

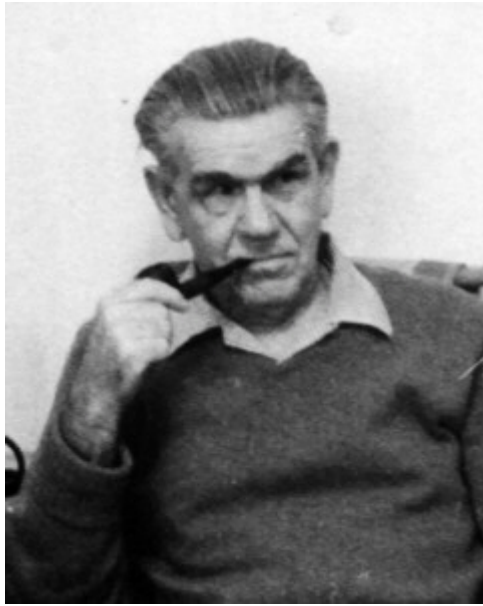
Paul Mattick
TEXTS /1
1926-1970

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Paul Mattick (Biography)

1904-1981



Born in Pomerania in 1904 and raised in Berlin by class conscious parents, Mattick was already at the age of 14 a member of the Spartacists' *Freie Sozialistische Jugend*. In 1918 he started to learn as a toolmaker at Siemens, where he was also elected as the apprentices' delegate on the workers' council of the company during the German revolution.

Implicated in many actions during the revolution, arrested several times and threatened with death, Mattick radicalized along the left and oppositional trend of the German communists. After the 'Heidelberg' split of the KPD (Spartacus) and the formation for the KAPD in the spring of 1920, he entered the KAPD and worked in the youth organization *Rote Jugend*, writing for its journal.

In 1921 — at the age of 17 — Mattick moved to Cologne to find work with Klockner for a while, until strikes, insurrections and a new arrest destroyed every prospect of employment. He was active as an organizer and agitator in the KAPD and the AAU in the Cologne region, where he got to know Jan Appel among others. Contacts were also established with intellectuals, writers and artists working in the AAUE founded by Otto Ruhle.

With the continuing decline of radical mass struggle and revolutionary hopes — especially after 1923 — and having been unemployed for a number of years, Mattick emigrated to the United States in 1926, whilst still maintaining contacts with the KAPD and the AAU in Germany.

In the USA Mattick carried through a more systematic theoretical study, above all of Karl Marx. In addition, the publication of Henryk Grossmann's principal work, *Das Akkumulations — and Zusammenbruchsgesetz des Kapitalistischen Systems* (1929), played a fundamental role for Mattick, as Grossmann brought Marx's theory of accumulation, which had been completely forgotten, back to the centre of debate in the workers' movement. To Mattick Marx's 'critique of political economy' became not a

purely theoretical matter but rather directly connected to his own revolutionary practice. From this time Mattick focused on Marx's theory of capitalist development and its inner logic of contradictions inevitably growing to crisis as the foundation of all political thoughts with the workers' movement.

Towards the end of the 20's Mattick had moved to Chicago, where he first tried to unite the different German workers' organizations. In 1931 he tried to revive the *Chicagoer Arbeiterzeitung*, a newspaper steeped in tradition and at one time edited by August Spies and Joseph Dietzgen, but without success. For a period he joined the *Industrial Workers of the World*, who were the only revolutionary union organization existing in America which, in spite of national or sectoral differences, assembled all workers in One Big Union, so as to prepare the general strike to bring down capitalism. However, the golden age of the Wobblies' militant strikes had already passed by the beginning of the 'thirties, and only the emerging unemployed movement again gave the IWW a brief regional development. In 1933 Paul Mattick drafted a program for the IWW trying to give the Wobblies a more solid 'marxist' foundation based on Grossman's theory, although it did not improve the organization's condition.

After some unsuccessful attempts to exercise an influence from the outside on the leninist *United Workers Party*, Mattick finally founded a council communist group in 1934 with some friends who were originally from the IWW as well as with some expelled members of the UWP. The group kept close contacts with the remaining small groups of the german/dutch left communism in Europe and published the journal *International Council Correspondence*, which up through the 30's became an anglo-american parallel to the *Rötekorrespondenz* from the dutch GIC(H). Articles and debates from Europe were translated along with economic analysis and critical political comments of current issues in the US and elsewhere in the world.

Apart from his own factory work, Mattick organized not only most of the review's technical work but was also the author of the greater part of the contributions which appeared in it. Among the few willing to offer regular contributions was Karl Korsch, with whom Mattick had come into contact in 1935 and who remained a personal friend for many years from the time of his emigration to the United States at the end of 1936.

As the european 'council communism' went underground and formally 'disappeared' in the second half of the 30's Mattick let the 'Correspondence' change name — from 1938 to *Living Marxism*, and from 1942 to *New Essays*.

Through Karl Korsch and Henryk Grossman Mattick also had some contact to Horkheimer's *Institut für Sozialforschung* (the later 'Frankfurter School'). In 1936 he wrote a major sociological study on the American unemployed movement for the Institute, although it remained in the Institute's files, to be published only in 1969 by the SDS publishing house *Neue Kritik*.

After the United States' entry into the Second World War and the consequent persecution campaign directed against the entire critical intelligentsia, the left in America was liquidated by Macarthyism. Mattick retired, at the beginning of the 50's, to the countryside, where he managed to survive through occasional jobs and his activity as a writer. In the postwar development Mattick — like others — made only small and occasional political activities, making small articles for various periodicals from time to time.

From the 40's and up through the 50's Mattick went through a study of Keynes, and compiled a series of critical notes and articles against keynesian theory and practice. In this work he developed Marx's and Grossman's theory of capitalist development further to meet the new phenomena and appearances of the modern capitalism critically.

With the general changes of the political scenes and the re-emergence of more radical thoughts in the 60's Paul Mattick made some more elaborated and important contributions. One main work was '*Marx and Keynes. The Limits of Mixed Economy*' from 1969, which was translated into several languages and had quite an influence in the post-68-student movement. Another important work was '*Critique of Herbert Marcuse — The one-dimensional man in class society*', in which Mattick forcefully rejected the thesis according to which the "proletariat", as Marx understood it had become a "mythological concept" in advanced capitalist society. Although he agreed with Marcuse's critical analysis of the ruling ideology, Mattick demonstrated that the theory of one dimensionality itself existed only as ideology. Marcuse subsequently affirmed that Mattick's critique was the only serious one to which his book was subjected.

Up through the 70's a lot of old and new articles were published in different languages for various publications. In the academic year 1974-75 Mattick was engaged as 'visiting professor' at the 'red' University-Center of Roskilde in Denmark. Here he held lectures on Marx' critique of political economy, on the history of the workers movement and served as critical co-referent at seminars with other guests such as Maximilian Rubel, Ernest Mandel, Joan Robinson a.o. In 1977 he completed his last important lecture tour of the University of Mexico City. He spoke in West Germany only twice: in 1971 at Berlin and in 1975 at Hanover.

In his last years Paul Mattick thus succeeded in getting some audience within new generations for his views. In 1978 a major collection of articles from over 40 years appeared as '*Anti-Bolshevik Communism*'.

Paul Mattick died in February 1981 leaving an almost finished manuscript for another book, which was later edited and published by his son, Paul Mattick Jr., as '*Marxism – Last Refuge of the Bourgeoisie ?*'

Wie die Bourgeoisie heute gegen „Sowjet“- Rußland „hetzt“

(März 1926)

Aus: *Kampfruf* 7, Nr. 3 (1926), S. 2.

Transkription/HTML-Markierung: Thomas Schmidt für das **Marxists' Internet Archive**.

Es gab eine Zeit wo die internationale Bourgeoisie das Rußland von 1917 als wildgewordenes, bombenwerfendes Untier illustrierte und damit, zur Zeit des „marschierenden Sozialismus“, die Anschlagssäulen und Delikateßläden plakatierte. Das war damals, als der noch nicht „bolschewisierte“ Spartakusbund, das russische Signal beachtend, zur Revolution in Deutschland aufrief. Greuelberichte auf Greuelberichte über bolschewistische Zustände füllten damals die bürgerliche Presse. Boykott und weißer Terror. Hetze und Schwindelberichte sollten das Sowjetsystem zerschlagen. Vom Universitätsprofessor bis zum kleinsten Bonzenanwärter rief damals alles auf zum „Kampf für die heiligsten Güter“. Für das ganze profitmachende Geschmeiß war Räre Rußland ein Stück der Hölle, das sie begeiferten.

Rußlands Revolution riß Westeuropa nicht mit. Den Stiefelleckern des deutschen Kapitals gelang es, die Revolten im Blut der Revoltierenden zu ersticken. Der Verrat „traditioneller Führer und Organisationen“ sorgte für „Ruhe und Ordnung“. Das bedeutete zugleich Ende des Kriegskommunismus in Russland, Einführung der NEP. Alleinstehend, auf Grund eherner ökonomischer Gesetze, mußte die Entwicklung Rußlands, die soeben die feudalistischen Fesseln abgestreift hatte, den Weg zur kapitalistischen Gesellschaftsform machen. Der für die wenigen, schon vorhandenen russischen Proletarier, darin liegenden Tragik spottend, erlangte der Entwicklung rücksichtslos die Fahrt mit vollen Segeln zur profitbringenden Wirtschaftsform.

Die ökonomische, zwangsläufige Umstellung Rußlands, änderte sofort die Stellung der internationalen Bourgeoisie zu Rußland. Konzessionen brachten Anerkennung, wirtschaftliche Verträge, politisches Vertrauen. Rußland reiht sich wieder mehr und mehr ein in das kapitalistische Weltkonzert. Gegensätze zu andern kapitalistischen Staaten bestimmen die Außenpolitik Rußlands. Das Prestige, das Rußland bei dem Proletariat aller Länder hat, wird von ihm für seine wirtschaftlichen, außenpolitischen Interessen benutzt. Vermittels einer Zweiseelentheorie, gaukelt es dem Proletariat vor, daß die Moskauer Parolen im Interesse der Erhaltung des „dem Kommunismus immer näher kommenden“ Rußlands als Kraftreservoir der Weltrevolution, unbedingt durchgeführt werden müssen. Praktisch schafft sich Rußland damit Stützpunkte innerhalb der anderen Staaten, die so gezwungen werden, eine rußlandfreundliche Politik zu führen, die erst günstige Geschäfte gestattet. Für die kapitalistische Entwicklung Rußlands wird die Weltrevolution verraten.

Das sieht sehr wohl auch die deutsche Bourgeoisie. Steht sie heute noch im Gegensatz zu Rußland, so aus Konkurrenzgegensätzen, nicht als Kapitalismus gegen Kommunismus. Und so hat auch ihre Hetze aufgehört. Die Rollen sind vertauscht.

Die sozialdemokratischen Kleinbürger bereisen heute Rußland und stellen nach zwei Tagen begeistert fest, daß in Rußland der „Sozialismus marschiert“ (genau wie damals in Deutschland zur Zeit Noskes). Die KPD ist es, die heute krampfhaft bemüht ist, eine „Hetze“ der Bourgeoisie gegen Rußland festzustellen, um ihren Anhängern den Götterglauben nicht zu rauben. — Aber die Bourgeoisie? Tschitscherin besucht Hindenburg und frühstückt bei Stresemann und Seek! Und die deutsche Bourgeoisie schließt Geschäfte ab. Ihre „Wissenschaftler“ empfehlen, pardon, „hetzen“ heute folgendermaßen: die Lesegesellschaft Köln lädt zu einem Vortragsabend den Berliner Universitätsprofessor Dr. *Otto Hötzsch* (M. d. R.) ein, der über „Räterußland“ spricht. Darüber berichtet die Presse u. a.:

„Hoetzsch kennt Rußland seit Jahrzehnten, er beherrscht die Sprache des Landes und behandelte zunächst Rußland als Staat. Er erkannte an, daß die „Räterepublik“ es fertig gebracht habe, ein neues Staatsgebilde zu schaffen, einen Staat mit den Gedanken und Zwecken der kommunistischen Partei. Die Stärke dieser einzigen, in Rußland bestimmende Partei schwankt zwischen 300 000—350 000 Mitgliedern. Dies sei aber eine Art Kerntruppe, eine Art Orden. Sie habe es fertiggebracht, daß heute fast alle Beamte und Offiziere im Lande in ihren Diensten stünden. Der „Räterepublik“ dienen heute über 2 Millionen Beamte, der Verwaltungsapparat laufe ausreichend. **Eine kommunistische Wirtschaft gab es nur von 1917 bis 1921.** Im Frühjahr 1921 als Lenin seine Schwenkung vollzog, kamen die großen Zugeständnisse. Lenin sagte damals: Die Weltrevolution geht verloren, wenn wir jetzt nicht Konzessionen machen. Das Merkwürdige geschah: **aus dem Marxismus wurde Merkantilismus**, und wenn der Kampf zwischen Theorie und Praxis auch weiter geht, **das, was wir heute in „Räterußland“ sehen, hat mit Marx wenig mehr zu tun, es ist nichts anderes, als staatskapitalistische Planwirtschaft.** Das große Problem, mit dem Rußland augenblicklich ringt ist seine letzte riesige Ernte. Es fragt sich: wie verkaufe ich möglichst günstig den Überfluß meiner Ente, um dafür diejenigen Artikel zu erwerben, die mir meine Industrie nicht schaffen kann. Und In diesem Zusammenhang tauchen Dinge auf, die weiß Gott nicht bei Marx stehen: Ausfuhrprobleme, aktive Handelsbilanz, Devisenkäufe zur Stützung der Währung usw. Auch die kürzlich erfolgte **Aufhebung des Branntweinbrennverbots ist ein weiteres Abrücken von kommunistischen Grundsätzen.** Auch auf dem Gebiet der kulturellen Politik zeigt sich diese innere Brüchigkeit. Die Frage der Führerschaft ist für den Augenblick gelöst, aber die Frage der Nachfolge ist noch ganz offen. Hier sieht der Redner die schwersten Bedenken, der ungenügende Nachwuchs würde bewirken, daß Rußland in dieser Hinsicht eines Tages vor Trümmern stehe. Die außenpolitische Stellung der „Räterepublik“ sei äußerst schwierig. Auf der einen Seite die Propagandatätigkeit: die Weltrevolution will weitergehen, auf der andern die Tatsache die Weltrevolution geht nicht weiter. Erfolge für die „Räteregierung“ verspricht sich Hoetzsch nach Osten zu, der Kampf gegen den englischen Kolonialimperialismus könne hier Erfolge zeitigen, die noch nicht abzusehen seien. Zum Schluß streifte der Redner das **Verhältnis zwischen Deutschland und Rußland.** Er nannte ein Wort das bedeutsam scheint: **Interessengemeinschaft.** Theoretisch gibt es keine größere Torheit, als einen Kampf oder eine Feindschaft zwischen Deutschland und Rußland, im augenblicklichen Zeitpunkt sei das vor allem klar zu erkennen: Deutschland stehe da mit einem Ueberfluß an industriellen Erzeugnissen und Rußland mit seiner Riesenernte, die es gern loswerden will. Das Abkommen mit Rußland, das ein Handelsmonopol kein Handelsvertrag sei. begrüße er. Er bezog sich zum Schluß auf ein Wort der russischen Emigranten: „Rußland ist einmal gewesen. Rußland wird wieder sein.“ im Gegensatz zu diesen Emigranten sagt Hoetzsch: „Rußland ist!“ Es ist in einer neuen Form, die uns nicht gefällt, aber es tat eine wirtschaftliche,

politische und kulturelle Realität, mit der Deutschland vieles gemein hat. und auf die sich jeder Politiker ohne Voreingenommenheit einstellen muß.“

So spricht heute die Bourgeoisie, in einer Zeit wo nach Angaben der KPD, in Rußland eine Etappe nach der andere zum Kommunismus zurückgelegt wird. Doch Kapitalismus und Kommunismus sind Gegensätze, die sich nicht überbrücken lassen. Eins steht in Todfeindschaft zum andern. Schlägt die Bourgeoisie heut für den „Bolschewismus“ Reklame, so muß das dem revolutionären Proletariat Beweis genug sein, daß dieser, der russische Bolschewismus am Boden liegt oder nicht existiert. Bisher wurde jeder Versuch des Proletariats, sich zu erheben, nur mit Kugeln und Kerker beantwortet.

Im Interesse der Weltrevolution liegt es, wenn das Proletariat jenem Rußland, das von der Bourgeoisie gelobt wird, die Janusmaske vom Gesicht reißt. Was die Bourgeoisie lobt und anerkennt, ist für die proletarische Revolution die Pest.

Die Industrial Workers of the World und die Allgemeine Arbeiter-Union

Eine notwendige Klarstellung.
(Februar 1929)

*I.W.W. und A.A.U., Kampfruf, Organ der Allgemeinen Arbeiter-Union
(Revolutionäre Betriebsorganisation), Jahrgang 10, Februar 1929, Nr. 7, S. 3, & Nr. 8,
S. 2-3.*

Transkription/HTML-Markierung: Thomas Schmidt für das **Marxists' Internet Archive**.

I.

Der **Kampfruf**, das Organ der A.A.U. Deutschlands, brachte Ende 1928 die Uebersetzung der besten I.W.W.-Propagandabroschüre: [Was ist die I.W.W.?](#) Sie enthielt in knappsten Sätzen die Prinzipienklärung, die wie ein Berg oder auch wie ein Juwel aus der breiten programmatischen Umschreibung aufragt und glänzt. Die Klarheit der Prinzipienklärung ist fast ein Widerspruch zu dem umständlichen Programmbau, bei dem am Dach, Fundament und Konstruktion gleichzeitig und planlos gearbeitet wird. Ist das Programm oder die Prinzipienklärung, die vorsichtige Stellungnahme zu dem Problem des Klassenkampfes, die niemandem weh tun, und auch von niemandem belästigt werden will? Die Praxis der I.W.W. beweist, und nicht nur die Praxis, auch die Genossen der I.W.W. beweisen, daß die Prinzipienklärung ihr Herzschlag ist, und alles andere eine Auseinandersetzung mit Dingen ist, die sie auch unterlassen oder eines Tages zur Hölle jagen können. Das gibt es nur einmal in der Arbeiterbewegung: daß die Praxis einer Organisation besser ist, als ihre Theorie.

Programm und Theorien — Schall und Rauch! Der Zusammenbruch der 2. und 3. Internationale (als Klassenkampf-Organisation), ihre schmutzige Praxis, treibt jedem den Ekel in die Augen, der sich ihre theoretischen Formulierungen von einst zu eigen gemacht hat; und wenn diese Vertreter von Revision zu Revision schreiten, um sich

theoretisch dem Schmutz ihres Lebens anzupassen, so eilt das, was sie Praxis nennen, neuen Gemeinheiten immer um zehn Schritt schneller entgegen.

Das Programm der I.W.W. ist zwanzig Jahre alt, und wenn revisionistische Strömungen es verbiegen sollten, so nur nach links. Das Arbeiterelement, aus dem sich die I.W.W. zusammensetzt, und auch ihr organisatorischer Aufbau sorgen dafür, daß selbst mit dem Katechismus zum Programm, die I.W.W. die einzige revolutionäre Arbeiterbewegung Amerikas ist und bleibt. Niemand kann der I.W.W. angehören, der nicht ein Ausgebeuteter ist, der nicht zur Klasse des Proletariats gehört. Das zersetzende, kleinbürgerliche Element all der anderen Arbeiter-Organisationen fehlt der I.W.W. vollständig, sie ist in organisatorischer Hinsicht eine „**Arbeiter“-Organisation in letzter Konsequenz**. Die I.W.W. wird sich irren können, ihr Charakter ist nicht zu ändern, oder die Lehre vom Klassenkampf wäre falsch. Es ist nicht die Zauberformel der „**One big Union**“ (das ist kein erreichbares Ziel), die Organisation an sich bestimmt noch nichts, aber hier bestimmen ihre Elemente den Inhalt, und hier stehen sie im Klassenkampf, dem sie nie ausweichen können, und haben ihre eigene Waffe, die ihnen kein Verräter in die Hand gedrückt hat. Ist ihre Waffe heute noch stumpf, so werden sie sie morgen schärfen. Wenn sie irgendetwas erfaßt haben, so ist es die Erkenntnis, daß ihre Befreiung nur ihr eigenes Werk sein kann, und damit treten sie in den Streik, um zu verlieren oder zu gewinnen: nur eins können sie nicht verraten werden. So werden sie morgen die Erde gewinnen, vielleicht nicht mittels der I.W.W., jedoch nur vermittelt der Klassen-Organisation, dem Ideal der heutigen I.W.W.-Genossen. An die I.W.W. muß man bejahend herantreten, nicht kritiklos, aber mit dem Bewußtsein, die einzige revolutionäre, amerikanische Klassenkampf-Organisation vor sich zu sehen.

