve "through the medium of the election of a government" measures "which we unhesitatingly recognize as the road to socialism."²⁴ The French Communist Party fights for a popular front that will begin to march to socialism, the first step being the election of a broad people's government. The British Communist Party declares "that the people of Britain can transform capitalist democracy into a real People's Democracy, transforming parliament, the product of Britain's historic struggle for democracy, into the democratic instrument of the will of the vast majority of her people."²⁵ The Canadian Labor-Progressive Party has a similar program,²⁶ and likewise the party in Australia. It is the general Communist political line in the major capitalist countries.

The Communist Party of the United States also "advocates a peaceful path to socialism in the U.S.... It declares that socialism will come into existence in the United States only when the majority of the American people decide to establish it."²⁷ The wholesale prosecution of Communists in the United States upon the allegation that the Communist Party advocates the forceful overthrow of the U.S. government, is a lie and a frame-up, no matter how often it is reiterated by crooked prosecutors, intimidated juries, and reactionary courts. Actually the American Communist Party, as the Communists in many other countries, strives for the legal election of a democratic, eventually a people's front government, as above indicated. This, however, has not prevented the party from being outlawed, in August 1954.

The people's front policy becomes feasible in the various countries upon the basis of three general considerations: (a) the great weakening of the capitalist system, nationally and internationally, through the workings of the general crisis of capitalism;

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(b) the enormous increase in strength of the democratic forces in the respective countries and on a world scale; and (c) the burning issues raised by the growing capitalist crisis – economic breakdown, fascism, national enslavement, and war – which are so urgent as to make realizable the creation of a broad people's front government embracing the great bulk of the nation. This makes possible, if democratic procedures can be maintained, the election of a people's government that can move towards socialism.

In all the above-cited national examples of people's front policy, the assumption is that the forces of democracy must and will restrain and defeat the forces of reaction in the latter's attempts, by violence, to balk the democratic will of the majority of the people. That the capitalists, when they feel their rule threatened, will have recourse to violence to save themselves at the expense of the people's freedom and well-being is characteristically illustrated by the situation in Italy. There capitalism is reeking with rotteness, and the forces of democracy, led by the powerful Communist Party, are rapidly coming to the fore. But the capitalists, who control the government, army, and police, are resolved not to surrender up these controls even in the face of a democratic mandate of the people to do so. In 1948, when it looked as though the forces of democracy might carry the Italian elections, the ruling class, fully backed by the United States, was all ready to launch a fascist-like counter-revolution. They are definitely of the same mind today, as reported by Walter Lippmann.²⁸ And Lippmann comments, matter-of-factly, "If the Italian democratic parties have really decided not to surrender the state, they have in principle taken the right decision." It will be the great task of the Communist Party and its democratic allies to make the majority will of the people prevail, in spite of the attempts of the ruling class to flout and defeat it.

The present rising wave of reaction and fascism in various capitalist countries, a product of the war drive and the deepening general crisis of capitalism, adds increasing threats of violence against the Communist efforts for a peaceful advance to socialism. Especially is this true of the United States, where fascism, particularly McCarthyism, which is a main American brand of fascism, has made dangerous inroads upon democratic liberties. In their drive for war the warmongers are slashing away the Bill of Rights, undermining the trade union movement, and, together with trying to make impossible the regular election of an anti-monopoly, anti-

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imperialist people's government, they are seeking to prevent any effective defense of the workers' immediate or ultimate interests.

Arrogantly, the Wall Street warmongers are also now attempting to deny every oppressed people in the world the right of revolution, by the exercise of which right all the major capitalist nations, including the United States, originally established themselves. When a people anywhere in the world moves to free itself from imperialism and monopolist exploitation, Washington promptly outlaws this action as subversive and proceeds by violence to try to suppress it. This was the significance of the American intervention in the Greek civil war, its interference in the Italian elections of 1948, its arbitrary participation in the Korean civil war, its systematic efforts to overthrow the Chinese People's Republic, its attempts to create civil wars in eastern Germany, Czechoslovakia, etc., its efforts to strangle independence in Puerto Rico, its arbitrary attempt to stifle the national liberation struggles in Indochina and elsewhere, its recent strangulation of the people's government of Guatemala, and its present intervention in Formosa.