II.

Der erste aller Differenzpunkte, die zwischen der A.A.U. und der I.W.W. bestehen, ist der der politischen Aktion. Der Satz: „Die I.W.W. hat absolut nichts zu tun mit politischen Revolutionen, noch mit politischen Aktionen irgend welcher Art“, wird durch die Praxis und die Stellung der I.W.W. in U.S.A. direkt, entgegen aller Ablehnungsversuche, aufgehoben. Die Debatten über diesen Punkt müssen sich in leerem Geschwätz erschöpfen, solange die I.W.W. (wie führende Genossen sich äußerten) ihren eigenen Diktionär hat (d. h. Wörterbuch). Für sie ist „Wallstreet“ die ökonomische Macht und für sie ist die Beseitigung Wallstreets, der Kampf um die kommunistische Bedarfswirtschaft, ein ökonomisches Problem. Auch für die A.A.U.! Für wen ist dies kein ökonomisches Problem? Und Polizei, Militär, Schule, Zuchthaus, — alle staatlichen Zwangsmittel, alle politischen Mittel, sie sind letzten Ende alle **ein Teil** des Oekonomischen, also bis zu einem gewissen Grade auch ein **ökonomisches Problem**. Die verräterischen Arbeiter-Organisationen, die einen gegebenen ökonomischen Zustand stützen, sind absolut ein ökonomisches Problem, und deshalb gibt es kein rein politisches, **in letzter Konsequenz** überhaupt kein politisches Problem. Das stimmt so genau, daß es schon gar nicht mehr richtig ist. Wie man das Ding nennt, — das wäre wirklich ganz gleich. Aber hier wird, um der Klarheit willen, Verwirrung getrieben. Die ökonomische Macht der Bourgeoisie ist ihr Besitz an Produktionsmitteln, und zur Sicherung dieses ökonomischen Zustandes bedient sie sich politischer (so wird das genannt) Machtmittel. Diese Machtmittel sind ein ökonomischer Zustand, schon weil sie von diesem Zustand bedingt sind. Sie sind, wie die I.W.W. ganz richtig sagt: der Stock in den Händen der ökonomisch herrschenden Klasse gegen die Proletarierhunde, die diesen ökonomischen Zustand beseitigen, oder in ihm ihre eigenen Interessen wahren wollen. Ohne diesen Stock ist die Kapitalherrschaft undenkbar, und so sind die politischen

Machtmittel, entgegen der Auffassung der I.W.W., kein „bloßer Reflex“, kein „leerer Schatten“ des herrschenden Systems: sie sind das „Schwert“ in den Händen der Herrschenden. Ein Schatten, ein Reflex kann nicht ein Knüppel sein, und hier tritt schon rein stilistisch im Programm der I.W.W. ein Widerspruch zutage. Um die Substanz zu treffen, kann man allerdings nicht hinter einem Schatten jagen; aber wie schon gesagt, der „Stock“ ist kein Schatten, sondern ebenfalls „Substanz“, und es ist durchaus nicht unsinnig (auch wenn die I.W.W. das meint), wenn der mit dem Stock geschlagene Hund seine Zähne in diesen Stock vergräbt; denn unter Umständen kann er dem Schläger den Stock aus den Händen reißen und diesen damit vollkommen wehrlos machen. Kein Schatten, ein Stock hält das Proletariat von der Substanz (der ökonomischen Herrschaft) zurück, allein durch die Entziehung dieses Stockes wird der Weg zur Macht frei. So unsinnig, so in die Augen springend primitiv diese Argumentation der I.W.W. ist, so billig und scheinbar absichtlich oberflächlich ist ihre Beweisführung zur Erhärtung ihrer Auffassung. **Es ist nicht wahr, daß die Arbeiter Schwedens und Deutschlands ihrer Bourgeoisie den Regierungsknüppel aus den Händen gewunden haben; und weil das nicht wahr ist, stimmt auch nicht die Behauptung, „daß der sozialistische Knüppel genau so schlecht war, wie der kapitalistische.“ Die parlamentarische Beteiligung sozialreformistischer Arbeiter-Organisationen in der bürgerlichen Demokratie (es gab bisher keinen anderen Zustand in Schweden und Deutschland) läßt den Knüppel immer in den Händen der Bourgeoisie.** Die Arbeiter Schwedens und Deutschlands waren nie Besitzer der politischen Gewalt, denn die politische Gewalt ist nichts von der ökonomischen Herrschaft Losgelöstes, sondern nur denkbar als eine Einheit. Es gibt keine Bourgeoisie ohne politische Gewalt, und es gibt keine politische Gewalt des Proletariats ohne die Herrschaft über die Produktionsmittel. Die politische Gewalt des russischen Proletariats vor der N.E.P., abgesehen davon, daß sie eine Parteigewalt war, war mit der Enteignung der russischen Bourgeoisie verbunden und zerbrach allein an der ökonomischen Notwendigkeit des russischen gesellschaftlichen Zustandes, dem die Voraussetzungen zur kommunistischen Wirtschaft fehlten. Diese Parteigewalt, die russische politische Gewalt, mußte den Interessen einer Neukonsolidierung des russischen Kapitals dienen, da es eben keine Trennung zwischen Oekonomie und Politik, zwischen Wirtschaft und Staat gibt, da mit dem Knüppel der Mann fällt; wenn der Mann steht, er auch den Knüppel hat.

Wir werden an anderen Punkten unserer Kritik noch auf diese „Frage“ zurückkommen, hier sei vorläufig nur noch gesagt, daß die I.W.W. mit ihrem eigenen Diktionär nichts erreicht, sondern die notwendige Klarheit trübt. Ein Teil der I.W.W.-Genossen weiß nichts von diesem „eigenen Diktionär und läßt sich bei Demonstrationen (oder denkt dies doch wenigstens theoretisch) mit verschränkten Armen den Gummiknüppel über den Schädel schlagen. Oder glaubt, wie der Genosse J. Wagner, da man in Amerika eine Pistole ohne weiteres nicht kaufen kann, daß eine politische Revolution, Kampf eines bewaffneten Proletariats unmöglich ist. Und doch haben I.W.W.-Genossen 1911, in Ludlow und auch zu anderen Zeiten mit „eigenen“ Maschinengewehren „ökonomisch“ dazwischengeknallt und manch ein Hüter des „politischen“ Gesetzes hat schon ins Gras beißen müssen. Genosse Wagner sagt in einer Polemik gegen die Auffassung des politischen Kampfes der A.A.U.: „Wenn die A.A.U. jede Aktion des Proletariats eine politische nennt, so würde auch das Kaufen eines belegten Brötchens an der Wurstbude politischen Charakter tragen.“ Mit dieser billigen Polemik zu antworten, würde ergeben, daß, wenn alles ökonomische Handlungen sind,

auch das Begrüßungsschreiben der I.W.W. an den D.I.V.¹ eine ökonomische Aktion bedeutet.

So kommt man nicht weiter und sich nicht näher im Verstehen. Die I.W.W. soll ihren eigenen Diktionär behalten, solange es ihr Vergnügen macht, — sie soll aber den Shawschen Witz bei Bernhard Shaw lassen, und einfach ehrlich sprechen. Soll sagen: Auch wir werden gegen die Machtmittel der Bourgeoisie anrennen, die ihr politisch nennt und wir ökonomisch, weil es uns so Spaß macht, oder: Wir wollen die Produktion übernehmen, wie die Sozialdemokratie auf *evolutionistischem* Wege, nicht mit revolutionären Mitteln — damit man sie wie die Sozialdemokratie behandeln kann.

Auch hierauf werden wir noch eingehen müssen.

III.

Die seltsame, rein ökonomische Auffassung des Klassenkampfes zeugte die noch seltsamere Theorie der „absolut rein ökonomischen direkten Aktion“, die den Streik um Verbesserungen innerhalb der kapitalistischen Gesellschaft sowohl, als auch zur Uebernahme der Produktion durch das Proletariat führen soll. Die Streiktaktik der I.W.W. in den U.S.A. hatte Erfolge und ist damit legitimiert; die Vorstellungen über die Uebernahme der Produktion durch das Proletariat sind, soweit sie überhaupt auftreten, ein Phantasiegebilde, das bei einem Marxisten peinliche Gefühle erweckt. Hier muß bemerkt werden, daß die Internationalität der I.W.W. bisher nur Wille ist, und daß dieselbe, als ein amerikanisches Gewächs, ihre Ideologie in einem amerikanischen Rahmen unterbringen mußte. Das Programm entstand zu einer Zeit, als das amerikanische Kapital zu Riesensprüngen ansetzte, um in den (jetzt bereits ablaufenden) Zustand größtmöglicher Prosperität zu gelangen. Der Sturz eines wachsenden Kapitalismus kann nicht der erste Punkt auf der Tagesordnung des Proletariats sein. Es hat auf die schwächsten Momente der Bourgeoisie zu warten und das Problem der Machtübernahme mußte so für die I.W.W. in der Gründerzeit ihrer Organisation natürlich ein zweitrangiges sein. Die Stärkung des amerikanischen Kapitals durch den Krieg, seine jetzige Vormachtstellung, die wohl auf faulen Fundamenten, aber doch ruht, läßt eine Auffassung der Todeskrise des Kapitals, die zur sofortigen Ausnützung drängt, nicht in der Art zu, wie sie den deutschen revolutionären Marxisten geläufig ist. Man lebt nach der Auffassung, daß irgend „eine Zeit“ zu kommen hat, spricht von der Unreife des Proletariats, davon, daß es militärisch nie ein Faktor sein kann, daß man den Punkt abzuwarten habe, wo der Kapitalismus sich selbst festgefahren hat, wo er die Produktion nicht mehr führen kann (wörtlich: „sie aus den Händen gleiten läßt“) und das Proletariat (technisch in jeder Hinsicht gebildet) so ohne einen Tropfen Blut, allein, weil die Produktion den Kapitalisten „aus den Händen gleitet“, (na, ganz einfach) die Produktion nun bedarfskommunistisch in Bewegung setzt; den Soldaten, Gerichten, Parlamenten keine Löhne oder Diäten mehr bezahlt, sie also verhungern läßt oder durch Not in die Fabriken treibt. Diese Vorstellungen gehen weit über das Lächerliche hinaus. Sie deuten nicht auf einen revolutionären, sondern auf einen evolutionären Charakter hin. So kann man in den Straßen Chicagos Agitatoren der I.W.W. hören, die diese Gegensätze frei- oder unfreiwillig durcheinander bringen oder verwechseln. Jedoch: da sind die Prinzipien eindeutig, klar, ein Bekenntnis zum ewigen Klassenkampf. Da wird trotz allem mit Energie behauptet: die I.W.W. ist eine revolutionäre Arbeiterorganisation.

¹ D.I.V. = Deutscher Industrie-Verband - linkskommunistische Gewerkschaft in der Weimarer Republik.

Verwirrung und Unklarheit sind im Programm der I.W.W. nicht zu missen. Auch die Debatten, welche bisher zwischen A.A.U. und I.W.W. geführt wurden, haben diesen Eindruck bei den Genossen der A.A.U. nur noch verstärken können.

Ihren proletarischen, revolutionären Charakter konnte die I.W.W. trotzdem nicht verleugnen, selbst wenn sie dies wollte. Gerade die internationalen Diskussionen werden das Blickfeld der I.W.W. ungemein erweitern; sie werden die Fragen des Klassenkampfes nicht mehr vom amerikanischen Gesichtspunkt allein, sondern von demjenigen der *Weltrevolution* aus zu beantworten haben. **Ebensowenig wie Amerika die Welt darstellt, ist die I.W.W. die alleinseligmachende Arbeiterorganisation.** Es ist eine Anmaßung und ein nicht mehr nützlicher Grad von Selbstbewußtsein, folgendes zu behaupten: „Gegenwärtig, da alle anderen sozialistischen Theorien und Bewegungen fehlschlagen, auch keine Hoffnungen für die Zukunft mehr erwecken können, steht allein die I.W.W. in der Meinung der Arbeiter der ganzen Welt als Meister der Situation da.“ Wie können Theorien fehlschlagen, die niemals praktisch verwertet wurden? Der frühere Kautsky, der frühere Hilferding, der frühere Lenin — was ist da fehlgeschlagen? Die Sozialdemokratie, die drei Internationalen — was haben diese Organisationen getan, um der marxistischen Auffassung in der Praxis des Klassenkampfes gerecht zu werden? Die europäischen Marxisten sehen im Fehlschlag des Bolschewikiexperimentes nicht eine Schwäche, sondern den Beweis für die Kraft und die Sicherheit ihrer marxistischen Auffassung. Die Hoffnungen des Proletariats auf eine überlieferte Organisationsform, sein Vertrauen in Führer-Organisationen auf kapitalistisch-politischer Basis schlugen fehl. Die Schwäche lag nicht in der Theorie, sie lag in der Praxis. Jedoch die Hoffnungen des europäischen Proletariats sind nicht erschlagen, auch nicht auf die I.W.W. gerichtet. Die Hoffnung des europäischen Proletariats saugt ihre Kraft aus den andersgearteten, fortgeschrittenen (im bürgerlich zersetzenden — proletarisch stärkenden Sinne) Verhältnissen Europas, die das Proletariat vor andere Aufgaben stellen, als sie die amerikanischen Arbeiter vor sich haben. **Die Theorie der I.W.W. reicht nicht aus, um den Anforderungen der europäisch-revolutionären Situation gerecht zu werden.**

Nur an einem Punkt und zum Glück dem hauptsächlichsten, ist die I.W.W. dem europäischen Proletariat zum Vorbild geworden. Die Zerstörung der alten Organisationsform (Gewerkschaften, politisch-parlamentarische Führerorganisation) ist für das europäische Proletariat ebenso notwendig, wie für das amerikanische auch. Die Erweckung des Selbstbewußtseins in Verbindung mit einer dem monopolisierten Kapital gewachsenen, geschlossenen, von den Mitgliedern allein bestimmten Organisation des Proletariats, die nur Klassen- und keine anderen Interessen mehr hat, die eindeutige, die erste, wirkliche Klassenkampforganisation des Proletariats ist zu schaffen. Dieses Neue, dieser erste Willensausdruck eines nicht mehr mit der Bourgeoisie verketteten Proletariats, hat in der amerikanischen I.W.W. seinen ersten Niederschlag gefunden. Diese Idee, nicht das widerspruchsvolle Drum und Dran ist das Geschenk der I.W.W. an das Weltproletariat. Die Arbeiterorganisation in letzter Konsequenz ist ein anderer, ein wirklich moralischer Faktor, der uns Marxisten mehr bedeutet, als die einst in viel gefährlicheren Widersprüchen und Zweifeln geborene 3. Internationale. Das Abwenden von Moskau hat gezeigt, daß die I.W.W. ihrer selbst gerecht zu werden versteht und eine neue Internationale wird wirklich den Ideen der Schöpfer der I.W.W. insoweit entsprechen, als sie in ihrer Prinzipienklärung enthalten sind.

IV.

Die Verkennung der europäischen Situation durch die I.W.W. findet ihre beste Formel in der fast allgemeinen Auffassung, daß Lohnkämpfe und andere, den

kapitalistischen Rahmen nicht sprengende Verbesserungen, dem europäischen Proletariat noch genau so möglich sind, wie dem amerikanischen. Dies ist jedoch kein Streitpunkt von tieferer Bedeutung, hier kann man mit Tatsachen erwidern. Auch, daß die spaßige Kampfmethod, der „Streik im Betrieb“, etwas in Europa Undenkbares ist, will den Genossen der I.W.W. schwer einleuchten. Die vollkommene Ignorierung der staatlichen Machtmittel hinderte Rockefeller in Colorado nicht, I.W.W.-Genossen zu morden und ein Streik in den Betrieben ist eine auch hier schon veraltete Taktik, die spezifisch amerikanisch, eine auch nur auf Bezirke begrenzte, der Bourgeoisie vollkommen ungefährliche Verhandlungszeit darstellt. „Streik in den Betrieben mit fortlaufender Entlohnung“, wie kann man darüber überhaupt ernsthaft reden. Wer streikt, liegt auf der Straße, in Amerika und überall. Und wer in die Betriebe will, ob „um zu streiken“, oder Streikbrecher zu entfernen, der wird abgeknallt von den Rockefeller des Erdballes. **Die I.W.W. argumentiert hier mit Dingen, die gar nicht mehr da sind.**

Die Lohnkämpfe in Europa liegen noch in den Händen der konterrevolutionären Gewerkschaften und der von ihr geschaffenen Schlichtungsordnung. Bei Abkehrung des Proletariats von diesen Organisationen, die im Interesse des herrschenden Systems, das sich mit ihrem eigenen deckt, diese Kämpfe verraten müssen, würden Lohnkämpfe systematisch zu politischen, d. h.: Kämpfe um die Macht, die Produktionsmittel. Zu Zugeständnissen, die für das Proletariat von Bedeutung wären, ist die Bourgeoisie nicht mehr imstande. Ein Proletariat kann nicht erkämpfen, was nicht da ist, eine Klassenorganisation kann in Europa nur Klassenpolitik in letzter Instanz treiben. Ein Kampf des Proletariats den Klauen der Führerbürokratie, den konterrevolutionären Organisationen entrissen, würde die Staatsgewalt den Knüppel mobil machen und dem bewaffneten Kampf oder der völligen Preisgabe wäre nicht auszuweichen. Hierbei bliebe noch unberücksichtigt, daß ein vom Sozialreformismus losgelöstes Proletariat, keine sozialreformistische Politik treiben kann und würde. **Wäre die „One big Union“ eine Möglichkeit, so hätte sie politische Kämpfe im Gefolge, eine Ignoranz wäre dann undenkbar, denn sie bedeutete den Tod.**

V.

Die I.W.W. ist eine wirtschaftliche Organisation. Sie ist nicht antipolitisch, sie ist apolitisch. Sie bekämpft nur politische Parteien aus Selbsterhaltungstrieb und nur dann, wenn diese Parteien sich gegen sie wenden. Sie greift nicht an, schlägt nur zurück. Sie hat sich, wie im Programm gesagt wird, keinem Dogma, keiner „gebieterischen Philosophie“ verschrieben, duldet alle Ueberzeugungen in ihren Reihen, also auch Leute, die zur Kirche gehen, oder Hoover wählten oder den EKKI-Kurs mitmachten, absolut Alles, was nur arbeitet. Sie drängt tatsächlich zur „One big Union“ und denkt, ihre Organisation würde schon allein durch ihre Existenz imstande sein, einst den Laden zu schmeißen. Heute spitzt sich alles zu auf Reformen und Lohnverbesserungen und als Endziel propagiert man die Uebernahme der Produktion und baut die neuen Produktionsorgane, die neue Gesellschaftsform „in der Schale der alten“. Die I.W.W. ist nicht antiparlamentarisch, das ist ja ein politisches Problem; sie ignoriert dies, wie die anderen politischen Fragen. Sie ist nicht gegen den Staat, für sie existiert der Staat gar nicht. Alle Wege, die zur Massenorganisation führen, sind von ihr freigelegt. Wer mehr Lohn haben will, der soll zur I.W.W. gehen. Er kann zwar als Mitglied der sozialistischen Partei Amerikas gleichzeitig seine Willensäußerung wieder aufheben, aber das macht nichts, die I.W.W. ist loyal, sie ist großzügig. Auf ein paar Jahrhunderte kommt es ihr nicht an. Irgendwann wird in der Weltgeschichte schon wieder ein Parallelfall der Auflösung Roms eintreten. Dann werden sie die Produktion schon übernehmen, denn bis dahin haben sie

genug Handbücher herausgegeben, aus denen zu ersehen ist, wie ein Chemietrust oder eine Strumpffabrik geleitet sein will. So wie sie ihre ethische Seite, (wenigstens im Wortschwall) der christlichen Phraseologie entlehnen, so könnten sie sich oft als Motto setzen: „Mein Reich ist nicht von dieser Welt“. Sie können sich nicht damit abfinden, daß das Proletariat in seinen Kämpfen Verluste haben wird. Die Toten von Colorado peinigen ihr Gewissen, vielleicht gäbe es doch einen anderen Weg, einen, auf dem keine Toten bleiben. Vielleicht hat man Fehler gemacht, denn es gab Tote. Eigentümlich ist die Angst vor Verlusten, die ihre eigenartige Theorie formte, sie möchten nicht gern einen Proletarier vermissen. Der gute Mann kann vielleicht blöd sein, aber ein Interesse muß er haben: mehr Lohn zu empfangen, und wenn die Bourgeoisie keinen Lohn mehr zahlen kann, so doch weiterzuleben durch eine Aenderung der Gesellschaftsordnung. Stumpfsinnig kann er zur I.W.W. kommen, bis zur Zeit des großen Kladderadatsch wird er schon genügend gelernt haben, um Gott, Hoover oder Stalin vergessen zu können.

Die I.W.W. erscheint jesuitisch: sie operiert mit allen und nach allen Richtungen. Sie greift zu einem Bittgesuch an einen amerikanischen Gouverneur so leicht, wie zur Ausdehnung eines Streiks auf weitere Staaten. Sie duldet alles, sobald es ihren Zwecken dient. Ist das Proletariat nicht durch Versammlungen zu erreichen, so kriegt man es doch durch Bälle. Man ist nicht Marxist, selbst, wenn man marxistisch denkt, nur keine Namen nennen, sich zu nichts bekennen, man kann so und auch so, alles für das eine Ziel: zu zeigen, die IWW, ist die Organisation des Proletariats, denn sie verbessert das Leben der Proletarier, rettet sie vor dem Untergang, jetzt und immer.

VI.

Zusammengedrängt läßt sich die theoretische Auffassung der I.W.W. auf folgende Basis bringen: sie war und ist die erste Arbeiter-Organisation Amerikas, die mit Klassenzielen auftritt. Sie entstand und fand ihre Formulierung in einer Epoche des höchstentwickeltesten Industrialismus, der schärfsten Konzentrationsbewegung des sich noch immer vorwärtsentwickelnden amerikanischen Kapitals. Sie schuf eine Organisation nach Industrien, um an Schlagkraft das größtmögliche herauszuholen: um der Konzentration des Kapitals die Konzentration des Proletariats entgegenzusetzen. Sie erkennt die Gewerkschaftsbewegung als eine kapitalistische Organisation und bekämpft sie wie den Kapitalismus überhaupt. Als Klassenorganisation beteiligt sie sich nicht an kapitalistischer Politik, ist so immun gegen die Verlockungen der üblichen Spiegelfechtereier der amerikanischen politischen Parteien und der damit verbundenen Vorteile. Sie sah und sieht einen riesenstarken Kapitalismus vor sich, glaubt an sein Ende, doch nicht an sein baldiges. Sie teilt die Auffassung der Marxisten in bezug auf die Erkennung der Struktur des Kapitalismus und seiner geschichtlichen Entwicklung wie Begrenzung. Sie ist überzeugt, daß die „Todeskrise“ ein schon begonnener Prozeß ist, dessen Ende jedoch noch nicht abzusehen ist. Sie ist überzeugt, auch durch Erfahrung, daß es möglich ist, dem Kapital Zugeständnisse abzurufen, und führt einen Kampf um Verbesserung der Lebenslage des Proletariats mit allen Mitteln, ihre Kampfaktik unterliegt nicht Prinzipien, sondern dem Erfolg. Geht eine Partei während eines Streiks gemeinsam mit der I.W.W., so wird man diese Partei nicht angreifen; erst dann, wenn sie sich gegen die I.W.W., d. h. in einem Streik gegen die Streiker und den Streik richtet. Sie entfacht, führt und beendet Streiks, nie gegen, sondern nur durch den Willen der Streikenden. Sie ist nicht föderalistisch, sondern straff zentralistisch aufgebaut; doch auf einer Basis, die diese Zentralisierung fruchtbar und ungefährlich macht.

Die Betriebs-Organisationen (wie die BO. der A.A.U.) sind die Teile der Industrie-Organisationen. Die Organisation nach Industrien ist die Folge der Auffassung, daß

innerhalb der jetzigen Gesellschaftsordnung schon die Struktur der neuen Gesellschaft zu legen ist. Sie haben die Struktur der kommunistischen Gesellschaft gebrauchsfertig in der Tasche. Auch als Streikwaffe bewährt sich der Streik nach Industrien; dieser Punkt soll kein Differenzpunkt zwischen I.W.W. und A.A.U. sein. Die Schulung ist neben und mit dem Streik das erste Wort der I.W.W. Sie gerieten in dieser Frage auf absonderliche Wege, z. B. zu der Auffassung, man habe das Proletariat technisch so weit vorzubilden, daß es, wie schon vorher gesagt, imstande sei, die Wirtschaft mit der Uebernahme der Produktionsmittel auch führen zu können. Doch ist es um diesen Punkt schon still geworden. Die Schulung der Proletarier durch die I.W.W. ist die Schulung zum Klassenkampf. Sie verwendet ihre Kraft mehr im täglichen Kampfe, als in der Sorge um die Zukunft. Die Presse der I.W.W., von Arbeitern geschrieben, beweist, daß ihre Stellung zu proletarischen Problemen heute ihr Programm bei weitem überragt. Eine Anzahl guter Marxisten wirkt in der I.W.W. und wird auch die Theorie über kurz oder lang den neuen Verhältnissen anpassen.

Wir haben hier versucht, was uns am I.W.W.-Programm irritiert, zurechtzurücken. Ohne Zweifel werden die Genossen der A.A.U. dieses Programm nicht in allen, sondern nur sehr wenigen Punkten decken können. So sehr auch dieses Programm behaupten mag, eine wirkliche, authentische Darstellung der Grundsätze und Prinzipien der I.W.W. zu sein, so wenig kann man ihm glauben, sobald man innerhalb dieser Organisation lebt, ihren Kampf und ihre Mitglieder kennt. Sehr oft wird behauptet, die I.W.W. hätte syndikalistische Tendenzen. Das ist nicht zutreffend. Sie zählt ohne Zweifel Syndikalisten in ihren Reihen, aber sie verwirft als Organisation aufs energischste syndikalistische Theorien. Ihr Endziel ist durchaus dasselbe, wie das der A.A.U.: nicht Zerstörung, sondern Entfaltung der Produktionskräfte, die der Kapitalismus hindert. Doch der Weg zu diesem Ziel deckt sich nicht mit dem der A.A.U. Die A.A.U. darf aber deswegen nicht in eine Borniertheit verfallen, die sich an einem schlechtverfaßten Programm stößt, sie hat die Pflicht, weiter zu sehen. Sie kann nicht auf Kritik verzichten, aber in ihrer Kritik wurzelt der Wille, sich näher zu kommen. Die A.A.U. muß eine Verbindung mit der I.W.W. wünschen und hat für sie zu arbeiten. Die heftigsten Debatten zwischen I.W.W. und A.A.U. werden nicht verhindern können, daß sie trotzdem auf einer Linie kämpfen: Gegen Amsterdam und Moskau, gegen die verräterischen Organisationen, — für die Organisierung des Proletariats als Klasse, für wirkliche Kampforganisationen des Proletariats.

Die kapitalistischen Tendenzen Russlands

Vortrag, gehalten vor der „Freisinnigen Gemeinde“ der Südseite, Chicago, Ill., am 19. Januar 1932

Aus: **Der Freidenker** (New Ulm), 19 Februar & 7. Februar.

Transkription/HTML-Markierung: Thomas Schmidt für das **Marxists' Internet Archive**.

Die in den letzten Jahren auffallende Beschäftigung der kapitalistischen Presse, Ökonomen, Politiker mit der russischen Frage, die Millionenauflagen erreichende Literatur die sich mit dem russischen „Problem“ befaßt, beides hat seine Ursache in der

sich immer schneller abwickelnden Umgestaltung Rußlands in einen die kapitalistischen Sphären berührenden Machtfaktor. Parallel hierzu hat sich das Angstgeschrei der kommunistischen Presse, die ihre Gebetsmühle „Rettet den Fünfjahrplan, gegen einen Anti-Sowjetkrieg“ mit bemitleidenswertem Geklapper dreht, noch verstärkt. Nicht zufällig wird die Rußlandhysterie in der bolschewistischen Presse immer unangenehmer, während die kapitalistische Presse nur noch in sanften, brüderlichen Ermahnungen eine Art freundlicher Kritik am „Vaterland der Arbeiter“ übt. Alle Fish-Kommissionen sind abgeblasen, die wahren Freunde der Sowjet-Union sind in den Büros der internationalen Bourgeoisie zu suchen; alle Auffassungen über Rußland ändern sich, nur die Oppositionsparteien treten in ihrer Kritik noch immer auf der Stelle. Hass und Liebe bringen sie abwechselnd in Wallung, die Rolle des verschmähten Liebhabers ist ihnen zum Beruf geworden.

Es sollte eigentlich für jeden einzelnen schon offensichtlich sein, daß sich die Stellung der Bourgeoisie zu Rußland geändert hat, aber da die Ideologen langsamer wechseln als die Verhältnisse, identifizieren große Arbeitermassen das Rußland von 1932 noch immer mit dem Rußland der Revolution von 1917. Die oppositionelle Kritik erschöpft sich zum größten Teil noch in einem Kampf gegen den „Stalin-Kurs“; d. h., sie steht auf dem idealistischen Standpunkt, daß die Politik einer von einem Mann geleiteten Clique über Jahre hinaus die Geschichte zu bestimmen vermag. So glaubt eine große Gruppe, daß, wäre z. B. Trotzki an Stelle Stalins Haupt der russischen Regierung, daß die Trotzki-Gruppe eine wesentlich andere, eine revolutionäre Politik in Rußland treiben würde. Wir wollen von vornherein erklären, daß wir mit einer derartigen „Opposition“, die da glaubt, daß große Männer die Geschichte machen, nichts zu tun haben. Wir opponieren nicht gegen „Stalin“: sondern sind der Überzeugung, daß die „Stalinsche Politik“, die den russischen Klassenverhältnissen- und Notwendigkeiten angepaßte *richtige*, weil einzig mögliche und geschichtlich-gegebene Politik ist. Die Frage die jedem Rußlandkritiker gestellt wird: „Was er denn in Rußland tun würde, oder getan hätte?“, wollen wir schon sofort zurückweisen mit der Zusicherung, daß auch wir in Rußland keine andere Politik treiben könnten, als die die getrieben wurde und noch wird. Will man die „Russische Frage“ behandeln, muß man unbedingt von Personenpolitik absehen, sondern man muß die geschichtlichen Verhältnisse, muß man unbedingt von Personenpolitik absehen, sondern man muß die geschichtlichen Verhältnisse betrachten. Und nur die drücken sich in allem aus, was in Rußland geschieht. Was auf Rußland zutrifft, paßt auch für die 3. Internationale, da die 3. Internationale ihre ganze Politik den Notwendigkeiten Rußlands angepaßt hat, also nur als Auslandsagentur spezifisch russischer Interessen zu betrachten ist.

Bevor wir jedoch auf das gestellte Thema „Die Aufzeigung der kapitalistischen Tendenzen Rußlands“ eingehen ist es notwendig, die bisherige russische Entwicklung zu skizzieren.

Der prinzipielle Charakter der russischen Revolution.

Als die Bolschewiki am 7. November 1917 die politische Macht eroberten, stand das russische Proletariat keinesfalls geschlossen hinter ihnen. Es war das Bauerntum, nicht das Proletariat, das die Klassenbasis für die Machtergreifung bildete. Auf dem 11. Parteitag der russischen Kommunistischen Partei (März-April 1922) sagte Sinowjew folgendes:

„Entscheidend für unsern Sieg 1917 war nicht die proletarische Avantgarde auf unsrer Seite, sondern der Übergang des Heeres, das zu uns kam, weil wir den Frieden forderten. Das Heer aber bestand aus Bauern. Hätten uns nicht die Millionen von

Bauernsoldaten unterstützt, so hätte von unserem Sieg über die Bourgeoisie nicht die Rede sein können.“

Lenin selbst erklärte auf dem 8. Parteitag (März. 1919):

„In diesem Lande wo das Proletariat die Macht nur mit Hilfe des Bauerntums ergreifen konnte, wo dem Proletariat die Rolle einst Agenten der Kleinbürger-Revolution zufiel, in diesem Lande war unsere Revolution bis zum Sommer und sogar Herbst 1918 in beträchtlichem Masse eine bürgerliche Revolution. Wir haben in der Form von Gesetzen durchgeführt, was in den Zeitungen der Sozialrevolutionäre gefordert wurde, was das feige Kleinbürgertum versprach aber nicht verwirklichen konnte. Erst seit wir begonnen haben, die Komitees der armen Bauern zu organisieren, erst in dem Augenblick begann unsere Revolution in die proletarische überzugehn!“ (Ges. Werke, 1. Aufl. XVI. S. 195.):

Diese Komitees der armen Bauern existierten von Juni 18 bis Dezember 18. Wenn sie erst den Übergang in die proletarische Revolution bedeuteten, was bedeutete dann ihre Auflösung nach einem halben Jahr, die auf den Druck der reichen und mittleren Bauern erfolgte? Nach der Logik Lenins: den Verlust des proletarischen Inhalts der Revolution. Nach ihm hatte die Periode der proletarischen russischen Revolution ein halbes Jahr gedauert.

Doch bevor wir die Entwicklung weiter verfolgen, müssen wir uns über die damalige Ideologie der Bolschewiki klar sein, um ihre Politik zu verstehn. Vor 1917 und noch kurz nachher glaubten die Bolschewiki selbst nicht daran, ihre Revolution als eine sozialistische zu betrachten. Nicht der Übergang von der kapitalistischen zur sozialistischen Produktionsweise sollte den Inhalt der Revolution bilden, sondern der beschleunigte Übergang vom rückständigen, russischen zum fortgeschrittenen Kapitalismus. Was ihnen vorschwebte, war eine Art Staatskapitalismus und so sagte Lenin auch am 29. April 1918 folgendes:

„Wir nehmen uns den deutschen Staatskapitalismus zum Muster, er ist uns weit überlegen. Die Sicherung eines solchen Staatskapitalismus hier bei uns in Sowjetrußland wäre unsere Rettung“.

Nachweisbar aus allen Schriften und Debatten dieser Periode, ergibt sich, daß die Bolschewiki damals nichts anders forderten als den Staatskapitalismus ohne allgemeine Expropriation der Industriellen Bourgeoisie. Nur die Banken und Transportmittel sollten verstaatlicht werden, im übrigen verlangte man nur die Kontrolle der Privatunternehmen durch die Regierung und die Arbeiterräte. Die Volksmiliz sollte diese Kontrolle sichern.

Auf eine Formel gebracht, kann an ihren eigenen Schriften nachweisbar, die Stellung der Bolschewiki 1917 wie folgt betrachtet werden: wir können bei der ökonomischen Rückständigkeit Rußlands die proletarische, sozialistische Revolution nicht durchführen, aber wir werden einen Kapitalismus aufbauen, von dem später aus der Übergang zur proletarischen Revolution gemacht werden kann. Das heißt eben: wir Bolschewiki übernehmen es, in Rußland die objektiven historischen Aufgaben der Bourgeoisie durchzuführen. Die Phrase vom proletarischen Inhalt kam erst später. Der prinzipielle Charakter der russischen Novemberrevolution (25. Okt.) ist nach der Auffassung Lenins und der gesamten Bolschewiki kein proletarischer gewesen.

Die Periode des Kriegskommunismus.

Die ökonomische Forderung des Proletariats ist die Aufhebung des Privateigentums an den Produktionsmitteln und die planmäßige Leitung der vergesellschafteten Produktion- mit dem Zweck, nicht der Akkumulation von Mehrwert, sondern der Befriedigung zu dienen. Die ökonomische Politik des Bauerntums in

Rußland erforderte die Entwicklung der Warenproduktion unter Verwandlung des bäuerlichen Kleineigentums in kapitalistisches Eigentum. Diesen beiden widerstrebenden Tendenzen standen die Bolschewiki gegenüber. Sie mußten mit beiden in Konflikt kommen, wollten sie die Macht behaupten.

Der erste Konflikt zwischen den Bolschewiki und dem Bauerntum entstand im Frühjahr und Sommer 1918, eben in jener Periode, die Lenin als den Übergang in die proletarische Revolution bezeichnete, als man die Komitees der Dorfarmen organisierte und mit deren Hilfe versuchte, den reichen Bauern das Getreide zu entreißen. Der Versuch mißlang. Wohl enteigneten die armen Bauern das Getreide, ja, sie gingen noch weiter und zerschlugen die bäuerlichen Großbetriebe, aber nicht um das Getreide abzuliefern, sondern um es für sich selbst zu behalten, und an Stelle der Großbetriebe bäuerliche Zwergwirtschaften zu setzen. Im Dezember 1918 wurden die Dorfarmenkomitees aufgelöst und durch Sowjets ersetzt, d. h., man setzte an Stelle der armen Bauern die „breite Masse“ des Bauerntums. Im März 1919 veranlaßte Lenin auf dem 8. Parteitag die Losung „wir müssen die Mittelbauern zu unsern Verbündeten machen“, herauszugeben. Der Widerstand der Bauern, der sich in zahlreichen Aufständen äußerte, erzwang diese Änderung der bolschewistischen Bauernpolitik. Blutig geführte Bauernaufstände erzwangen 1921 ebenfalls die Einführung der NEP. (Neue Ökonomische Politik.)

Jedes radikalere Vorgehen gegen die Bauern endete immer mit neuen Zugeständnissen an die Bauernschaft, die stets die Machtprobe stellte. Als zum Beispiel im Frühjahr 28 Stalin auf den Getreidestreik der Bauern mit der „radikalen“ Agrarpolitik antwortete (Getreiderequisitionen, Verhaftungen, gewaltsame Niederhaltung der Getreidepreise u. s. w.) erzwangen die Bauern bereits im Juli 28 die Zurücknahme dieser Maßnahmen, und die Erhöhung der Getreidepreise um 15- 20%. Wir streifen diese Entwicklung nur, um zu zeigen, daß es den Bolschewiki selbst in der Epoche des Kriegskommunismus nicht gelang, Politik „gegen“ die Interessen der Bauern zu machen.

Der erste Konflikt zwischen den Bolschewiki und dem Proletariat drehte sich um die Arbeiterkontrolle. Das System der Arbeitsgemeinschaft zwischen Proletariat und Bourgeoisie, das Lenin 1917 in der Form des Staatskapitalismus vorschwebte, fiel bereits im Frühjahr 1918 zusammen. Die Arbeiterschaft exproprierte und allen Versuchen der Bolschewiki zum Trotz die Arbeiterkontrolle über die Produktion zu zerschlagen, sah sich der erste Kongreß der Volkswirtschaftsräte gezwungen, durch Dekret vom 28. Juni die Verstaatlichung der gesamten Industrie vorzunehmen. Damit verwandelte sich die bolschewistische Partei von einer bloßen Kontrollinstanz zum Gesamtkapitalisten. Und von da ab trat sie auch den Arbeitern als solcher gegenüber.

Steigerung der Produktion um „jeden Preis“, „absolute Disziplin“, „Unterordnung der Arbeiterinteressen unter das Produktionsinteresse“, das sind die Losungen, die jetzt die ökonomische Politik bestimmen.

Streikverbot, Verwandlung der Betriebsräte aus Organen der Belegschaft in eine Aufsicht über die Belegschaft, das sind die Formen, in denen diese Politik durchgeführt wurde. Und dies schon in der Periode des Kriegskommunismus, die von vielen Bolschewisten als die wirkliche Periode der proletarischen Revolution in Rußland angesehen wird. Sie datierten den Rückzug der Bolschewisten erst vom Zeitpunkt der Einführung der NEP, während in Wirklichkeit schon im Frühjahr 1918 der Rückzug zum Kapitalismus vollzogen wurde. Wir werden auf den entscheidenden Wendepunkt noch zurückkommen; hier sei noch die Charakterisierung dieser Epoche durch Lenin wiedergegeben, was uns erspart, auf die Details dieser Zeit im besonderen einzugehn:

„Unsere bisherige ökonomische Politik (d. h. der Kriegskommunismus) beabsichtigte den unmittelbaren Übergang von der alten russischen Ökonomie zur

staatlichen Produktion und Verteilung nach kommunistischen Prinzipien. Wir machten den Fehler, daß wir unmittelbar zur kommunistischen Produktion u. Verteilung übergehn wollten. Wir dachten uns die Sache so: die Bauern würden uns unentgeltlich das nötige Getreidequantum abgeben, wir würden es gleichmäßig auf die Betriebe verteilen, womit wir eine kommunistische Produktion und Verteilung hätten. Die ist leider Tatsache. Ich sage „leider“, weil wir uns vor noch nicht zu langer Zeit von der Fehlerhaftigkeit dieser Konstruktion überzeugen mußten, die allem widersprach, was wir früher über den Übergang vom Kapitalismus zum Sozialismus geschrieben haben.“ (Lenin, aus einer Rede vom 17. Okt. 1921, Werke XVIII. S. 871.)

Der wirkliche Wendepunkt der russischen Revolution.