But this King Canute-like effort of American imperialists to exorcise colonial and socialist revolutions is bound to fail. It may temporarily succeed here and there, as in western Europe, in damming back the revolutionary forces, but when the sweep inevitably comes it will be all the more powerful and complete. Peoples cannot be denied the right of revolution by the fiat of Wall Street monopolists and other would-be world rulers.

The world pressure for socialism grows ever more intense. This comes from two main sources, from the breaking down of the capitalist system, with all its harrowing exploitation and oppression in the various countries, and from the attractive influence of the demonstrated success of socialism as exemplified by the U.S.S.R., People's China and the European People's Democracies. Capitalism cannot possibly reverse this basic historic trend. Its attempt by violence to prevent countries from advancing to people's democracy and socialism, merely adds an additional task for the great world socialist movement led by the Communist parties. The mass movement, as it fights for the preservation of world peace, will also have to guarantee to all peoples the right to establish such progressive forms of government as they see fit, regardless of the reactionary will of Wall Street.

60. The Historical Advance of Socialism (1848-1954)

Let us now take a look back over the ground we have traversed in the preceding chapters and consider the historical process as a whole. During the one century that we have been dealing with, the social development has been swift and revolutionary. From the vast human panorama two decisive central facts stand forth: first, the spread, maturing, and decay of the capitalist system, and second, the tremendous advance of the world's working class towards socialism.

THE RISE AND DECLINE OF CAPITALISM

A century ago capitalism, which had been passing through the industrial revolution, was strong and vigorous, and was entering upon several decades of rapid growth and extension over the earth. Industry thus was still largely in the handicraft stage, or in small factory units. Capitalism was throwing off the fetters of feudalism, the broad European revolution of 1848 being fundamentally anti-feudal. The future great capitalist states, for the most part, were consolidating themselves, to the accompaniment of many national wars. The young labor movement, weak in organization and uncertain in program, was just coming into existence. Science was strong and vigorous, and most of its outstanding leaders, as part of the general capitalist struggle against feudalism, were carrying on a strong battle against religious superstition and clerical domination. This was capitalism in its early, healthy, progressive, competitive stage.

Capitalism, rapidly transforming its industries into great plants and expanding transportation and communications systems, in the 1880's began to enter into its second fundamental stage, monopoly and imperialism. In accordance with the law of the uneven development of the capitalist system, the United States, Germany, and eventually Japan, shot ahead industrially and successfully challenged the pioneer industrial country, Great Britain. The labor movement also grew rapidly and spread to many countries, and its fight became more powerful and clear-sighted. The great imperialist states, in growing collision with each other, ravenously proceeded to seize as colonies the remain-

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ing, less developed sections of the earth, especially in Asia and Africa – an imperialist process which was completed about 1900. This ever-sharpening competition among the capitalist powers culminated in the devastating world war of 1914-18. The workers achieved the epoch-making Russian Revolution of 1917.

These developments introduced the final stage of world imperialism, its period of general crisis and decay. First manifesting itself at the time of World War I, this crisis has increased in tempo ever since. As we have seen in the previous chapters, the period has been marked by a tempestuous sharpening of all the inner contradictions of the capitalist system. The workers have delivered several heavy revolutionary blows against the capitalist ruling classes, and the rebellious peoples in the colonial countries have just about wrecked the colonial system, one of the foundation pillars of world capitalism. Cyclical economic crises, once relatively minor national disturbances, have now become great international holocausts. The irreconcilable rivalries of the imperialist powers culminated in the great World War II, which was catastrophic to the capitalist system in general. And the working of the law of the uneven development of capitalism has finally produced the unhealthy and destructive situation of one great power, the United States, more or less dominating all the rest. In this period of general capitalist decline, bourgeois democracy tends into ultra-reactionary fascism, bourgeois culture has degenerated into the cultivation of every form of obscurantism, bourgeois economics has become mere capitalist propaganda, and decaying bourgeois science in general accepts as a basic proposition the nonsensical principle of a harmony between science and religion.