Die Monate April- in 1918 haben zwei bleibende Resultate gezeigt, die seitdem die ganze Struktur des bolschewistischen Regimes bestimmt haben. Erstens, die Zerschlagung der proletarischen Organisationen von 1917 und die Fesselung des russischen Proletariats durch die Verwandlung der Gewerkschaften in Unterorganisationen der bolschewistischen Regierungspartei. Zweitens, der Übergang der Industrie in die Hände der Bolschewiken, und damit der Verwandlung des letzteren in einen Gesamtkapitalisten. Scheinbar beweist gerade diese letzte Maßnahme den proletarischen Charakter der bolschewistischen Politik, aber eben nur scheinbar, denn um tatsächlich als solche angesprochen zu werden, müßte die Revolution proletarischen Charakter haben. Wir wiesen aber nach, daß sie diesen Charakter nicht besaß. In den Thesen der „linken Opposition“ innerhalb der russischen KP, in der Radek und Bucharin arbeiteten, wurde schon 1918 der ganze Weg der russischen Revolution auf Grund ihrer Maßnahmen vorgezeichnet.

Die NEP, die Kollektivierung und der Fünfjahrplan.

Mit dem Beginn der NEP. bestand die Politik der Bolschewiki aus immer mehr und mehr Zugeständnissen an die sich entwickelnde kapitalistische Gesellschaft. Zwar entwickelt man den Kapitalismus mit immer wiederkehrenden Einschränkungen, da man als Staat die Balance zwischen den Bauern- und Arbeiterinteressen im Interesse des Burgfriedens zu halten hat; aber die kapitalistischen Elemente wurden doch immer stärker. Die zahlreichen Oppositionsgruppen entstanden u. wurden blutig unterdrückt, bis mit der Kollektivierung der Bauern scheinbar eine Linksschwenkung einsetzte. Aber diese Kollektivierung, die wohl auf der Produktionsbasis liegt und eine technische Weiterentwicklung bedeutet, hat an den Eigentumsverhältnissen nichts geändert. Die Ausbeutung von Arbeitskraft, die Akkumulation des individuellen Bauernkapitals bleibt bestehen. Die etwaige Möglichkeit die mit der Kollektivierung auftauchte, daß evtl. die ganze Agrarwirtschaft mit dem Staat als Ausbeuter der russischen „Landproletarier“ industrialisiert werden könnte, verschwand bald, als neue Maßnahmen die Positionen der Kulaken gerade durch die Kollektivierung kräftigten. Mit dem Fünfjahrplan setzte die gewaltmäßige Entwicklung der Staatsindustrie ein, die auf der Basis der Mehrwertbildung nur akkumulieren kann durch die Ausbeutung der Arbeiter. Und sich wiederum schneller entwickeln wird durch die Verschärfung der Ausbeutung. Wie in allen Anfängen kapitalistischer Entwicklung ist der Kapitalismus für eine Periode imstande, die Lebenslage des Proletariats zwar nicht in der Höhe der Akkumulation, aber doch in eine bestimmte Höhe hinaufzutreiben. Diese Tendenz, allen Kapitalismen eigentümlich, wird oft als Beweis des „marschierenden Sozialismus“ ausgegeben. Im Jahrbuch der Sowjet-Union Von 1930 wird auf S. 97 angegeben, daß am Ende des

Fünfjahresplans sich die Produktion verdoppelt haben wird, während die Löhne nur um 70 % gestiegen sein werden. Karl Marx sagt im 1. Band seines „**Kapitals**“ S. 554 [MEW 23, S. 646]:

„Steigender Preis der Arbeit infolge der Akkumulation des Kapitals besagt in der Tat nur, daß der Umfang und die Wucht der goldenen Kette die der Lohnarbeiter sich bereits selbst geschmiedet hat, ihre losere Spannung erlauben.“

Die Steigerung der russischen Löhne, die immer noch hinter der Steigerung der Produktion zurückbleibt, beweist nicht den sozialistischen Fortschritt, sondern bezeichnet nur eine Etappe in der kapitalistischen Entwicklung.

Die kapitalistischen Tendenzen, Rußlands wurden selten in solcher Schärfe klargelegt wie in der am 23. Juni 1931, vor den russischen Wirtschaftsfunktionären von Stalin gehaltenen Rede, die so großes Aufsehen erregte, daß die kommunistische Presse sich erst dann entschloß sie zu veröffentlichen, als die kapitalistische Presse schon lange ihren Hohn über sie ausgegossen hatte.

Der Inhalt dieser Rede, die bisher noch keinen wesentlichen Widerhall in der Arbeiterschaft gefunden hat, wurde von den Kapitalisten sofort begriffen: Hier war Geist von ihrem Geist! Die neue Politik, die durch die Stalinrede besiegelt wurde, ist nur für das Heer der Schwätzer, das nicht marxistisch denken kann, „neu“. Sie ist nicht neu, sie ist nur ein weiterer Schritt im gesetzmäßigen Verlauf der russischen Entwicklung, die nur mit dem Marxschen Wertgesetz erklärt werden kann, was allerdings keinem der russischen „Marxisten“ bisher eingefallen ist. Auch der Zeitpunkt, in dem die „neue Politik“ fällt, ist nicht zufällig, sondern bestimmt von der Weltwirtschaftskrise, auf die auch Rußland zu antworten hat. Aus der Unzahl der kapitalistischen Zeitungen, die sich mit der Stalinrede und der „neuen“ Politik befaßten, greifen wir nur eine heraus, die aber absolut charakteristisch für die Haltung der gesamten Bourgeoisie ist. In der Chicagoer „**Daily Times**“ heißt es nach einem albernen Vergleich der Marxschen und Stalinschen Auffassungen vom Sozialismus, nach einer Verhöhnung des Kommunistenfressers Matthew Woll, der nach ihrer Meinung einen nichtexistierenden Kommunismus bekämpft, zusammengefaßt folgendermaßen:

„ohne Rücksicht darauf, was Stalin auch reden mag, beweisen die Tatsachen, daß Rußland nicht zum Kommunismus marschiert, sondern auch vom Sozialismus immer mehr und mehr entfernt. Stalins Politik ist der Beweis dafür. Laßt uns nicht mehr Zeit verlieren mit der Sorge um die russische, rote Gefahr, Rußland beginnt zu denken. Es entdeckt gerade die fundamentalen Erkenntnisse nach denen sich Amerika entwickelte.“

„Der Marxismus ist sauer geworden“, heult die bürgerliche Meute und weist mit dem Finger auf Stalin. Aber was sie so reden läßt, ist ihre Unkenntnis von der Marxschen Theorie, sie verstehn davon genau so viel wie Stalin.

Die Stalinrede.

Die Stalinrede vom 23. Juni setzt sich aus verschiedenen Themen, die aber untereinander verbunden sind, zusammen. Ihr gesamter Inhalt kann in den einen Satz gebracht werden, daß mehr akkumuliert werden muß, und die zu diesem Zweck erforderlichen Maßnahmen auch durchgeführt werden müssen. Will man mehr akkumulieren, so ist dies nur möglich durch eine Verschärfung der Ausbeutung der Arbeiter, was sich an den persönlichen Arbeitsverhältnissen, im Fallen des relativen Arbeitslohnes, und der Erweiterung der Produktivkräfte durch Rationalisierung, technische Verbesserungen und stärkere Industrialisierung feststellen läßt.

Daß die russische Akkumulation eine kapitalistische Akkumulation ist, wird wohl jedem Arbeiter, der die Grundgesetze des Marxismus nur ungefähr begriffen hat, durch

die Stalinrede klar werden. Der erste Angriff Stalins richtet sich gegen die Löhne der Arbeiter. Er sagt:

„In einer Reihe von Betrieben wurden die Tarifsätze in der Weise festgelegt, daß der Unterschied zwischen qualifizierter und unqualifizierter Arbeit, zwischen schwerer und leichter Arbeit fast verschwindet. Die Nivellierung (gleicher Lohn) führt dazu, daß der unqualifizierte Arbeiter nicht daran interessiert ist, Qualifikation zu erlangen und infolgedessen der Perspektive des Hinaufrückens beraubt ist. — Es kann nicht geduldet werden, daß der Eisendreher denselben Lohn erhält wie der Hilfsarbeiter. Es kann nicht geduldet werden, daß der Lokomotivführer im Eisenbahntransport ebensoviel erhält als ein Kopist. Marx und Lenin haben gesagt, daß der Unterschied zwischen qualifizierter und unqualifizierter Arbeit auch unter dem Sozialismus, sogar nach der Vernichtung der Klassen bestehen bleibt; daß erst im Kommunismus dieser Unterschied verschwindet, daß infolgedessen der Lohn auch im Sozialismus je nach der geleisteten Arbeit und nicht nach den Bedürfnissen verteilt wird —.“

Es wird Stalin unmöglich sein nachzuweisen, daß Marx eine Periode des Sozialismus vor dem Kommunismus kannte. Für Marx identifizierten sich die Begriffe — klassenlose Gesellschaft — Sozialismus — Kommunismus. Lenin sprach nach einer langen Periode der sozialistischen Bewegung, die Friedrich Engels in ihren Reihen zählte, nur deshalb wieder von der Notwendigkeit, sich Kommunist zu nennen, weil die reformistische, sozial-verräterische Rolle der SP mit einer klaren Scheidung von ihr, auch einen klaren Namen für die neue Arbeiterbewegung erforderte. Das „Kommunistische Manifest“ erzählt nicht, daß seine Geschichte erst nach dem Sozialismus beginnt und auch nicht, daß zwischen Sozialismus und Kommunismus mehr liegt, als die Terminologie der Sprache. Was Stalin da Marx in die Schuhe schiebt, beweist den ganzen „Marxismus“ der heutigen Bolschewisten.

Vor dem Kommunismus besteht die Diktatur des Proletariats, die notwendig ist, um die nach der proletarischen Revolution noch verbliebenen kapitalistischen Reste zu beseitigen, und Schritt für Schritt die Herrschaft der Produzenten über die Produktion zu festigen. Was Stalin vom Sozialismus verlangt, ist das, was jede kapitalistische Gesellschaft gibt. Nach seiner Theorie des Marxismus kommt nach dem Kapitalismus wieder Kapitalismus, den er aber „Sozialismus“ nennt, und dann erst der Kommunismus. Von dieser Ideologie aus wird jener sozialdemokratische Ausspruch „Sozialismus wohin wir blicken“ endlich zur Wahrheit.

Doch wir wollen über diesen Stalinschen Witz hinweggehen und nachprüfen, ob Marx tatsächlich von einer Differenzierung der Löhne im „Sozialismus“ (wie Stalin sie fordert) gesprochen hat. Dies fiel gewiß schwer, denn selbst in den diesbezüglichen Marxschen Ausführungen wird nicht von Sozialismus, sondern von der kommunistischen Gesellschaft gesprochen, wie sie sich gerade aus dem Kapitalismus entwickelt hat. Marx sagt:

„Womit wir es hier zu tun haben, ist eine kommunistische Gesellschaft, nicht wie sie sich auf ihrer eigenen Grundlage entwickelt hat, sondern umgekehrt, wie sie eben aus der kapitalistischen Gesellschaft hervorgeht; die also in jeder Beziehung, ökonomisch, sittlich, geistig, noch behaftet ist mit den Muttermalen der alten Gesellschaft, aus deren Schosse sie herkommt. Demgemäß erhält der einzelne Produzent — nach den Abzügen — exakt zurück, was er ihr gibt. Was er ihr gegeben hat, ist sein individuelles Arbeitsquantum. Z. B. der gesellschaftliche Arbeitstag besteht aus der Summe der individuellen Arbeitsstunden die individuelle Arbeitszeit des einzelnen Produzenten ist der von ihm gelieferte Teil des gesellschaftlichen Arbeitstages, sein Teil daran. Er erhält von der Gesellschaft einen Schein, der ihm bestätigt, daß er so und soviel Arbeit geleistet hat (nach Abzug seiner Arbeit für die gemeinschaftlichen Fonds) und zieht mit diesem

Schein aus dem gesellschaftlichen Vorrat von Konsumtionsmitteln soviel heraus, als gleichviel Arbeit kostet. Dasselbe Quantum Arbeit, das er der Gesellschaft gegeben hat, erhält er in einer andern Form wieder zurück.“ (**Programmkritiken** S. 25 [MEW 19, S. 20].)

Wohl spricht Marx von einer im Anfangsstadium des Kommunismus noch ungleichen Entlohnung der Arbeiter, aber nicht in Hinsicht auf die qualitativen Unterschiede ihrer Arbeit, sondern durch den Umstand, daß manche Arbeiter verheiratet sind und Kinder haben, und andere nicht, wodurch eine Ungleichheit entsteht, da sie vom Ertrag ihrer Arbeit, die allein auf Arbeitsstunden basiert, mehrere ernähren müssen und die andern nur sich selbst. Marx läßt noch weiter zu, daß die Arbeit, um als Maß zu dienen, der Ausdehnung oder der Intensität nach bestimmt werden muß. Er setzt noch ein „oder“ zwischen Ausdehnung und Intensität; aber er spricht nicht von einer Bezahlung nach der Art der Arbeit, beurteilt sie nicht nach Berufen, sagt nicht wie Stalin, „es wäre unerhört, daß ein Lokomotivführer genau so viel erhalte als ein Kopist.“

Stalin fälscht hier Marx und er fälscht auch Lenin, denn Lenin hat in seinem „**Staat und Revolution**“, worin er diese Frage behandelt keine andere Auffassung wie Marx. (S. 89-92.) An anderer Stelle spricht Stalin über die Fünftagewoche. Er sagt:

„Manche von unsern Genossen haben sich hier und da mit der Einführung der Fünftagewoche allzusehr beeilt und sie in die „Obeslitschka“ verwandelt.“ (Obeslitschka nennt Stalin ein System, das die Bindung zwischen Arbeiter und Arbeitsstätte gefährdet). „Entweder muß die Durchführung der Fünftagewoche so umgeändert werden, daß keine Obeslitschka aus ihr wird, wie dies im Transportwesen erreicht wurde, oder aber, falls Vorbedingungen für entsprechende Maßnahmen fehlen, muß die papierne Fünftagewoche fortgeworfen und vorübergehend durch die Sechstagewoche ersetzt werden.“

Zwar führte man mit großem Geschrei die „papierne“ Fünftagewoche ein, um nachher über diejenigen, die sie ernst genommen hatten, herzufallen, und erneut die Sechstagewoche zu verlangen. Das kapitalistische Mehrwertgesetz ist eben stärker als die reformistische Phrase, will man akkumulieren, muß man die Arbeitszeit verlängern oder erweitern. Diese Selbstentlarvung russischer Sozialpolitik spricht für sich, so daß dieser kurze Kommentar vollkommen ausreicht.

Den Ausweg, den Stalin, seinen Vortrag zusammenfassend, aufzeigt, finden wir in folgenden Sätzen:

„Beseitigung der Unwirtschaftlichkeit, Mobilisierung der inneren Ressourcen der Industrie, Einführung und Festigung des Prinzips der Wirtschaftlichkeit in allen Betrieben, systematische Senkung der Gestehungskosten, Festigung der innerindustriellen Akkumulation in allen Industriezweigen ohne Ausnahme.“

Nehmt euch irgend einen Bericht von einer Industriekonferenz in irgend einem kapitalistischen Land und ihr werdet genau die gleichen Sätze finden. Auch, daß davon die Lage der Arbeiter abhängt, denn jeder Ausbeuter behauptet, daß er ausbeutet allein im Interesse des Ausgebeuteten. Im selben Moment, in dem die Rede Stalins veröffentlicht wurde, teilte die Juni-Ausgabe der „**Soviet Union Review**“ mit, daß die Reorganisation der russischen Gewerkschaften vollzogen wäre. D. h. daß die großen Industrieverbände und Gewerkschaften in kleine enge Berufsgewerkschaften aufgelöst worden sind. Man setzt voraus, daß evtl. möglich sei, die Kontrolle in den großen Organisationen bei zu drastischen Maßnahmen gegen die Arbeiter zu verlieren. Die kleinen Verbände mit ihren engen Interessen sind nützlicher für eine Gesellschaft, die die Arbeiter zersplittern muß, um sie zu beherrschen. Mit Gewalt werden neue Klassen durch die Lohnunterschiede innerhalb der Arbeiterschaft gebildet, ideell werden sie getrennt durch die Vereinsmeierei zahlloser, kleiner Verbände. Wenn man überlegt, daß sich die Lohnunterschiede in Rußland zwischen 60 und 800 Rubel im Monat bewegen, dann begreift man, daß die

Interessen der 60-Rubel-Empfänger andere sind, als die der 800-Rubel-Empfänger; dann weiß man, daß sich diese verschiedenen Interessen nicht in den Rahmen einer Organisation pressen lassen dann erkennt man, daß sich die Konkurrenz zwischen Arbeitern verstärkt und diese Konkurrenz ist eines der typischen Merkmale der kapitalistischen Produktion. Man begreift den Sinn der „Stossbrigaden“ und den ganzen Schwindel, den Stalin die Periode des „Sozialismus“ nennt.

Die Einwirkung der Weltkrise

Als die Sensationsmache der bürgerlichen Presse von der nahenden deutschen Revolution schrieb, war jeder gefühlsmäßig revolutionäre Arbeiter überrascht, folgende Bankrotterklärung der 8. Internationale zu lesen:

„Die Kommunistische Internationale erklärt, daß sie nicht imstande ist, festzustellen, welche Situation in Deutschland besteht. Sie über läßt die ganze Verantwortlichkeit den Händen der Kommunistischen Partei Deutschlands.“

Der Satz Kautskys, daß die Internationale kein Instrument des Krieges ist, ist jetzt erweitert worden, nach Moskau ist sie auch kein Instrument der Revolution. Was für ein Instrument ist sie eigentlich? Karl Radek gibt in einem Artikel in der „**Moskauer Rundschau**“ vom 21. Juni folgende nette Erklärung:

„Die Plenarsitzung des Zentralkomitees der Kommunistischen Partei der Sowjetunion, die vom 11. bis 15. Juni stattfand, hatte nur drei Fragen auf ihrer Tagesordnung die Berichte und Debatten über die Saatkampagne, über die Entwicklung des Transport und über die sowjetische Städtewirtschaft, insbesondere die Moskauer Kommunalwirtschaft. Schon diese äußere Tatsache zeigt den Unterschied zwischen der Lage der Sowjetregierung und der der kapitalistischen Regierungen. Fragen, die die sogenannte Weltpresse beschäftigen: die Reparationen, die Kriegsschulden, das Verhältnis zwischen dem Vatikan und der faschistischen Regierung, die schwere Regierungskrise in Deutschland und vor allem die Weltwirtschaftskrise, die Grundlage aller inneren und äußeren Kämpfe der kapitalistischen Welt, — sie klingen für den Sowjetleser wie eine Kunde aus einer fremden Welt.“

Jetzt wissen wir's: die Internationale ist ein Instrument der Kapitalsakkumulation in Rußland. Alle andern Interessen des internationalen Proletariats klingen ihr wie eine Kunde aus einer fremden Welt.

Die KPD hat denn auch ihre ganze Verantwortung begriffen und als einzige Aktion um die Eröffnung des Reichstags gebeten, Volksrevolution für die Reichstagsöffnung, wo bleibt der kleine Stalinist, der auch das mit Marx erklärt?

Die Interessen Rußlands sind nicht mit denen des deutschen Proletariats verbunden, sondern mit denen seiner Ausbeuter. N. Kornew schreibt in der „**Moskauer Rundschau**“ vom 28. Juni anlässlich der Verlängerung des deutsch-russischen Vertrages folgenden Satz, den jeder Arbeiter aufmerksam lesen sollte:

„Wir werden nicht müde zu wiederholen, daß die Industrialisierung der Sowjet-Union nicht nur keine Gefahr für Deutschland oder Untergrabung des deutschen Anteils am sowjet-russischen Markt darstellt, sondern umgekehrt, der deutschen Industrie, dem deutschen Unternehmergeist- und Willen immer neue, ungeahnte Möglichkeiten bietet.“

In dem schon erwähnten Jahrbuch der Sowjet-Union von 1930 wird dem „Unternehmergeist“ auch gezeigt, daß sein Feld in diesem Sechstel der Erde nicht zuende ist. Auf Seite 208 weist man nach, daß die in Rußland Investierten Kapitalien 12% Zinsen bringen, und daß die konzessionierten Gesellschaften einen Durchschnittsprofit von 81%-96% gebracht haben.

Aber zur Entfaltung der kapitalistischen Produktion ist immer mehr und mehr Profit notwendig. Und jetzt mitten in die Entwicklung der Kapitalsanhäufung durch den Staatskapitalismus, dem Konzessionskapital und privaten Kulakenkapital fällt die internationale Wirtschaftskrise, von der nur die Propagandaphrase, aber nicht die russische Wirklichkeit freibleib. Im selben Artikel von Radek in der „**Moskauer Rundschau**“ heißt es weiter:

„Auch die Sowjetunion spürt die Lage des Kapitalismus an ihrem eigenen Leibe. Die Wirtschaftskrise hat einen Preisfall zur Folge, der am schwersten die Agrarprodukte trifft. Das mindert den Erlös des Sowjetexports, verschärft den Kampf um den Weltmarkt.“

Der Fall der Profitrate, auch in Rußland, zwingt zu dem Stalinschen Programm und seinem Witzblatt-Sozialismus. Die Wirtschaftskrise wird in absehbarer Zeit auch in Rußland weitere vernichtende Kreise ziehn, und das russische Proletariat wird begreifen das alles, was von der Revolution blieb, im balsamierten Leichnam Lenins besteht, dessen letztes Wort an die Bolschewisten war „Lernt handeln, werdet gute Kaufleute!“

Die Revolution von 1917 war keine proletarische Revolution, diese wird noch von den russischen Arbeitern geschlagen werden, die heute noch ihr Sparkonto entwickeln, soweit sie dazu imstande sind. 1923 gab es in Rußland 357 Sparkassen, 1931 bereits 41.494. Auch diese Sparkassen werden als „Sozialismus“ ausgegeben. Was sie in Wirklichkeit sind, bezeichnet Karl Marx, folgendermaßen: 1. „die Sparkasse ist die goldene Kette, woran die Regierung einen großen Teil der Arbeiterklasse hält. Sie bekommen so nicht nur ein Interesse an der Erhaltung der bestehenden Zustände. Es tritt nicht nur eine Spaltung ein zwischen dem Teil der Arbeiterklasse, der an den Sparkassen beteiligt, und dem Teil, der nicht an denselben beteiligt ist.“ 2. „Die Arbeiter liefern so ihren Feinden selbst Waffen in die Hand, zur Erhaltung der bestehenden, sie unterjochenden Organisation der Gesellschaft.“ (K. Marx: **Über den Arbeitslohn**, 1847 [MEW 6, S. 645].)

Aber daß sich kapitalistisch entwickelnde Rußland hat nicht mehr die Zeit vor sich, die die andern Kapitalisten hinter sich haben. Sein kapitalistischer Akkumulationsprozeß fällt in die Periode der permanenten Krise, und was sich akkumuliert, ist die permanente Krise auch für Rußland. Aber so wenig, wie der internationale Kapitalismus freiwillig abtritt, weil ihm bewiesen wird, daß er historisch überlebt ist, so wenig wird die kapitalistische Entwicklung in Rußland aufgegeben. Es wird nur eins nicht kennen lernen: die reformistische Periode, die in der Aufwärtsentwicklung die gesellschaftliche Forderung des Proletariats war. Die Besserung der Lage des russischen Proletariats ist der Potenz eines Schwindsüchtigen vergleichbar, die früh vergeht.

Die internationale Arbeiterschaft kann nicht gefühlsmäßig auf die Gesetze der Ökonomie reagieren; die Welt läuft nicht nach ihren Wünschen.

Sie muß mit nüchternen Augen auf Rußland sehn u. ihre eignen Handlungen dem internationalen Klasseninteresse dienstbar machen. Mit der Waffe der marxistischen Wissenschaft muß sie kritisch an alles herangehn, um zu analysieren und ihre Maßnahmen danach einzurichten. Wer kritiklos ist, ist kein Marxist. Nicht umsonst heißt eine Marxsche Arbeit: „Die Kritik der kritischen Kritik.“

In der „**Moskauer Rundschau**“ vom 1. November 1931 finden wir die Notwendigkeiten Rußlands wie folgt aufgezeichnet:

„Der Ökonomische Nichtangriffspakt hat nicht die Aufgabe, den Kapitalismus von der Krise zu heilen, aber seine Annahme könnte gewisse, bösertige Formen der Krise mildern, die die Entwicklung des Welthandels beeinträchtigt.“

Mit dieser Begründung forderte Litwinow im Namen der russischen Regierung in Genf einen ökonomischen Nichtangriffspakt. Rußland ist heute daran interessiert, daß

sich die kapitalistische Krise nicht weiter verschärft. Es muß importieren und folglich auch exportieren. Die Wirtschaftskrise hat den Fünfjahrplan aufs tiefste erschüttert. Der Export der Sowjet-Union, der im ersten Halbjahr 1930 noch 464 Millionen Rubel betrug, ist in der gleichen Zeit 1931 um volle 100 Millionen gesunken. Im ersten Halbjahr 1931 betrug die mengenmäßige Steigerung der Ausfuhr 10%, gegenüber der gleichen Zeit 1930, trotzdem war der Erlös um 21 % geringer. Die Schwierigkeiten der kapitalistischen Länder vergrößern auch die Schwierigkeiten für Rußland. Diese Schwierigkeiten durch Revolution noch zu vertiefen, kann nicht im Interesse Rußlands liegen; jedenfalls tut es alles, um diese Schwierigkeiten abzuschwächen. Deshalb hassen Rußland und die 3. Internationale heute nichts mehr als eine Revolution. Auf Grund der Entwicklung der russischen ökonomischen Verhältnisse, ist Rußland heute die stärkste konterrevolutionäre „Macht“ geworden. Die stärkste schon deshalb, weil sie neben der materiellen Gewalt auch noch die Ideologien des Proletariats beherrscht,.

Nicht die Phrase „Fünfjahrplan“ gilt es, für ihren schönen Klang anzuerkennen, sondern was dieser Plan im Rahmen der Weltwirtschaft ökonomisch bedeutet, muß klar gestellt werden. Das zeigt schon ein einziger Punkt, und zwar der Export, daß Rußland die Prosperität braucht, die Krisenabschwächung, wenn weiter nichts möglich ist. Aber die Verschärfung der Krise ist der einzig revolutionäre Faktor der Weltgeschichte.

Den russischen Friedens- und Prosperitätsschreibern seien folgende Sätze von K. Marx entgegengehalten:

„Bei einer allgemeinen Prosperität, worin die Produktivkräfte der bürgerlichen Gesellschaft sich üppig entfalten, wie dies innerhalb, der bürgerlichen Verhältnisse überhaupt möglich ist, kann von einer wirklichen Revolution nicht die Rede sein. Eine Revolution ist nur in den Perioden möglich, wo diese beiden Faktoren, die modernen Produktivkräfte und die bürgerlichen Produktionsformen miteinander in Widerspruch geraten. Eine Revolution ist nur möglich im Gefolge einer Krise, sie ist aber auch ebenso sicher wie diese.“ [MEW 7, S. 440]

Was ist in Rußland?

Nicht bestritten wird vom russischen „Sozialismus“:

1. daß Lohnarbeit existiert, d. h. daß der Arbeiter seine Arbeitskraft verkauft. „Solange der Lohnarbeiter Lohnarbeiter ist, hängt sein Los vom Kapital ab.“ „Kapital und Lohnarbeit sind zwei Seiten eines und desselben Verhältnisses. Die eine bedingt, die andere.“ (K.Marx. [MEW 6, S. 411])

2. daß für den Markt und nicht für den Bedarf produziert wird, was mit der Tatsache der Lohnarbeit vollkommen verbunden ist.

3. daß Mehrwert erzeugt wird, den die Arbeiter nicht erhalten, worin eben die Ausbeutung des Arbeiters besteht.

4. daß die Produktion nicht von den Arbeitern bestimmt wird.

Da die russische Ökonomie auf Ausbeutung der Arbeitskraft basiert und die Ideologien sich nur in den Produktionsverhältnissen widerspiegeln, so muß auch die Ideologie der privilegierten Klassen in Rußland kapitalistisch werden. Die traditionelle Revolutions-Ideologie, die noch die Arbeiter zum Teil im Bann hält, existiert auch dann noch weiter, wenn ihre materielle Basis schon geschwunden ist. Aber sie hat keine Wirkung mehr, da die herrschenden Ideen bestimmt werden von den herrschenden Klassen. Karl Marx sagt, daß die Produzenten nur in dem Masse frei sein können, als sie die Produktionsmittel im Besitz haben. (Inauguraladresse) Sie haben sie in Rußland nicht im Besitz.

Im Besitz der Produktionsmittel sind:

1. die private Bauernschaft (auch in den Kollektiven.)
2. der Staatskapitalismus (die Bürokratie um die Bauern als Nutznießer.)
3. der Privatunternehmer (Konzessionskapital.)

Was ist Kommunismus?

Unsere rein „negative“ Kritik der Politik der Bolschewistischen Partei in Rußland, die den Nachweis erbringen soll, daß das, was sich in Rußland entwickelt, nicht die kommunistische Gesellschaft ist, verpflichtet uns auch zu sagen, was wir nur eigentlich für Kommunismus halten. Wir schilderten die Entwicklung Rußlands von 1917 bis 1931 um den Beweis anzutreten, daß das Proletariat in Rußland nicht die dominierende Klasse ist. Und wir hätten nicht einmal nötig gehabt, die ganze Periode zu durchstreifen, da schon allein die russische „Fabrikordnung“ klar erkennen läßt, daß die Arbeiter keinen Einfluß auf den Gang des Wirtschaftslebens haben, was darauf hinausläuft, daß einzelne Leiter der Produktion die Verfügung über den Produktionsapparat haben und die russischen Arbeiter unter dem „Staatskommunismus“ Lohnarbeiter geblieben sind. Man muß auch weiter blind sein wenn man nicht sieht, daß der Profit die Grundlage der russischen Produktion ist, daß, wie überall auf der Welt, die Produktion nicht eingestellt ist auf den Bedarf der Produzenten.

Der Ausgangspunkt

In revolutionären Perioden finden wichtige ideologische Umformungen statt, die sich mit nie gekannter Schnelligkeit vollziehen. Die Zielsetzung der Arbeiter wird eine vollkommen andere, sie wird völlig radikalisiert. Eine der wichtigsten Lehren die die revolutionäre Periode 1917-23 uns gebracht hat, ist wohl die, daß die ungeformten Ideologien einen anderen organisatorischen Ausdruck haben, als die alte Arbeiterbewegung. Die Betriebsorganisationen und die Arbeiterräte sind die organisatorischen Waffen, womit die Arbeiter die Revolution durchführen.

Über die Wichtigkeit der Räte war man sich vor 1917 nicht klar. Der Sowjetgedanke ist ausschließlich eine Folge der Revolution. Wenn jemals das Wort von Mehring, daß die Intuition den handelnden Massen genialer sein kann, denn das größte Genie, sich bewahrheitete, dann in diesem Falle. Das vornehmste, Positive, welches die revolutionäre Periode von 1917-23 uns gebracht hat, ist, daß wir die Formen gesehen haben, in denen sich die proletarische Revolution vollzieht. Die Übernahme des gesellschaftlichen Produktionsapparates wird vollzogen durch die Betriebsorganisationen und deren Zusammenschluß, die Arbeiterräte. Deshalb muß jede Untersuchung der Probleme kommunistischer, Produktion und Verteilung von dieser Grundlage, ausgehen.

Worin besteht die Beherrschung der Arbeiterklasse?

Die Beherrschung und Ausbeutung der Arbeiterklasse ist in ihren Ursachen außergewöhnlich einfach und für jeden Arbeiter sofort zu begreifen: sie sind eingeschlossen in der Tatsache, daß der Arbeiter von den Produktionsmitteln getrennt ist. Die sind Eigentum der Kapitalisten, der Arbeiter besitzt nur seine Arbeitskraft. Die Bedingungen unter denen der Arbeiter arbeiten muß, werden von den Kapitalisten bestimmt, der Arbeiter ist ökonomisch vollkommen rechtlos mag die politische Demokratie auch bis zur äußersten Vollendung durchgeführt sein, er ist abhängig vom Kapital. Mit dem Verfügungsrecht über die Produktionsmittel hat die besitzende Klasse

zugleich die Verfügung über die Arbeitskraft, das heißt, sie beherrscht die Arbeiterklasse. Die Arbeiter verfügen nicht über die von ihnen erzeugten Produkte, sie gehören nicht ihnen, sondern ihren „Brotherrn“. Was damit geschieht, ist nicht ihre Sache, sie haben nur ihre Arbeitskraft zu verkaufen und empfangen dafür ihren „Lohn“: sie sind Lohnarbeiter. Die Lohnarbeit ist der Ausdruck der Tatsache, daß die Arbeit von der Arbeitsproduktion geschieden ist, von der Tatsache, daß die Arbeiter weder über das Produkt, noch über den Produktionsapparat etwas zu sagen haben.

Worum es geht

So einfach die Grundlage der Beherrschung der Arbeiterklasse ist, so einfach ist auch die Formulierung in der Aufhebung der Lohnsklaverei: „sie kann nur aufgehoben werden, wenn die Trennung zwischen Arbeit und Arbeitsprodukt aufgehoben wird, wenn das Verfügungsrecht über das Arbeitsprodukt und somit auch über die Produktionsmittel wieder den Arbeitern zukommt.“ [**Grundprinzipien kommunistischer Produktion und Verteilung**, s. 155]

Das ist das Wesentliche der kommunistischen Produktion. Das kann natürlich nicht mehr in der Weise geschehen wie früher, als der Handwerker selbst über sein Werkzeug und Arbeitsprodukt verfügen konnte. Die heutige Gesellschaft erfordert einen vergesellschafteten Arbeitsprozeß, die gesellschaftliche Produktion und deshalb müssen die Arbeiter die Produktionsmittel gemeinschaftlich besitzen. Gemeinschaftlicher Besitz aber, der nicht zugleich das Verfügungsrecht darüber in sich schließt, verfehlt seinen Zweck. Der gemeinschaftliche Besitz ist kein Ziel an sich, sondern nur das Mittel, um das Verfügungsrecht über die Produktionsmittel für die Arbeiter möglich zu machen, um die Trennung möglich zu machen, um die Trennung von Arbeit und Arbeitsprodukt aufzuheben, um die Lohnarbeit abschaffen zu können.

Ziel und Mittel

Hier liegt die schwache Stelle der heutigen Arbeiterbewegung. Man setzt sich zum Ziel, die Produktionsmittel in Gemeinschaftsbesitz zu bringen und ahnt nicht, daß dies überhaupt kein Ziel sein kann; man vermutet nicht, daß mit dem Übergang zum „Gemeinschaftsbesitz“ das Problem einer neuen Produktionsweise erst gestellt ist. Die Arbeiterklasse lebt fälschlich in dem Vertrauen, daß der Kommunismus „von selbst“ kommen muß, wenn der Privatbesitz an Produktionsmitteln aufgehoben ist. Aber die Voraussetzung, daß damit die Lohnarbeit notwendigerweise verschwinden muß, ist falsch. Die wirkliche proletarische Zielsetzung kann nur sein, daß die Arbeiter das Verfügungsrecht über die Produktionsmittel (und damit über das Produkt) erobern und dadurch in der Tat die Lohnarbeit abschaffen. Erst dadurch wird die Arbeiterklasse „frei“. Die gemeinschaftlich ausgeübte Verfügung über die Produktion durch die freien Produzenten, das ist die Grundlage der kommunistischen Gesellschaft.

Die freien Produzenten können aber nicht willkürlich über die Produktionsmittel verfügen, so wie es die freien Produzenten im Kapitalismus (die Fabrikbesitzer oder „Führer“) tun. Ist die Verfügung willkürlich, dann kann von einer gemeinschaftlichen Verfügung keine Rede sein. Die erste Bedingung, eine gemeinschaftliche Verfügung über den Produktionsapparat möglich zu machen, ist daher, daß sich die Produktion nach allgemein geltenden Regeln vollzieht; Regeln, auf denen alle gesellschaftliche Arbeit ruhen muß. Dann erst ist ein gemeinschaftliches Handeln und Beschließen möglich. Die freien Produzenten müssen darum gleiche Produktionsbedingungen für alle Produzenten

schaffen. Die Betriebsorganisationen verkörpern in ihren Verbindungen der verschiedensten Art, die „Assoziation der freien und gleichen Produzenten.“

Die alte Auffassung

Sowohl die radikale Sozialdemokratie (Bolschewiki) wie auch die reformistische haben beide die marxistische Lehre gerade in dem entscheidenden Punkt der „Assoziation freier und gleicher Produzenten“ revidiert. Beide Richtungen glauben, daß es nur notwendig sei, den Staat zu beherrschen, um die Ausbeutung aus den kapitalistischen Produktionsverhältnissen zu entfernen.

„Die ganze Volkswirtschaft organisiert nach dem Vorbild der Post — das ist unsere erste Aufgabe.“ (Lenin in „**Staat und Revolution**“.)

Hilferding sagt:

„Das heißt nichts anderes, als daß unserer Generation das Problem gestellt ist, mit Hilfe des Staates, mit Hilfe der bewußten gesellschaftlichen Regelung diese von den Kapitalisten organisierte und geleitete Wirtschaft in eine durch den demokratischen Staat geleitete Wirtschaft umzuwandeln.“ **[Referat auf dem Kieler Parteitag der SPD 1927]**

Die Unterschiede zwischen den Sozialdemokraten und den Bolschewiki treten erst dann auf, wenn es um die Mittel geht, um die Taktik, womit man diesen gesellschaftlichen Zustand erreichen will. Die einen wollen es auf dem Wege des allgemeinen Wahlrechts, wollen diesen bürgerlich-kapitalistischen Staat „erobern“ und durch ihn die Organisationen des Kapitals unterwerfen. Die andern bekämpfen diese Politik mit aller Entschiedenheit. Sie propagieren die Vernichtung des bürgerlichen Staates in der Revolution und Bildung einer neuen politischen Macht durch die Partei der Arbeiterklasse, den Staat der proletarischen Diktatur.

Die Berufung des „Staatssozialismus" auf Marx.

Der radikalen, wie der reformistischen Sozialdemokratie fällt es tatsächlich leicht, ihre oben geschilderte Auffassung mit dem „Kommunistischen Manifest“ in Einklang zu bringen. Das Manifest enthält am Ende des Absatzes 2 Forderungen, die theoretisch denen der heutigen sozialdemokratischen Auffassungen entsprechen. Starke Progressivsteuer, Expropriation des Grundeigentums und Verwendung der Grundrente zu Staatsausgaben, Sozialisierung der Großbetriebe zur Durchführung staatlicher Planwirtschaft u. s. w. [MEW 4, S. 481] Diese Forderungen wurden aber 1847 nicht als Allheilmittel für die Beseitigung der kapitalistischen und Aufbau der kommunistischen Gesellschaft aufgestellt, sondern sie waren Teilforderungen ihrer Zeit, Forderungen, die vor 84 Jahren eine Ungeheuerlichkeit darstellten, die aber in der heutigen Zeit für Marxisten undiskutabel sein sollten. Karl Marx sagt selbst im Vorwort zum kommunistischen Manifest 1872

„Die praktische Anwendung dieser Grundsätze, erklärt das Manifest selbst, wird überall und jederzeit von den geschichtlichen Umständen abhängen, und wird deshalb durchaus kein besonderes Gewicht auf die Abschnitt II vorgeschlagenen revolutionären Maßnahmen gelegt. Dieser Passus würde heute in vielen Beziehungen anders lauten.“ [MEW 4, S. 573]

Weiter heißt es:

„Gegenüber der immensen Fortentwicklung der großen Industrie in den letzten 25 Jahren und der mit ihr fortschreitenden Parteiorganisation der Arbeiterklasse, gegenüber der praktischen Erfahrungen, zuerst die Februarrevolution und noch weit mehr die Pariser Kommune, wo zum ersten mal das Proletariat zwei Monate lang die politische Gewalt

inne hatte, ist heute das Programm veraltet. Namentlich hat die Kommune den Beweis geliefert, daß die Arbeiterklasse nicht die fertige Staatsmaschine einfach in Besitz nehmen und sie für ihre eigenen Zwecke in Bewegung setzen kann. Indes das Manifest ist ein geschichtliches Dokument, an dem zu ändern wir uns nicht mehr das Recht zuschreiben.“ [ebd. S. 573f]

Der lebendige Marxismus, der Klassenkampf des Proletariats, hätte nichts mehr mit Marx und dem Manifest zu tun, wenn es dieses als ein Nachschlagewerk für die heutigen Aufgaben der Arbeiterklasse ansehen würde, daß sich die Vertreter des „Staatskommunismus“ auf Marx berufen, ist eine absolute Verkennung des Marxismus selbst.

Das russische Experiment

Die russische Revolution hat uns die praktische Durchführung der Theorie des Staatssozialismus gebracht. Die Darstellung dieser Entwicklung war der Inhalt unsres vorhergehenden Artikels. Die Bolschewiki gaben keine Richtlinien, nach denen die Arbeiter selbst ihren Betrieb in das kommunistische Wirtschaftsleben einfügen können, sie zeigten nicht, wie Leitung und Verwaltung tatsächlich in die Gesellschaft übergeht. Für sie war die Befreiung der Arbeiter nicht das Werk der Arbeiter selbst, sondern für sie war die Durchführung des Kommunismus eine Funktion der „Männer der Wissenschaft“, der „Intellektuellen“ der „Statistiker“ usw. Die Bolschewiki glaubten, es handle sich nur darum, die alten Industrieführer zu verjagen und die Kommandogewalt über die Arbeit in die eigene Hand zu nehmen, um alles in den sicheren Hafen des Kommunismus zu lotsen.