All this sums up to a great sharpening of the general crisis of world capitalism. It is the period of irretrievable decay in every capitalist fibre. The industries of the major capitalist countries have been concentrated into the hands of a relatively few monopolists. While still capable of some spurts of national growth the system is essentially turning in upon itself and losing its character as a world regime. The world has been split into two great economies: one, the socialist sector, healthy and growing; the other, the capitalist sector, cancerous and shrinking. The fundamental sickness of the capitalist economy was made basically clear in the unprecedented world economic crisis of 1929-33. Since then the capitalist system has been operating precariously, largely upon

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the artificial stimulation of war, the repairing of war's damages, and the preparations for a new world war.

There are those who attempt to separate the American economy from the general decay of capitalism, holding that it somehow is a different type of system. But this American exceptionalism is sheer nonsense. The economy of the United States is capitalist, basically the same as that in Great Britain, West Germany, Japan and other declining capitalist countries. Its industries are capitalist-owned;¹ its workers are exploited and robbed, and it has all the other elementary features of capitalism. The main reason the United States has so far escaped the marked economic and political decline characteristic of the capitalist system as a whole is the temporary advantage of its geographic position, which enabled it to avoid the devastation of the two world wars. Cannibal-like, it has been able to profit from the disasters of the rest of the capitalist system. But American capitalism nevertheless is no less subject to the laws of the growth and decline of capitalism, and it is also involved in the general crisis of the capitalist system. Indeed, one of the most decisive expressions of this general crisis is precisely the insane resolve of American monopoly capital to try to solve its own increasing problems and those of the capitalist system as a whole by a third world war.

THE ADVANCE OF THE WORKING CLASS

Whereas the course of the capitalist system as a whole during the period of 1848-1954, has been in a sort of arc – that is, a time of rise, growth, and decline; for the working class the graph is of a rising inclined plane – a time of growth and ever-increasing strength. The historical meaning of this sharp contrast is clear – the rule of the capitalists is passing and declining, while that of the working class is in the ascendancy and is moving towards becoming universal. This worker advance, however, is not uniform, but goes into occasional revolutionary leaps.

At the time our study begins, a little over a century ago, the modern working class was just being born, and also the labor movement, with its trade unions, cooperatives, and political parties. The handicraftsmen were being transformed into real wage workers as the factory system grew and expanded. The workers were making their first sustained efforts in western Europe and the United States at establishing a working-class philosophy, to-

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gether with the organization and tactics necessary to carry it out.

The period of the First International (1864-1876) was one of tremendous importance in the life and growth of the world labor movement. It was then that the workers, under the leadership of the great Marx and Engels, laid the basis of the world revolutionary program; they strengthened the trade union and political movement and spread it far into eastern Europe; they got their first elementary experiences in international solidarity, when they waged the glorious struggle of the Paris Commune.

The period when the Second International (1889-1914) rated as the organization of world labor also marked many advances. It was an epoch of expanding mass working-class organization in all spheres – trade union, cooperative, political. The movement also began to spread into many new areas of eastern Europe, Asia, Australia, and Latin America. This was also the time of the development of world imperialism, when the corruption of the skilled aristocracy and the right Social-Democracy undermined the program and crippled the militancy of the working class. This degenerative trend culminated in the tragic failure of the International to fight against the first world war of 1914-18.

The period of the Third International (1919-1943) was that of the developing general crisis of world capitalism; it was also a time of growing proletarian and colonial revolutions. Under the leadership first of Lenin and then of Stalin, the labor movement developed its program and expanded to practically every country on the globe. The great Russian revolutions of 1905 and 1917 expressed the revolutionary tone of the entire period. After World War I there immediately followed the German and Hungarian revolutions and the whole series of colonial revolutions in China, Turkey, Persia, and various other countries. There were the great struggle against fascism, the tremendous building of socialism in the U.S.S.R., the heroic waging of World War II to smashing victory over fascism, and the decisive role of the Communists in all these struggles.

The post-war years, from 1945 on, after the dissolution of the Comintern, are years in which the world's workers have carried on in the tradition and with the leaders, programs, and parties created by the Third International; the labor movement has made spectacular progress. The workers' basic organizations have experienced a tremendous growth. The world trade union movement,

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all tendencies, has mounted to the stupendous figure of at least 125 million. The cooperative movement in 1946, before the Chinese Revolution and the European People's Democracies, which greatly spread that movement, had at least 143 million members.² And as we have seen, the workers' political parties, and youth, women, and peace movements have reached figures that were hardly dreamed of during the days of the First, Second, and even the Third International.