Was in der Sozialdemokratie aller Schattierungen als Sozialismus oder Kommunismus gilt, ist nicht die Durchführung neuer ökonomischer Bewegungsgesetze für die Güterbewegung, sondern nichts anderes als die Übertragung der Organisation des Kapitals in das kommunistische Wirtschaftsleben. Soll nach diesen Sozialisierungsprojekten das sozialistische Produktionssystem funktionieren, dann muß die Leitung vor allem darauf bedacht sein, die Verfügung über den Produktionsapparat und damit das Kommandorecht über die Arbeiter zu sichern. ("Wenn wir ernsthaft von einer planmäßigen Wirtschaft sprechen wollen, wenn die Arbeiterschaft in Übereinstimmung mit dem Wirtschaftsplan im gegebenen Entwicklungsstadium verteilt werden soll, darf die Arbeiterklasse kein Nomadenleben führen. Sie muß ebenso wie die Soldaten verschoben, verteilt, abkommandiert werden.“ Trotzki: **Russ. Korr.** 1930. Heft 10.) In der Theorie wird dieses Recht im Namen des Wirtschaftsplanes gefordert, in der Praxis richtet es sich auch gegen jede unerwünschte Einmischung von Seiten der Lohnarbeiter. Die Entwicklung des russischen Staatskommunismus gibt dafür ein lehrreiches Beispiel.

Die Lehren

„Die Lehre von der sozialistischen Wirtschaft kennt nur einen einzigen Wirtschaftler: die Gesellschaft, welche ohne Gewinn- und Verlustrechnung, ohne Zirkulation eines Geldes, sei es nun Metall- oder Arbeitsgeld, auf Grund eines Wirtschaftsplanes, ohne Zugrundelegung einer Recheneinheit, die Produktion organisiert und die Lebenslagen nach sozialistischen Grundsätzen verteilt.“ (Otto Neurath: **Wirtschaftsplan und Naturalrechnung**, S. 84.)

Von 1918-1921 haben die Bolschewiki versucht, dies Prinzip zu verwirklichen, es war unmöglich, man kehrte von der prinzipiellen Naturalform der Verteilung zum „wertbeständigen Geld“ zurück. Es war erwiesen, daß ohne die Neu-Organisierung der

Produktion und ohne die Aufstellung eines allgemeinen Maßes, für die Berechnungen im Wirtschaftsleben es unmöglich ist, rationell Wirtschaft zu führen. Es war erwiesen, daß die Versuche, die Regierungsgewalt über die Produktionsmittel nach einer zentralen Regierungsstelle zu verlegen, die Initiative der Arbeiter immer mehr ausschalten muß. Die Trennung von Arbeit und Arbeitsprodukt ist das wesentlichste Merkmal der russischen Produktion gerade wie im Kapitalismus. In der Konzentration der Verfügungsgewalt über den Produktionsapparat, die gesellschaftliche Arbeit und das gesellschaftliche Gesamtprodukt, sehen wir die Form, in welche die Diktatur des Proletariats in die Diktatur über das Proletariat, übergeht. Kommunistische Produktion und Verteilung Bei der „marxistischen“ Erklärung der Beherrschung der Arbeiterklasse haben wir gesehen, daß das eigentliche Problem des Kommunismus in dem Aufheben der Trennung von Arbeit und Arbeitsprodukt liegt. Nicht der eine oder andere Oberste Volkswirtschaftsrat, sondern die Produzenten selber müssen durch ihre Betriebsorganisationen die Verfügung über das Arbeitsprodukt haben. Nur dadurch werden sie zu freien Produzenten und können sich dann in gegenseitigem Zusammenhang zu den Assoziationen von freien und gleichen Produzenten gruppieren. Weil die heutige Technik die ganze Produktion vergesellschaftet hat, alle Betriebe technisch vollkommen voneinander abhängig sind und zusammen einen ununterbrochenen Arbeitsprozeß bilden, so ist es die Aufgabe der Revolution, sie auch ökonomisch aneinander zu schmieden. Das ist aber nur möglich, wenn ein allgemeines ökonomisches Gesetz den ganzen Wirtschaftsprozeß vereinigt.

Das neue allgemeine ökonomische Gesetz, das den ganzen Wirtschaftsprozeß vereint, sagt noch gar nichts über den organisatorischen Zusammenschluß der Wirtschaft. Es setzt nur die Bedingungen fest, unter denen die in den Betriebsorganisationen vereinigten Produzenten am großen allgemeinen Wirtschaftsprozeß teilnehmen. Diese Bedingungen müssen in erster Linie für jeden Teil des Totalprozesses dieselben sein. Im Gegensatz zu Lenin, der von dem Grundsatz ausgeht, „die ganze Volkswirtschaft organisiert nach dem Vorbild der Post, das ist unsere Forderung“, sagen wir: „gleiche ökonomische Bedingungen für alle Teile der gesellschaftlichen Produktion.“ Dann erst kann zu der Frage der Organisationstechnik Stellung genommen werden.

„Gleiche ökonomische Bedingungen“ hat in erster Linie Bezug auf die Durchführung eines allgemein geltenden, festen Maßes, wonach alle Berechnungen in Produktion und Verteilung vorgenommen werden. Dieses Maß kann nicht mehr das Geld sein, weil sich keine zweite Person mehr zwischen den Arbeiter und sein Produkt einschieben soll. Der Arbeiter steht hier nicht als Fremder dem gesellschaftlichen Arbeitsprodukt gegenüber. Wohl konsumiert er nicht direkt das durch ihn hergestellte Produkte, aber sein Produkt trägt etwas in sich, das alle gesellschaftlichen Güter gemeinsam haben: die notwendige Arbeitszeit, die ihre Herstellung kostete. Alle Güter sind also gesellschaftlich gesehen qualitativ vollkommen gleich. Sie unterscheiden sich nur in der Menge gesellschaftlicher Arbeit, welche sie im Produktionsprozeß erforderten. So wie der Maßstab für die individuelle Arbeitszeit die Arbeitsstunde ist, so muß der Maßstab für die Menge gesellschaftlicher Arbeit, die in der Produktion enthalten ist, die gesellschaftlich durchschnittliche Arbeitsstunde sein.

Die Revolution besteht aber nicht nur in einer Umwälzung der ökonomischen Bedingungen der Produktion, sie bringt auch für die individuelle Konsumtion neue ökonomische Bedingungen. Haben die Arbeiter das Verfügungsrecht über das Arbeitsprodukt in Händen, dann muß ihr Verhältnis zu diesem Produkt auf neuer Grundlage festgelegt werden und geregelt; d. h. auch hier werden die neuen Produktionsverhältnisse zu neuen Rechtsverhältnissen. Denn wohl haben die Arbeiter das Verfügungsrecht über das Produkt, aber nicht mehr im Sinne des Privatkapitalismus mit

willkürlich freier Verfügung. Die Verfügung über das Produkt kann sich nur unter gesellschaftlichen und für alle gleichen Bedingungen vollziehen. Die Produzenten und Konsumenten sind wohl frei, doch nur durch ihre gesellschaftliche Gebundenheit. Jeder Betrieb ist nur eine Zelle im großen Gesamtwirtschaftskörper, aber auch nicht weniger. Jede Zelle hat ihre eigene Aufgabe, ihre eigene Differenzierung, die sich nur in Selbstbewegung vollziehen kann. Und zugleich ist diese Selbstbewegung nur möglich in und durch den begrenzenden Rahmen der allgemeinen Bewegungsgesetze des Gesamtkörpers. In diesem Rahmen entfaltet sich die freie Selbstaktivität und Selbstbewegung welche durch ihre Begrenzung die Arbeiter zu freien Produzenten macht.

Gleiche Bedingungen für die individuelle Konsumtion können wiederum nur in einem gleichen Maßstab für die Konsumtion liegen. So wie die individuelle Arbeitsstunde der Maßstab ist für individuelle Arbeit, so ist die individuelle Arbeitsstunde zugleich der Maßstab für die individuelle Konsumtion. Hiermit ist auch die Konsumtion gesellschaftlich geregelt und bewegt sich in vollkommen exakten Bahnen.

Die Todeskrise des Kapitalismus

1933

Weltkrise und Arbeiterbewegung

Wir sagten, dass der Aufschwung des Kapitals die Entstehung einer revolutionären Bewegung hemmte und dass die Entartung der Arbeiterbewegung das Produkt der kapitalistischen Blütezeit war. Heute, mitten in der allgemeinen kapitalistischen Weltkrise, können wir bereits feststellen, dass mit dem Untergang des Kapitalismus auch „dessen“ Arbeiterbewegungen zu Grunde gehen. Der Zersetzungsprozess der amerikanischen Gewerkschaften, der American Federation of Labor (A. F. of L.) kann z. B. statistisch überzeugend nachgewiesen werden. Aber auch die anderen, traditionell gebundenen, auf „Führerschaft“ und Gruppeninteressen basierenden Arbeiterorganisationen werden über kurz oder lang das Schicksal der A. F. of L. zu teilen haben. Die Arbeiter müssen, um zu leben, die Fessel der veralteten Organisationsform sprengen und sich als KLASSE, in Organisationen, die sie selbst beherrschen, organisieren!

Der Krieg als Wendepunkt

Für die alte Arbeiterbewegung galt als Motto: "Die Bewegung ist alles, das Ziel nichts!" Der Sozialismus war für sie etwas in die weiteste Ferne Gerücktes. Die Marx'sche Theorie von der Unabwendbarkeit des kapitalistischen, ökonomischen Zusammenbruchs des Kapitalismus wurde verlacht. Man "sah", dass die Krisen, die zyklisch kamen, immer wieder überwunden wurden, ja, dass sie langsam schwächer wurden und man glaubte, dass der Kapitalismus sie einst ganz auszuschalten imstande sein würde. Aus einem Problem des kapitalistischen Produktionsprinzips wurden Zirkulations- und Konkurrenzprobleme, die durch die Konzentration des Kapitals ganz ausgeschaltet werden sollten mit Hilfe einer „richtigen“, planmässigen Führung der Wirtschaft.

So lebte man unbesorgt dem kapitalistischen Alltag; die Revolution wurde mit Spott in die Unwahrscheinlichkeit verwiesen, die Klassenharmonie feierte ihre höchsten Triumpfe — bis eines Tages die Bombe des Weltkrieges über den "friedlichen" imperialistischen Bürgersteig rollte und den Beginn einer neuen Aera einleitete.

Die alte Arbeiterbewegung verlor den letzten Schein pietätvoller, revolutionärer Phraseologie und zeigte mit ekelregender Klarheit, dass ihre reaktionäre Form die Form ihres reaktionären Inhalts war. Gemeinsam mit ihrer Bourgeoisie kämpfte die Arbeiterschaft eines jeden Landes um den besten Platz an der Sonne. Und hier zeigte es sich, dass die alte Arbeiterbewegung nichts weiter war, als ein Teil der kapitalistischen Ausbeutungsmaschinerie.

Nur die I. W. W. verkaufte nicht das Erstgeburtsrecht der Revolution für das Linsengericht kapitalistischer Zugeständnisse. Sie piffte auf die Burgfriedenspolitik, führte gerade in der Kriegszeit die besten ihrer Streiks und hielt das Banner des Klassenkampfes aufrecht.

Durch den Krieg wurde der "schon überwundene" Standpunkt des „Kommunistischen Manifestes“ durch ein Millionenopfer an Leichen wieder zurückgewonnen. Die Selbstbesinnung des Proletariats fand ihren grossartigen Ausdruck in den Stürmen der russischen und mitteleuropäischen Revolutionen. Der Glaube an den Kapitalismus, als der "besten der Welten", war erschüttert.

Der Konjunkturablauf nach dem Weltkriege änderte sich. Die Krisen wurden länger und schärfer. Aber die Intensität der Krise war noch geographisch verschieden gelagert. Einzelne Länder wurden schwerer, andere leichter betroffen. Die Krise war vorerst noch keine Weltkrise in dem Sinne, wie sie sich jetzt seit fünf Jahren äussert.

Es war dem amerikanischen Kapital selbst in der Zeit des sichtbaren, permanenten Niedergangsprozesses des kapitalistischen Europas möglich gewesen, seine Krisen mit ungeahnten Konjunkturen abzulösen. Das schon erwähnte Fehlen zu gewichtiger frühkapitalistischer Restbestände, die günstige organische Zusammensetzung des Kapitals, die äusserst rationalisierte Wirtschaft, die relative ökonomische Unabhängigkeit vom Rohstoffweltmarkt, die Surplusprofite während des Krieges und andere Momente, machten aus dem U.S.A. Kapitalismus das Reklameschild der kapitalistischen Welt.

Die Prosperitätsideologie trübte das Klassenbewusstsein des amerikanischen Proletariats so sehr, dass die Theorie der I. W. W. nicht nur nicht Fuss fassen konnte, sondern ihr Einfluss sogar zurückging. Dies spricht nicht gegen die I. W. W. und die amerikanische Arbeiterschaft, sondern ist das natürliche Produkt der Entwicklungseigentümlichkeiten des amerikanischen Kapitalismus.

Als 1928 die industrielle Krise in U.S.A. einsetzte, als sie sich mit dem Börsenkrach von 1929 den Weg in die kapitalistische Presse bahnte, glaubte die amerikanische Arbeiterschaft mit ihrer Bourgeoisie, dass die Krise, wie frühere Depressionen in kurzer Zeit behoben sein würde. Dieser schon erschütterte Glaube im fünften Jahr der Weltkrise und ihrer Perspektiven, die nur auf weiteren Abstieg deuten, muss von der revolutionären Bewegung gänzlich vernichtet werden.

Todeskrise

I.

Obwohl die Revolution keine Doktorfrage ist, ist es doch notwendig, dass das Proletariat seine Situation in ihrer ganzen Schärfe erfasst. Die Bourgeoisie und die an ihrer Existenz gebundene Arbeiterbewegung ist ausserstande, die Krise in ihrer wirklichen Gestalt und Bedeutung zu erkennen. Tauchen Probleme auf, die das Ende der

kapitalistischen Produktionsweise in sich enthalten, so muss die "Theorie" der Bourgeoisie und ihrer Lakaien absolut versagen. Sie können keine Lösung finden, denn die Lösung liegt hinter ihrem Tod. Das Kapital kann sich nicht selbst vernichten, so ist allein das Proletariat imstande, die ökonomische Wissenschaft zu Ende zu führen.

An der Stellung der Arbeiterbewegung zum Krisen- und Zusammenbruchproblem ist der Charakter dieser Bewegung zu erkennen. Wer nicht zum Kern der Dinge vordringt, wer nicht die Krise und den endlichen Zusammenbruch auf die Eigentümlichkeiten der kapitalistischen Produktionsverhältnisse zurückzuführen imstande ist, der ist auch ausserstande, die Theorie für die Aenderung der Produktionsweise zu geben, der ist auch nicht zur revolutionären Praxis fähig.

Die Marx'sche Akkumulations- und Zusammenbruchstheorie ist zugleich die Praxis der proletarischen Revolution, eins drückt das andere aus; wo diese Totalität nicht besteht, existiert auch nur die Untauglichkeit zur geschichtlich gestellten Aufgabe.

Die Krise des Kapitals kann von der revolutionären Bewegung nur vom Standpunkt des Proletariats aus betrachtet werden. Die objektiven Bedingungen sind für uns in der Niedergangsepoche des kapitalistischen Systems gegeben, die sich dadurch charakterisiert, dass das Kapital nur noch Profite machen kann, durch die allgemeine, absolute und dauernde Verelendung des Proletariats.

Wir lehnen jede mechanische Auffassung vom Zusammenbruch des Kapitals ab. Wir sind als Anhänger der materialistischen Dialektik der Auffassung, dass die kapitalistische Gesellschaft nur durch die organisierte Kraft des Proletariats beseitigt werden kann.

Wir wissen, dass ganz bestimmte Verhältnisse notwendig sind, die den Sturz des Kapitals erst ermöglichen. Der Wille des Proletariats genügt nicht, ohne diese bestimmten Verhältnisse kann sich ein solcher Wille gar nicht entwickeln. Wir sind aber der Ueberzeugung, dass heute die objektiven Verhältnisse reif genug sind, um die subjektiven Voraussetzungen für die endgültige Emanzipation der Arbeiterklasse zu schaffen.

Die Entwicklung des Kapitalismus zeigte uns, dass es ihm möglich war, bis zu einem gewissen Punkt die Reallöhne der Arbeiter zu steigern. Marx wies nach, dass, wenn dieser bestimmte Punkt erreicht ist, auch der Reallohn, wie vorher schon der relative Lohn, fallen muss, will der Kapitalismus seinen Profit sichern. Marx, allgemein zusammenfassend, sagte: "Es folgt daher, dass in dem Masse, wie Kapital akkumuliert, die Lage des Arbeiters, welches immer seine Zahlung, hoch oder niedrig, sich verschlechtern muss." . . . "Dies ist das absolute, allgemeine Gesetz der kapitalistischen Akkumulation!" Und sein berühmtes Akkumulationskapital illustriert in grossartiger Weise diese absolute Tendenz des Kapitalismus: "Je grösser der gesellschaftliche Reichtum, das funktionierende Kapital, Umfang und Energie seines Wachstums, also auch die absolute Grösse des Proletariats und die Produktivkraft seiner Arbeit, desto grösser die industrielle Reservearmee. Die disponible Arbeitskraft wird durch dieselben Ursachen entwickelt wie die Expansivkraft des Kapitals. Die verhältnismässige Grösse der industriellen Reservearmee wächst also mit den Potenzen des Reichtums. Je grösser aber diese Reservearmee im Verhältnis zur aktiven Arbeiterarmee, desto massenhafter die konsolidierte Uebervölkerung, deren Elend im umgekehrten Verhältnis zu ihrer Arbeitsqual steht. Je grösser endlich die Lazarusschicht der Arbeiterklasse und die industrielle Reservearmee, desto grösser der offizielle Pauperismus." ("Das Kapital" I, S.609-10.)

Also die kapitalistische Akkumulation, die zur Entfaltung des Kapitalismus führte, wird zugleich die Ursache seines Zusammenbruchs. Dieselben Tendenzen, die seinen rapiden Aufstieg ermöglichten, werden an einem bestimmten Punkt der Entwicklung die Ursachen des rapiden Niedergangs.

Das Marx'sche Akkumulations- und Zusammenbruchsgesetz

Für alle Gesellschaftsordnungen manifestiert sich der technische und ökonomische Fortschritt darin, dass der Mensch imstande ist, mit seiner Arbeitskraft eine stets grössere Menge von Produktionsmitteln in Bewegung zu setzen. Weniger Arbeit liefert ein immer grösseres Produkt. Das Eigentümliche der kapitalistischen Produktionsweise liegt darin, dass in ihr dieser allgemeingültige Arbeitsprozess zugleich ein Verwertungsprozess ist, d. h. die Produktionsmittel und die Arbeitskraft haben neben ihrer Naturalform noch einen Wertcharakter. Mit anderen Worten: Grundbesitz, Maschinen, Rohstoffe und beschäftigte Arbeiter sind im Kapitalismus nicht nur Grundbesitz, Maschinen, Rohstoffe und beschäftigte Arbeiter, sondern zugleich ein Kapitalverhältnis. Konstantes und variables Kapital, das verwertet werden muss, oder einfacher gesagt, Profit zu erzeugen hat. Auf dieses dualistische Prinzip der kapitalistischen Produktionsweise lassen sich alle ihre weiteren Erscheinungen zurückführen.

Der allgemeingültige, natürliche Prozess der menschlichen Emanzipation, der sich in immer mehr Produktionsmittel und immer weniger Arbeitskraft ausdrückt, äussert sich im Rahmen der kapitalistischen Akkumulation gleichzeitig, als das beständige Anwachsen des konstanten Kapitals im Verhältnis zum variablen. Immer mehr Kapital wird in die Maschinerie (fixes Kapital) und in Rohstoffe, immer weniger, im Verhältnis zum ersteren weniger, in Arbeitslöhnen angelegt. Da aber der variable, in Arbeitslöhnen steckende Kapitalteil die einzige Quelle des Profits ist, muss mit der verhältnismässigen Abnahme dieses Teils auch der Profit geringer werden. Da aber der Profit die einzige Triebfeder der kapitalistischen Produktion ist, wird die Akkumulation nur solange fortgesetzt werden, als sie eben profitabel ist.

Die amerikanischen Zensuszahlen bestätigen, dass das auf den Kopf des Arbeiters angewandte konstante Kapital im Verhältnis zum Lohnkapital (variables) stets wächst. Diese Tatsache des schnelleren Wachstums des konstanten Kapitals im Verhältnis zum variablen wird als organische Zusammensetzung des Kapitals bezeichnet. Infolge der fortschreitend höheren organischen Zusammensetzung des Kapitals und der damit verbundenen Steigerung der Produktivität der Arbeit, wird der Lohn einen stets kleineren Teil des Gesamtprodukts betragen und dadurch wohl die absolute Mehrwertmasse steigen, aber die Profitrate zugleich fallen. Im Verlauf der kapitalistischen Akkumulation, die dauernd vom Fall der Profitrate begleitet ist, wird bald ein Punkt erreicht, wo nicht nur die Profitrate, sondern zugleich auch die Profitmasse sinkt.

Die kapitalistische Akkumulation erfordert eine dreifache Teilung der Mehrwertmasse. Es wird aus ihr bestritten das zusätzliche konstante Kapital, das zusätzliche variable Kapital und der dritte Teil bildet den Konsumtionsfond der Kapitalisten. Wächst die organische Zusammensetzung des Kapitals, und sie wächst solange das Kapital akkumuliert, dann muss aus dem Mehrwert ein relativ immer grösserer Teil desselben für die Zwecke der zusätzlichen Akkumulation verwendet werden. Bei einer niedrigen organischen Zusammensetzung ist der Mehrwert gross und ausreichend, um mit ihm die Akkumulation fortzusetzen. Auf einer höheren Akkumulationsstufe wird die Mehrwertmasse verhältnismässig zu klein und reicht nicht aus, um die Bedürfnisse des zusätzlichen konstanten Kapitals und der anderen Teile zugleich zu sichern. Soll die Akkumulation trotzdem fortgesetzt werden, so kann die Bourgeoisie entweder auf ihren Konsumtionsfond verzichten, oder den variablen Teil, das heisst den Lohnanteil der Arbeiter verringern. Sie wird das letztere tun, da sie nicht freiwillig verhungern wird. Diese ökonomische Situation verschärft den Klassenkampf. Ein dauernder Angriff auf die Löhne, im Interesse des eigenen Konsumtionsfonds setzt

ein. Von der Verelendung des Proletariats hängt nun das weitere Schicksal des Kapitals ab.

An einem solchen Punkt angelangt, wo die zu erwartende Mehrwertmasse nicht gross genug ist, um einen notwendigen Profit zu sichern, setzt die weitere Akkumulation aus. Der aus den bisherigen Kapitalanlagen fliessende Mehrwert liegt brach, ein Ueberfluss von müssigem, vergeblich nach Anlagemöglichkeiten suchendem Kapital tritt ein.

Henryk Grossmann fasst diese Tendenz der kapitalistischen Akkumulation in einer äusserordentlich treffenden Formulierung folgendermassen zusammen: "Der Kapitalismus findet seine endgültige Schranke an der mangelnden Verwertung des Kapitals. Je mehr der Kapitalismus wächst, umso grösser wird der Kapitalanteil, der für Rohstoffe und Produktionsmittel ausgegeben wird, umso kleiner wird im Verhältnis dazu der Kapitalanteil, der für Arbeiterlöhne einzusetzen ist. Weil aber der Mehrwert nichts ist, als die unbezahlte Mehrarbeit der beschäftigten Arbeiter, so muss mit dem Wachstum des Kapitals der Mehrwert und damit der Profit im Verhältnis zum gesamten angelegten Kapital sinken. Zum Tell wird das ausgeglichen durch das Wachstum des Grades der Ausbeutung. Weil aber ein fortwährend grösseres Kapital angewandt wird, gleicht sich weiterhin das Sinken der Profitrate aus durch das Wachsen der Profitmasse. An einem bestimmten Punkt der Akkumulation ist das Sinken der Profitrate aber auch zugleich von einem Sinken der Profitmasse begleitet. Dann bringt ein grösseres, gesellschaftliches Kapital einen absolut kleineren Profit. Wir haben dann:

Ueberproduktion von Kapital und stets wachsende Arbeitslosigkeit. Unverwertbarer Ueberschuss von Kapital bei unanwendbarer überschüssiger Bevölkerung. Das ist der letzte grosse Widerspruch der kapitalistischen Produktion, an dem sie zu Grunde gehen muss !" ("Das Akkumulations- und Zusammenbruchsgesetz des kapitalistischen Systems".)

Diese reine, absolute Tendenz der kapitalistischen Akkumulation wird durch Gegentendenzen, die sich aus der kapitalistischen Entwicklung selbst ergeben, aufgehalten. Die Zusammenbruchstendenz drückt, sich in der Krisen aus und wird durch die Krisen überwunden. Die Krisen sind durch Gegentendenzen abgeschwächte, nicht zur vollen Entfaltung gelangte Zusammenbruchserscheinungen. Aber diese Gegentendenzen schalten sich im Laufe der Entwicklung selbst aus.

Die Rationalisierung wird zur Fehlrationalisierung. Die Fusionen der Betriebe und die damit verbundene günstigere, organische Zusammensetzung richtet sich gegen sich selbst, z. B. durch die belastende Verzinsung und Amortisation des Kapitals der stillgelegten Betriebe. Die Herabsetzung der Löhne der Arbeiter ist begrenzt. Man kann die Arbeiter nicht dauernd unter Reproduktionskosten halten. Tote oder verhungerte Arbeiter erzeugen keinen Profit. Auch die Abkürzung der Umschlagszeit hat seine Grenzen, weil sie, übertrieben, die Kontinuität des Produktionsprozesses aufhebt. Der Handelsprofit kann nur ausgeschaltet werden; ist er aber ausgeschaltet, so hört dieses Mittel der Profiterhöhung auf, Gegentendenz zu sein. Auch die Gegenwirkung des Kapitalexports ist nur temporärer Natur. In dem Masse, in dem durch die fortgesetzte Akkumulation die Zahl der kapitalübersättigten und deshalb kapitalexporthierenden Länder und die Masse ihrer Kapitalisten grösser werden, vergrössert sich die Konkurrenz auf dem Weltmarkt, der Kampf um gewinnbringende Anlagesphären und wird der Kapitalexport als Gegentendenz wirkungsloser. Es zeigt sich, dass durch die immanenten Gesetze der Kapitalakkumulation diese und weitere Gegentendenzen, die die bisherigen Krisen stets überwand, sich langsam selbst aufheben. Haben diese Gegentendenzen keine Wirkung mehr, so setzt sich der Zusammenbruch durch. Dann haben wir die Krise in Permanenz, oder die Todeskrise.

Todeskrise

II.

Das heutige Stadium des Kapitalismus, der Imperialismus, manifestiert die Herrschaft des Monopolkapitals. Das Industriekapital beherrscht als Finanz- oder Monopolkapital das Bankkapital und bestimmt den Staat und seine Politik. Es sprengt den nationalen Rahmen und schliesst sich international zusammen, wodurch der Konkurrenzkampf auf breiterer Grundlage verschärft wird. Die imperialistischen Konflikte wegen profitabler Anlagequellen für das überschüssige Kapital und der Beherrschung günstiger Rohstoffbasen, verschärfen sich und drängen zu neuen Kriegen.

Aber wie schon der letzte Krieg nicht imstande war, die kapitalistischen Schwierigkeiten durch Kapitalzerstörung und der dadurch ausgedrückten, gewaltsamen Herabsetzung der organischen Zusammensetzung des Kapitals aufzuheben, so drücken die drohenden Kriege auch nichts weiter aus, als den beschleunigten Marsch in die kapitalistische Barbarei. Auch die heute unternommenen Kapitalentwertungen durch Abschreibungen haben keine tieferen Wirkungen, im Sinne eines erneuten Aufschwungs. Wie auch der schon vollzogene kolossale Preissturz, und in erster Linie Preissturz des Lohnes, nichts zur Ueberwindung der Krise beitrug, oder in anderen Worten, nicht eine neue Konjunktur durch die Krise ermöglichte. Die Höhe der Produktivkraft der Arbeit lässt auch jede neue Erfindung, jede neue Erfindung neuer Industrien, als Mittel einer neuen Konjunktur nicht mehr zu. Die Rationalisierung hat die Arbeitsperioden für die Produktion bereits derart verkürzt, dass jede neue Industrie bereits erschöpft wäre, ehe sie als krisenmildernd bemerkbar würde.

Die Krise bleibt als allgemeine Krise bestehen. Sie trifft alle Gebiete des internationalen Kapitalismus. Sie entwickelt keine neue Konjunktur, sondern drückt sich aus im ständigen Rückgang der Produktion und dem dauernden Wachsen der Arbeitslosigkeit. Sie ist zugleich Finanz-, wie Agrarkrise. Alle spekulativen Gegentendenzen, wie Inflation und Zollpolitik, zerschellen an ihrer Härte. Der durch den Kolonialimperialismus erzeugte zusätzliche Mehrwert wird immer geringer durch die Eigenakkumulation der Kolonien. Die imperialistischen Tendenzen verschärfen den Druck auf das Proletariat, anstatt wie früher, ihn zu mildern. Es zeigt sich, dass die Krise im Rahmen des Kapitalismus nicht überwunden werden kann.

Wir wiederholen: Das Marx'sche Akkumulationsgesetz ist zugleich Krisentheorie und das Zusammenbruchsgesetz des kapitalistischen Systems. Es zeigte sich, dass die gegen den Zusammenbruch sich wendenden Tendenzen ihre Wirkung verloren haben. Es bleibt dem Kapital nichts weiter, als seinen weiteren Profit allein aus der dauernden und absoluten Verelendung des Proletariats zu schöpfen. Während der, die Aufstiegsepoche begleitenden Krisen des Kapitals, gelang die Wiederherstellung der notwendigen Profitsumme, ohne dass es notwendig wurde, den absoluten Arbeitslohn dauernd zu senken. Erst in der Endphase des Kapitals reicht der Mehrwert nicht mehr aus, um ein genügendes Lohnniveau und die erforderliche Akkumulation zugleich sicher zu stellen.

Erst an diesem Punkt, wo die Expansion, die Konzentration, die Rationalisierung, die Ausschaltung profitfressender Mittelschichten, des Handelskapitals etc., als Gegentendenzen gegen den Profitschwund keine Wirkung mehr haben, oder schon aufgehoben sind, bleibt dem Kapital nichts weiter, als die Verelendung der Arbeiterschaft.

Im Kampf um den Mehrwert drückt sich der Klassenkampf innerhalb der kapitalistischen Gesellschaft aus. Der Klassenkampf um den Mehrwert muss umschlagen in den Kampf um die Vernichtung des Kapitalverhältnisses in der Produktion. Was die

Endkrise von den bisherigen Krisen allein unterscheidet, ist, dass mit der "Ueberwindung" der Krise vom kapitalistischen Standpunkt aus, was nur die Wiederherstellung der Verwertung des Kapitals bedeuten kann, das Lohnniveau nicht wiederhergestellt werden kann, dass es dauernd, sinkt, ohne Rücksicht darauf, ob das Kapital von Krise oder „Normalität" spricht. Die Ueberwindung der Krise vom Standpunkt des Kapitals hebt nicht die Todeskrise für das Proletariat auf. Vor dem Proletariat steht die Alternative: KOMMUNISMUS ODER DIE BARBAREI!

Das Kapital bricht nicht von selbst zusammen. Wenn die Arbeiterschaft nicht, in kraftvollen Industrie-Unionen organisiert, die Produktionsmittel in Besitz nimmt und das Ausbeutungssystem beseitigt, dann geht die Arbeiterschaft, über die vollständige Kulisierung, der Massenvernichtung, der Barbarei entgegen.

Todeskrise des kapitalistischen Systems heisst nichts weiter, als dass die objektiven Bedingungen für die proletarische Revolution gegeben sind. Für das Proletariat gibt es nur einen Weg aus der Krise, den Weg, der zur Beseitigung des kapitalistischen Systems führt.

Die Realität der Weltkrise

Die Fragen des Proletariats können in der kapitalistischen Ordnung weder beantwortet noch gelöst werden. Sie können nicht einmal hinausgezögert werden. Der Reformismus zeigt sich gerade in der heutigen Zeit als Utopie und fällt der Lächerlichkeit anheim. Die Weiterexistenz des Systems verlangt die Vernichtung von Millionen. Die Errettung der Millionen würde Selbstmord der kapitalistischen Nutzniesser bedeuten: So muss für Revolutionäre diese Krise die Todeskrise des Systems sein. Denn alle Momente, die den Klassenkampf vom Reformismus zur Revolution drängen, sind gegeben. Diese Ueberzeugung hat nicht in Wünschen, sondern in der Betrachtung der realen Wirklichkeit ihre Begründung. Wir befinden uns im fünften Jahr einer allgemeinen Weltkrise, wie sie die bisherige Geschichte des Kapitals nicht kannte. Wir sehen, dass alle bisher wirkenden Krisenüberwindungsmomente an der Tiefe der jetzigen Krise scheitern. Es gibt keine Symptome, die eine Besserung anzudeuten vermögen. Und nicht nur für das Proletariat erscheint dieser Krisenzustand unertragbar, auch die Bourgeoisie betrachtet ihr eigenes Werk mit Schauern. In einem Leitartikel schreibt der „Economist" (4.6.1932): "Der Gang der Weltereignisse berechtigt von Tag zu Tag immer mehr den Vergleich mit dem Irrenhaus." Und die Charakterisierung, die Lenin der Bourgeoisie vor zehn Jahren gab: "Sie (die Bourgeoisie) verhält sich wie ein Räuber, der frech geworden ist und seinen Kopf verloren hat, sie macht eine Dummheit nach der anderen, sie verschärft ihre Lage, sie beschleunigt ihren Untergang." Diese Beschreibung gilt heute- mehr als damals. Das ist jedoch nur die aussere Erscheinung; die Bourgeoisie ist weder dumm noch irrsinnig, die Handlungen der Bourgeoisie sind nicht willkürlich. Sie verschärft ihre Lage nicht, weil sie den Kopf verloren hat, sondern sie verliert den Kopf, weil sich, gegen alle ihre Massnahmen, die Krise weiter verschärft.

Ihre Gütter stürzen, und zwar buchstäblich. Sie nehmen sich das Leben, entlarven sich als „Kriminalverbrecher" (wir erinnern nur an Kreuger und Insull). Was der Bourgeoisie allein geblieben ist, ist die kindlichste Hoffnung. Seit Jahren sieht sie und die ihr verpflichteten "Wissenschaftler" täglich den Umschwung zur Besserung eintreten. In jeder jämmerlichen Hausspekulation sieht sie den Stern von Bethlehem, der ihr neue Prosperität verspricht. Wie oft schon betonte sie, der Tiefstand sei erreicht, schlimmer könne es nicht werden, und es wurde schlimmer. In der Märzausgabe (1932) der Zeitschrift "Commerce" (offizielles Organ der "Chicago Association of Commerce") schreibt der führende Finanzkapitalist Edwin L. Lobdell folgendes: "Wenn die

Verhältnisse nicht schlechter werden können (und allem Anschein nach ist dieser Punkt bereits erreicht), muss jede Aenderung eine Veränderung zum Besseren sein. Das Jahr 1932 wird ein Jahr der Reinigung sein und nur die besten werden leben bleiben. Die Vereinigten Staaten überwandnen viele Krisen, manche, die schwerer waren, als die jetzige. Das Land wurde stets wieder gesund und begann mit neuer Frische grössere Dinge. Die Geschichte wird sich wiederholen und die jetzigen Verhältnisse werden vergessen sein, Wenn eine neue Generation die Kontrolle in die Hände nimmt." Aber diese Analogien mit der Vergangenheit haben absolut keinen Wert. Diese Krise kann nicht mit den vorhergehenden verglichen werden, auch dann nicht, wenn grundsätzlich der Charakter aller kapitalistischen Krisen derselbe ist. Gegen alle Prophezeiungen bat sich die Krise in alle grossen kapitalistischen Ländern dauernd verschärft und verschärft sich noch immer und wird sich noch weiter verschärfen.

Die Produktion von Produktionsmitteln ersetzt nicht einmal den natürlichen Verschleiss. Die Produktionskapazität wird kaum noch halb ausgenutzt. Das Arbeitslosenheer schwillt noch immer an und wird weiter anschwellen. Die Profite werden immer geringer, die Bankerotte häufen sich. Alle Gegenmassnahmen versagen. Kartelle, die den Preisfall aufhalten sollen, zerfallen selbst. Inflationsversuche verpuffen wie ein Tropfen auf heissem Stein. Die politische Unsicherheit wird grösser.

Was den Umfang der Produktion betrifft, so ist die kapitalistische Welt schon weit hinter den Stand der Vorkriegsperiode zurückgeworfen. Setzt man den Index der Produktion von 1913 mit 100 an, so hielten sich Ende 1932 die Vereinigten Staaten noch auf dem Niveau von 1913, während in Frankreich' der Index auf 95, in England auf 83, Deutschland auf 63 und Polen auf 46 gefallen ist. Noch klarer wird der Niedergang des Kapitalismus, vergleicht man den Produktionsstand der einzelnen Industriezweige 1932 mit den jeweiligen Jahren der Vergangenheit, die die selbe Höhe aufwiesen.

	hle:	Ko heisen:	Ro hl:	Sta	Bau mwooll verbrauch:
U. S. A		190	189	190	191
	6	8	5		3
England		190	186	189	187
	0	0	7		2
Deutschla		189	189	189	188
nd	9	1	5		9

Mithin sind die entscheidenden Zweige der kapitalistischen Industrie um 25 bis 40 Jahre zurückgeworfen.

Am klarsten wird der Niedergang des kapitalistischen Systems ausgedrückt durch das krasse Abnehmen der Nachfrage nach allen Arten der schwerindustriellen Produktion, wie sich dies aus den Angaben über die Roheisenerzeugung ergibt.

	U. S. A.:	Frankrei ch:	Deutsc hland:	England:
	(In Millionen Tonnen)			
929	18,3	4,3	5,4	2,9
931	9,6	3,8	2,8	1,7
	4,6	2,3	1,7	1,6

932

Die chronische Agrarkrise erfährt durch die industrielle Krise noch weitere Vertiefungen. In den Vereinigten Staaten z. B. stellte sich der Index der Farmerzeugnisse im Mai 1932 (Vorkriegsindex: 100) auf 56. Die Kaufkraft der Farmerzeugnisse auf der Preisbasis der anderen Produkte betrug, gegenüber der Vorkriegsperiode, 50 Prozent. Die Schrumpfung des Innenmarktes zwingt zur verschärften Konkurrenz auf dem Weltmarkt; gleichzeitig schrumpft der Welthandel ein durch Schutzzollmassnahmen.

Ein- und Ausfuhr sanken von 1929-1932:

	Einfuhr:	Ausfuhr:
England	39%	48%
U. S. A.	67%	68%
Deutschland	65%	54%
Frankreich	50%	60%
Italien	60%	59%
Kanada	64%	61%
Australien	48%	60%

Die Schrumpfung des Welthandels vertieft die Krise, indem sie die Währungs- und Finanzlage der Länder erschwert. Parallel zu diesen Erscheinungen vollzieht sich die krasse Abnahme der Gewinne. Die Gewinne der amerikanischen Unternehmungen stellten sich im ersten Quartal 1932 nur auf 20 Prozent jener im entsprechenden Quartal 1931. Die Aktien der amerikanischen Unternehmungen haben seit 1929 85 Prozent ihres Kurswertes eingebüsst. Die Lage des Bankkapitals ist katastrophal. Zinsraten sanken bis auf 1½ Prozent. Die Schliessung der Banken, oder die gewaltsame Enteignung der Spargelder der Arbeiter und des Mittelstandes verschärft die Situation noch mehr.

Am allerdeutlichsten sprechen die Arbeitslosenziffern der Welt. Amerika zählt im März 1932 rund 16 Millionen Arbeitslose. Deutschland hat 6 Millionen registrierte und 2 Millionen ausgesteuerte Erwerbslose. In England wurden 2,859,828 Erwerbslose gezählt. Ihre Anzahl ist in Wirklichkeit viel höher. Polen hat eine Million Arbeitslose. In allen Ländern steigen die Erwerbslosenziffern höher und höher. Die Weltarbeitslosigkeit umfasst mehr als 30 Millionen Menschen.

Der Angriff auf die Löhne wird international geführt. Was für Amerika gilt, gilt für alle anderen Länder ebenfalls. Die Lohnsumme, die in amerikanischen Fabriken 1932 ausgezahlt wurde, beträgt nur 45 Prozent der des Jahres 1926. Das Gesamtarbeitereinkommen ist innerhalb der letzten sechs Jahre auf weniger als die Hälfte gesunken.