During the later war years and the period of the cold war the working class and its allies have won one great basic victory after another over the declining, rotting capitalist system. Chief of these successes were the revolutions in Lithuania, Latvia, Esthonia, Czechoslovakia, Poland, East Germany, Hungary, Rumania, Bulgaria, Albania, and especially the Chinese Revolution. With the numerous national liberation movements and anti-imperialist revolutions, the peoples of Asia – especially in China, India, Indochina, Indonesia, Malaya, Burma, Korea, Ceylon, etc. – have dealt smashing blows to the long-established, oppressive, and reactionary colonial system. It all mounts up to the great historical fact that 900,000,000 people, over one-third of the world's population, have definitely embarked upon the road to socialism.

The speed of the world revolutionary process is now fast and is ever becoming faster. Fifty years ago the trade union movement of the world was still relatively weak and scattered, but now it is an immense organization covering all parts of the globe. At the turn of the century the national liberation movement in the colonies also was young and feeble, and the imperialists shot down "native" revolts at will; but now the colonial revolution, grown mighty, is shaking the whole capitalist system. At that time, too, the socialist movement, save in a few European countries, was small and weak, and predominantly in the hands of opportunist careerists; but now it has grown powerful, it is led by resolute fighters, and it is able to measure its strength successfully with that of capitalism as a whole. Fifty years ago world capitalism was still strong, but now, it is senile and obviously on the way to oblivion.³

It has indeed been a century of tremendous progress for the working class, the peasantry, and the oppressed peoples of the earth. The capitalist system, during this period, has lived through its great period of growth and expansion and is rapidly on the de-

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cline; the splendid new sun of socialism is now well up over the world political horizon. The new order is swiftly replacing the old, and the tempo of this process can only increase. The tens of thousands of heroic strikes and political struggles waged by the workers during the past hundred years have not only served to protect them partially from the barbarous exploitation of capitalism, but they have also served basically to weaken the underpinning of that system. Above all they have created the working-class consciousness and organization that is putting an end to capitalism. The great progress of the toilers of the earth since the foundation period of the First International will undoubtedly be far eclipsed by the advance during the next decades.

THE HISTORICAL JUSTIFICATION OF MARXISM

During the past century of the advancing, revolutionary working class, its decisive leadership, in the fields both of theory and of actual struggle, has come from the Marxists, and specifically during the past half-century from the Marxist-Leninists. These fighters have not only foreseen the general course of economic and political evolution, but have led the workers successfully through the complex events of all these years. The soundness of Marxism has been brilliantly demonstrated by this century of stormy history.

Marxism has a tremendous and constantly growing body of theory, but the student who wants to know what has happened economically and politically during the past century of struggle and the proletariat's role in it, can find it forecast in outline in two small books, Marx's and Engels' *The Communist Manifesto* of 1848, and Lenin's *State and Revolution* of 1917. In their famous work, Marx and Engels laid the foundations of scientific socialism and outlined the future of society (which they greatly elaborated upon in the next decades), and Lenin in his book (along with his many other writings) applied the principles of Marxism to the period of imperialism and proletarian revolution.

Ever since the appearance of *The Communist Manifesto* the principles of Marxism have been under incessant attack from the open bourgeois enemies and from opportunists within labor's ranks. Marxism has also had to stand the severe test of life itself in the tremendously complex developments of society during this long period. But Marxism has emerged victoriously from all these attacks and tests. As the core of its all-embracing revolutionary

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philosophy, it explains to the workers just what is taking place in the world, gives them practical leadership in the current defense of their class interests, points the way to the socialist goal to which they must strive, and carries on the actual building of the socialist world.

Anti-Marxist elements have left no important element of Marxism unassailed. They have attempted, in vain, to refute scientific philosophical materialism and Marxist dialectics; they have stormed against the materialist conception of history, but far from overthrowing Marxism, their own history writing has become marked by an abandonment of the concept of causation, of progress – in fact, it is an attempted liquidation of history.⁴ They have broken their lances in futile battle against the Marxist doctrine of the class struggle, while myriads of strikes and other manifestations of the class struggle raged beneath their noses; and they have especially attacked the Marxist conception of the state as the “Executive Committee of the bourgeoisie” under capitalism and as the dictatorship of the proletariat under socialism – two propositions that have been completely borne out, both under capitalism and in the new socialist regimes which are now so rapidly growing in the world.

But the heaviest enemy theoretical attacks have been directed against Marx’s economics, above all, against his revolutionary conception of surplus value, and particularly its implications of the relative and absolute impoverishment of the working class, and of the polarization of wealth in the hands of the capitalist class. This is the basic Marxist conclusion that the operation of capitalism inevitably tends to create a small minority of increasingly wealthy capitalists at one end of the social scale and a vast mass of increasingly impoverished workers at the other end. Every bourgeois economist and every Social-Democratic opportunist, from Bernstein on down, has warred against this fundamental and revolutionary conception. The burden of the enemy counter-argument is the nonsense that capitalism produces a steady improvement in the lot of the masses and that, therefore, socialism is both unnecessary and impossible.

The complete answer to the bourgeois lie that capitalism improves the lot of the toiling masses is to be found in the terrible conditions of hunger, poverty, and disease now to be found in the colonial and semi-colonial areas of the world – the worst victims

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of capitalism, of imperialist super-exploitation. That they are becoming increasingly aware of the cause of their growing destitution and misery is signified by their growing rebellion.

In the industrial countries also the benefits of the great strides capitalism has made in industrial techniques and in the volume of production flow overwhelmingly into the hands of the capitalists and the upper middle classes, to the detriment of the workers. The vast masses of the workers, the peasants, and lower middle classes live at bare subsistence levels or below. While a small section of skilled workers have benefited considerably, the great majority of the working class has not. Kuczynski says of the British worker, who has the "highest" living standards in Europe: "The British worker today, although enjoying a higher cultural standard, and occupying a more comfortable (although not necessarily healthier) home, actually lives on a lower nutritional standard than did his forefathers of 200 years ago."⁵ In France low living standards of the workers have long prevailed, and similar conditions exist all over capitalist Europe.

In a futile attempt to prove their point that capitalism progressively improves the conditions of the toiling masses, the bourgeois apologists and soothsayers, as their last refuge, always refer to the United States. This country, of course, having so far been able, cannibal-like, to exploit the growing crisis of capitalism, does not yet exhibit the vast sea of poverty characteristic of the other capitalist countries, but the trend towards such a situation is definite.

The United States is the classical land of great monopolies, which dominate the whole economic and political system. About three percent owns a majority of it. In 1950 the total United States national income was \$239 billion, of which the top one-fifth of the population received \$111 billion (46 percent); whereas the bottom one-fifth received only \$10 billion (4 percent). The Heller budget, for a family of four, calls for an expenditure of \$5,405 in most cities, but this is beyond the reach of more than two-thirds of all the families.⁶ Negro families receive per family only about one-half as much as whites do.

What is happening to the working class in the United States has been graphically illustrated by the Labor Research Association. Considering all major factors – employment, output per worker, nominal wages and salaries, average annual earnings, and

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the index of prices – the L.R.A. shows that the position of the factory worker in the United States has deteriorated from point 100 in 1939 to 78.8 in 1952.⁷ The U.S. Government publication, *The Workers' Story*, which extravagantly claims that American real wages have doubled in the past 40 years, nevertheless has to admit the fact that production per worker has tripled during the same period.⁸ Meanwhile, American corporate profits before taxes have been shooting up, from 65.9 in 1939 to 404.4 in 1952.⁹ In 1951 the steel corporations made four times more profit per steel worker than in 1946.

During the period of the rise of imperialism in Great Britain, Germany, France, Japan, and the United States, there was a considerable increase in real wages, mainly among the skilled categories of workers; but with the onset of the general crisis of capitalism this trend has been reversed. J. Duclos states that in France, “compared with 1937, real wages per hour have decreased by 45 percent.”¹⁰ Similar conditions prevail elsewhere in capitalist Europe, and the workers' conditions in the United States are also deteriorating. As the capitalist warmongers develop their insane drive towards war, living conditions for the toiling masses will get worse. In the period of the deepening general crisis of capitalism, workers' living standards increasingly fall. This general situation further emphasizes the correctness of Marxism on this elementary point of absolute mass impoverishment.

THE GROWTH OF COMMUNIST WORLD INFLUENCE

One of the basic developments of this general period, especially during the past 40 years, has been the rise of the Communists to the leading position in the world's labor movement. Since the days of the Communist League in 1848 the Marxists have waged an endless war against the various sects and deviators that have developed during the life of the labor movement, including utopian socialists, Proudhonists, Blanquists, Lassalleans, Bakuninists, Anarcho-syndicalists, Bernstein Revisionists, opportunist trade unionists and cooperators, Guild Socialists, Trotskyites, Bukharinites, Titoites, etc. Marxism has won out over all these alien trends. Its final, strongest, and most stubborn foe is right Social-Democracy. But the Marxists, now Marxist-Leninists, have also basically defeated this group, whose record is a miserable story of betrayal of the working class.

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This left victory is evident from a comparison of the strength of Communism and right Social-Democracy on a world scale. Morgan Phillips, chairman of the Socialist (Second) International, generously credits that organization with having “37 parties with a total membership of nearly 10 million and voting strength of 60 million.” He puts the world Socialist youth organization at 380,000, but gives no figures as to the number of women in the Second International.¹¹

The world Communist movement, however, far overtops these statistics of international Social-Democracy. A recent U.S. Senate study of world communism lists some 75 Communist parties, with a total of 24,320,697 members (a big underestimation), located in practically every country on earth.¹² The voting strength of the Communist movement in general also is at least four or five times that of the right Social-Democrats. The left-led trade unions of the world, too, outnumber the right-led unions by at least two to one. And the left-led united-front youth and women movements, running into scores of millions, utterly dwarf the Social-Democratic organizations in these fields. And Social-Democracy has no movement at all to compare with the immense left-led world peace movement. Of course, the Communists, in the scope of their decisive political victories, far surpass the right Social-Democracy – a dozen countries, comprising one-third of the people and territory of the world, now having Communist leadership, while the right Social-Democracy at this time leads no important nation. The whole trend of world developments goes to increase the disparity between the two movements. As the movement for socialism grows, Communist influence also expands; as capitalism dies, its faithful servant, right Social-Democracy, expires with it.

The tremendous growth of Communist strength in the world means that for the first time since the days of the First International the voice of the working class and of the oppressed peoples of the world is being heard effectively. The world situation has already escaped the control of the erstwhile capitalist masters, and no longer can they do as they wish in international affairs. They now confront increasingly the unbreakable strength of the world's toiling masses. Capitalism is doomed and socialism is marching on to universal victory – this is the great lesson of the past century.

APPENDIX

World Congresses and Important Conferences of the Internationals

THE FIRST INTERNATIONAL (International Workingmen's Association)

London 1864 (Conf.), Geneva 1866, Lausanne 1867, Brussels 1868, Basle 1869, The Hague 1872, Philadelphia 1876 (dissolved), Geneva 1877.

THE ANARCHIST INTERNATIONAL (International Workingmen's Association)

St. Imier 1872, Geneva 1873, Brussels 1874, Berne 1876, Verviers 1877, London 1881 (expired).

INTERIM SOCIALIST AND LABOR CONGRESSES

Ghent 1877, Chur 1881, Paris 1883, 1886, London 1888.

THE SECOND INTERNATIONAL

Paris 1889, Brussels 1891, Zurich 1893, London 1896, Paris 1900, Amsterdam 1904, Stuttgart 1907, Copenhagen 1910, Basle 1912 (Conf.) (Suspended during World War I).

LABOR CONFERENCES DURING WORLD WAR I

Copenhagen 1915 (Neutral Powers), Vienna 1915 (Central Powers), London 1915, 1917, 1918 (Allied Powers), Zimmerwald 1915 – Kienthal 1916 – Stockholm 1917 (International left wing).

THE COMMUNIST INTERNATIONAL (Third International)

Moscow 1919, 1920, 1921, 1922, 1924, 1928, 1935 (dissolved 1943).

THE SECOND INTERNATIONAL (Revived as the Labor and Socialist International)

Berne 1919 (Conf.), Amsterdam 1919, Vienna 1921 (2½ International), Berlin 1922 (Conf. of the Three Internationals), Hamburg 1923 (unity of 2nd and 2½ Internationals), Marseilles 1925, Brussels 1928, Vienna 1931, Paris 1933 (Conf.). (Suspended during the Hitler period.) Frankfurt 1951 (revived as the Socialist International), Milan 1952.

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