Die proletarischen Konsequenzen

Die Revolution ist ein dialektischer Prozess. Es gibt für sie kein fertiges Rezept. Ihre Theorie und Praxis ist dem Wechsel unterlegen. Der Klassenkampf findet seinen Höchstpunkt in der Uebernahme der Produktionsmittel durch die Industrie-Unionen des siegreichen Proletariats zur Herstellung der: ASSOZIATION FREIER UND GLEICHER PRODUZENTEN.

Die Betriebsorganisation, die Industrie-Union, die Klassenorganisation ist zugleich die Organisation der zukünftigen Gesellschaft. So bildet in der I. W. W. das Ziel und die Taktik eine Totalität. Ihr organisatorischer Aufbau ist bereits die Struktur der neuen Gesellschaft in der Schale der alten.

Nach Industrien organisiert, für den Tageskampf mit der Bourgeoisie; nach Industrien organisiert für die Weiterführung der industriellen Produktion nach Uebernahme der Macht. Die Tendenz der Organisation: DIE EINE GROSSE UNION ist zugleich ihr ZIEL.

Dahin drängt die Entwicklung. Aber um die Entwicklung selbst zu verstehen, ist es notwendig, alle Tendenzen, die sich gegen das Ziel wenden, in die Kalkulation einzubeziehen.

Der Klassenkampf ist das natürliche Produkt der Privateigentumsgesellschaft. Die Formen des Klassenkampfes wechseln mit der Entwicklung der Klassenkämpfe. Die Entwicklung wird gehemmt durch Gegenaktionen der Bourgeoisie, durch traditionelle Einflüsse; gehemmt durch neue konterrevolutionäre Elemente, die sich erst aus dem Klassenkampf selbst heraus entwickeln, z. B. die reaktionären Arbeiterorganisationen.

Wenn wir sagten, dass die Revolution ein dialektischer Prozess ist, dann sagen wir damit, dass beide Seiten des Entwicklungsprozesses, die objektiven und die subjektiven Momente sich gegenseitig beeinflussen. Im Prozess des Klassenkampfes, in dem beide Elemente sich verschmelzen, ist die bewusste Tat des bewussten Teils des Proletariats von eminenter Bedeutung. Hier liegt die Begründung für die Notwendigkeit der Organisation.

Das Proletariat macht, wenn auch nicht aus freien Stücken, seine eigene Geschichte. In der Endphase der bürgerlichen Gesellschaft fehlen dem Kapital genau so die objektiven Voraussetzungen für seine Weiterexistenz, wie die subjektiven für die Revolution noch nicht voll gegeben sind. Die Bourgeoisie und die revolutionäre Minderheit ringt um die Ideologie der Arbeiterschaft. Die Entwicklung dieses Kampfes drückt sich aus in der Entwicklung der Formen des Klassenkampfes, nach unserer Auffassung in der Entwicklung der Selbstaktivität der kämpfenden Arbeiterschaft, die sich in Organisationen zusammenschliesst, die sie selbst beherrscht und bestimmt und die zugleich wirklich brauchbare Klassenkampfaffen sind. So ist für uns die I. W. W. das wichtigste Instrument der Revolution.

Die I. W. W. unterscheidet sich grundsätzlich von allen anderen existierenden Arbeiterorganisationen. Schon in der Kritik der alten Arbeiterbewegung liegt bereits das Positive der I. W. W.

Die alte Arbeiterbewegung ist nach dem bürgerlichen Staatsprinzip "Führer und Masse" (von oben nach unten) aufgebaut. Sie verbesserte die Existenzmöglichkeiten von Teilen des Proletariats in der Aufstiegsepoche des Kapitalismus. Sie entwickelte Organisationen, die selbst zu Gliedern der kapitalistischen Gesellschaft wurden. Sie erzogen eine Führerschaft, einen Beamtenapparat, der dem Proletariat im Interesse ihrer eigenen Kastenexistenz genau so gegenüber tritt, wie das Kapital selber. Wie der Parlamentarismus die geistige, so verkörpert die Gewerkschaftsbewegung die materielle Macht der Führer über die Arbeitermassen. In diesen Organisationen herrscht die Bürokratie über die Machtmittel, die Geldmittel, die Presse usw. Die Führer identifizieren sich mit der Organisation; die Organisation ist ihr Privateigentum geworden. Die Mitglieder sind nicht imstande, ihren Willen gegen die Bonzokratie durchzusetzen. Die Organisation tritt den Arbeitern als etwas Fremdes gegenüber, als eine äussere Macht, gegen die sie wohl rebellieren können, die aber über ihnen steht, obgleich doch diese Macht aus ihnen selbst entspringt. Das Verhältnis der Arbeiter zu ihren Organisationen ist genau so, wie das Verhältnis der Arbeiter zum bürgerlichen Staat.

In revolutionären Perioden finden wichtige ideologische Umformungen statt. Die Zielstellung der Arbeiter wird eine vollkommen andere, sie wird radikalisiert. Dies wird bestätigt durch die Tatsache, dass die Arbeiterklasse in der Revolution andere Organisationsformen gebraucht, als in dem Zeitabschnitt der ruhigen Verbesserung der

Arbeitsbedingungen. Die wichtigste Lehre, die die revolutionäre Periode in Europa von 1917 bis 1923 brachte, ist die, dass die Arbeiterschaft sich neuer Kampfmethoden bediente, die im strikten Gegensatz zu denen der alten Arbeiterorganisationen und zu diesen Organisationen selbst standen. Die Arbeiterräte, die Aktionsausschüsse, die Betriebsorganisationen wurden von der alten Arbeiterbewegung aufs blutigste bekämpft. Das heisst, die Organisationen, in denen das Proletariat sich selbst bestimmen konnte, die sich nicht durch eine Schmarotzerklique beherrschen liessen, waren die Todfeinde der parlamentarisch-gewerkschaftlichen Bewegung.

Die I. W. W. ist deshalb so gehasst, weil sie das neue Prinzip der wirklichen Arbeiterbewegung "VON UNTEN NACH OBEN" bis zur letzten Konsequenz verkörpert, weil hier, in der I. W. W., die Arbeiter ihre Organisation beherrschen.

Wir wendeten unsere Aufmerksamkeit ganz besonders der Krise zu, weil es für uns als revolutionäre Organisation klar ist, dass die Taktik und die Aufgaben der Bewegung absolut von dem wirtschaftlichen Zustand abhängig sind. Die I. W. W. greift ihre Theorie nicht aus der Luft, sondern versucht sie wissenschaftlich nachzuweisen.

Mit der Ueberakkumulation des Kapitals ist die geschichtlich objektive Grenze der reinen Gewerkschaftsbewegung erreicht. In der Endphase der bürgerlichen Gesellschaft kann durch keine Organisation irgend etwas an der Tatsache geändert werden, dass die Verelendung der notwendige Endpunkt der kapitalistischen Entwicklung ist. Auf Basis der kapitalistischen Produktionsweise kann das Proletariat nur verelenden. Alle Organisationen, die nur innerhalb des kapitalistischen Systems für die "Interessen" der Arbeiter eintraten, müssen zu Grunde gehen. Denn die Beseitigung des Systems ist nun die einzige Lösung für die Arbeiterschaft. Nur eine Organisation, die sich als Ziel die klassenlose Gesellschaft gesteckt hat, ist in solch einer Periode noch imstande, den Klassenkampf zu führen.

Jeder grössere Lohnstreik, jedes feste Eintreten für die Verbesserung der Lebenslage der Arbeiterschaft wird, wenn erfolgreich geführt, zu einer Frage von Leben und Tod für die Bourgeoisie. Jede Organisation, die den Kapitalismus erhalten will, muss gegen die Verbesserung der Lebenslage der Arbeiterschaft mit der Bourgeoisie gemeinsam kämpfen.

In der Endphase der kapitalistischen Gesellschaft haben die Gewerkschaften keine Funktion mehr zu erfüllen, sie haben auch im Kommunismus keine Funktionen. Sie sind an ihrer objektiven Schranke angelangt. Damit verschwinden sie allerdings noch nicht, da die Ideologien immer den Verhältnissen nachhinken. Aber sie werden konterrevolutionär, versuchen, um ihr eigenes Leben zu retten, dem Kapitalismus wieder auf die Beine zu helfen. Ein gut funktionierender Kapitalismus ist eine Lebensfrage für die Gewerkschaften. Deshalb werden die Gewerkschaften zu Streikbrecherorganisationen, deshalb versuchen sie durch verräterischen Kuhhandel mit den Unternehmern die wirklichen Klassenkämpfe abzuleiten.

In der Niedergangsperiode des Kapitals hat der Streik aber erst wirkliche revolutionäre Bedeutung. Jeder Erfolg der Arbeiter vertieft die Krise. Jede Widerstandsaktion des Proletariats geht auf Kosten der Bourgeoisie. Und selbst jeder Misserfolg, durch die einfache Tatsache des Ausfalls der Produktion und damit der Verringerung der Mehrwertmasse, schnürt den Strick um den kapitalistischen Hals noch enger. In jedem Falle ist das Proletariat, vom Standpunkt der Revolution aus gesehen, der Gewinner. Alles, was die Arbeitslosen der Bourgeoisie abringen, führt zur verschärften Ausbeutung in den Betrieben, führt damit zur Verschärfung der Klassenkämpfe, führt auf den Weg zur Revolution, zur Beseitigung der Profitordnung.

Der wirtschaftliche Kampf der Arbeiter ist der revolutionäre Kampf. Dieser Kampf muss geführt und kann nur geführt werden von den Arbeitern selbst, kann nur geführt

werden von Organisationen, die nicht den Kapitalismus erhalten, sondern die ihn beseitigen wollen, kann nur geführt werden zum endgültigen Sieg in Klassenfronten vom gesamten Proletariat, nicht von einzelnen Gruppen. Die Industrie-Unionen sind die diesem Kampfe angepassten Organisationen.

Marinus van der Lubbe — Proletarier oder Provokateur?

(4. Januar 1934)

Aus: **Der Freidenker**, Nr. 5/6, 4. Januar 1934, S. 7, New Ulm, Minnesota, U.S.A.
Mattick verfasste diesen Aufsatz 1934 im Auftrag des „Comite International pour la defense et la rehabilitation de Marinus van der Lubbe.“ [Paris].
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Das von der 3. Internationale herausgegebene „Braunbuch“ über den Reichtagsbrand enthält neben vielen Wahrheiten über den Naziterror auch weiterhin die Behauptung, dass Marinus van der Lubbe ein Werkzeug der Hitlerbewegung sei. Als einziges Beweismaterial weist man auf die angebliche Homosexualität v.d.L. hin, als ob die Führer der Nazis einen jahrelang arbeitslosen Proleten als homosexuellen Partner nötig hatten? Dafür sollten doch die Nazis genug „anständige“ Leute in ihren eigenen Reihen haben. Aber selbst die Homosexualität v.d.L. haben sich die Schmierfinken der K.P. aus den Fingern gesogen. Ihre ganze Beweisführung ist von A bis Z erlogen und doch machen sie sie zum Zentralpunkt ihrer ganzen Argumentation.

M.v.d.L. gehörte bis zum November 1932 der Gruppe Internationale Kommunisten Hollands an. Er kennt den Parlamentarischen Verrat der S.P.D. und den parlamentarischen Kretinismus der K.P.D. Er sieht wie sich in Deutschland der Faschismus entwickelt und wie die Arbeiterpartien nichts zu seiner Abwehr tun. Kurz vor der Machtergreifung versuchen S.P.D. und K.P.D. die Arbeiter vom wirklichen Kampf abzuhalten, indem sie ihnen empfehlen, mit den Faschisten an der Wahlurne abzurechnen. Der Stimmzettel soll die Revolution verhindern. Als die Hitlertruppen vor dem Karl Liebknechtthaus demonstrieren, schreiben die K.P.D. Blätter: „Arbeiter gebt ihnen die Antwort am 5. März, wählt Kommunisten.“ Die Atmosphäre ist die des Bürgerkriegs, sie zieht den Revolutionär v.d.L. nach Deutschland. Die Arbeiterparteien tun aber alles um diesem Bürgerkrieg auszuweichen und bereiten damit die Niederlage vor. Am Abend vor der Aufrichtung der politischen Macht des Faschismus haben die Führer den Arbeitern nichts anderes zu empfehlen als den parlamentarischen Betrug. Zum Protest gegen diesen Schwindel setzt sich v.d. Lubbe den Reichtag in Brand. Ein Zeichen, dass es nicht zur Wahl Urne, sondern zur Revolution gehen soll. Ein Signal, dass mit dem parlamentarischen Schwindel Schluss gemacht werden muss.

Die Nazis lügen: „v.d.L. arbeitet für die K.P.D.“ — Kein Mensch glaubt ihnen das. Die K.P.-Bonzen lügen: „v.d.L. ist ein Provokateur der Nazi.“ Und viele Arbeiter glauben diesen Schwindel. Wohl haben die K.P.-Bonzen keinen wirklichen Beweis für diese ehrabschneidende Beschuldigung, aber was machts, sie haben Papier, das sich bedrucken

lässt. Einmahl ist v.d.L. für sie ein Naziagent, ein andermal ist er von Deterding bestochen, um die Nazis zu zwingen, die Handelsbeziehungen mit dem russischen Petroleumtrust abzurechnen: Jede neue Behauptung widerspricht einer früheren. Doch was ist v.d.L. für ein eigentümlicher Provokateur? — Er hat keine, die Schuld der K.P.D. oder S.P.D-Führer aufweisenden Papiere bei sich finden lassen. Er hat keinerlei Erklärungen abgegeben, die der Nazi-Polizei Gelegenheit zu Verhaftungen gegeben hätten.

Es ist außer Zweifel, dass die Nazis hunderte von Agenten und Spitzeln in den Reihen der K.P.D. und S.P.D hatten und haben. Weshalb dann, wählten sie sich für die Tat einen einfachen, holländischen Arbeiter, einen Rätekommunisten, also einen erklärten Gegner der parlamentarischen Arbeiterbewegung? Welch ein seltsamer Provokateur, der immer wieder erklärt: „Ich habe ganz allein gehandelt“, obwohl er als Agent doch andere zu belasten hätte? Obwohl er doch angeblich angestellt war, die Schuld am Reichtagsbrand auf die K.P.D. zu schieben, betont er immer wieder die K.P.-Angeklagten nicht zu kennen, weist er jede Verbindung mit der K.P.D. zurück. Die Beschuldigungen v.d.L. durch die K.P. stimmen nicht mit den Tatsachen überein. Sie können es nicht, weil sie schamlose Lügen sind.

Warum verwickeln sich die „roten Journalisten“ der Zweiten — und Dritten Internationale in derartige Widersprüche? Sie wollen die Welt zeigen, dass ein Kommunist so etwas, wie den Reichstag anzuzünden, nicht täte. Dazu kann nur ein Nazi fähig sein. Sie wollen den Bourgeois zeigen, dass die K.P.D. in Wirklichkeit nichts weiter will, als Handlangerdienste leisten für die Bourgeoisie. V.d.L. muss für die 3. Internationale ein Nazi sein, er muss für die Nazis ein Kommunist sein. Die Nazis zeigen der Welt die Gefährlichkeit des Bolschewismus in Person v.d.L., um Verständnis für ihre imperialistische Aufrüstung zu finden. Die 3. Internationale zeigt der Welt, dass die Nazis Mordbrenner sind in der Person v.d.L., um die deutsche Position zu schwächen. Im ganzen Prozess um den Reichtagsbrand widerspiegeln sich nur die Kriegsvorbereitungen indem ein Staatenblock gegen andere Staatenblocks steht. Noch gehört Deutschland nicht zum russischen Staatenblock, deshalb ist v.d.L. ein Agent des Mörders Göring. Im engeren Rahmen sehen die Parlamentarier in der Tat v.d.L. einen Schlag gegen sich selbst, gegen die Unterhändler, die Führer. Mit unfehlbarem Instinkt erkennen die Bonzen in v.d.L. den Mann einer ihnen feindlichen Welt. Aus den Millionen von Stimmvieh hat ein Arbeiter dem parlamentarischen Gesindel ins Gesicht geschlagen.

Arbeiter! Lasst Euch nicht dauernd von einer feilen Schreiberbande belügen. Verlangt die Beweise für die Behauptung, dass v.d.L. Mitglied des Mordsturmes 33 gewesen ist, dass Deterding ihm 25.000 Mark Belohnung versprochen hat. Wenn sie dies behaupten, so müssen sie Beweise haben, und können sie es nicht, dann schlägt ihnen ihre Lügen in den Schlund zurück. Man mag über den Wert oder Unwert der Tat v.d.L. denken wie man will, sie war eine Überzeugungstat, für die v.d.L. selbst einsteht. Das Signal, das er geben wollte, war zu schwach, um den ganzen Betrug der alten, verkommenen Arbeiterbewegung blitzschnell zu beleuchten. Aber das Signal wurde von einem Revolutionär gegeben.

Man wird, lässt sich die Lüge vom Naziagenten nicht mehr aufrecht erhalten, euch sagen, dass v.d.L. verantwortlich gemacht werden muss für den Hitlerterror, der nach den Brand einsetzte. Aber damit werden sie den alten Lügen nur eine neue anfügen. Die Nazis übten den Terror schon vor den Brand aus. Sie sprachen schon vorher öffentlich aus, dass sie alle Arbeiter, die sich ihnen entgegenstemmen werden, niederschlagen werden. Die Zahl der Arbeitermorde stieg schon vor dem Brand in schnellem Tempo. Der faschistische Terror war nicht eine Folge der Tat v.d.L., sondern seine Tat sollte der Beendigung des Terrors gegen die Arbeiterschaft dienen. Die Niederlage des deutschen

Proletariats auf die Tat v.d.L. zurückzuführen zu wollen, ist nur ein Versuch, den eigenen Bankerott zu verbergen.

Mit dem Beginn des Reichtagsbrand-Prozesses schrieb die „Neue Weltbühne“, dass die Gefahr der Vergiftung der Angeklagten Torgler, Dimitrov usw. bestände und man deshalb nicht erstaunt sein solle, wenn diese Angeklagten Dinge aussagen, die man von ihnen nicht erwartet. Dass man dasselbe auch mit v.d.L. tun kann und hier tatsächlich tat, das kam den Herren nicht in den Sinn. Das war ja der Provokateur, der musste ja im Interesse des Gerichts aussagen, den brauchte man nicht erst vergiften, der wurde ja bezahlt. Über die Vergiftungserscheinungen v.d.L. machte sich die Intelligenzija und die K.P.-Presse nur lustig, v.d.L. wurde auf einmal ein Halbidiot. Und doch, nur die Vergiftung v.d.L. konnte für das Gericht einen Sinn haben. Seine Aussagen, die die anderen Angeklagten entlasteten, mussten entkräftet werden. V.d.L. durfte nicht sprechen, um den letzten Schein der Anklage gegen Torgler und Genossen nicht zu vernichten.

Die K.P. weiß, dass v.d.L. kein Naziagent ist, aber sie wird das Lügen nicht aufgeben, selbst dann nicht, wenn v.d.L. hingerichtet ist. Nach Monaten der Verhandlung die das ganze Lügengebäude um v.d.L. das die K.P. aufgebaut hatte, zerschlug, wagt die „Rundschau“ — ein kommunistischen Parteiorgan am 30. November noch zu schreiben: „Lubbe hat den Auftrag erhalten, seine bisherige Schweigetaktik zu brechen.“. Die Forderung v.d.L. die Leibziger Komödie zu beenden, kommentiert die „Rundschau“ wie folgt: „Lubbe fordert die Einlösung der von den Faschisten ihm gemachten Versprechungen. Er selber besteht auf die Todesstrafe, weil er glaubt, dass man die ihm gemachten Versprechungen, ihn nachher laufen zu lassen, einlösen werde.“ War v.d.L. erst ein Agent, der die parteikommunistischen Angeklagten zu denunzieren hatte, so ist er heute ein Agent, weil er das nicht tut. Wenn v.d.L. vor dem Gericht erklärt: „Kein Mensch kann an die Schuld Torglers und der Bulgaren glauben“, dann schreibt die „Rundschau“: „An dieser Stelle scheint Lubbe sich besonders ungeschickt in seiner Rolle benommen zu haben.“ Und dann folgt ein sehr seltsamer Satz: „Es ist auch möglich, dass die plötzliche Lebendigkeit Lubbes darauf zurückzuführen ist, dass er am Tage vorher weniger gegessen und infolgedessen die Giftmengen, die seinem Essen beigemischt werden, diesmal nicht ganz gewirkt haben“. Weshalb soll man wohl einen Mann, der auf Auftrag handelt, der genau stets das tut, was die Nazis von ihm wollen, noch obendrein vergiften? Was mutet die NX „Rundschau“ ihren Lesern zu, was mutet die K.P., die 3. Internationale ihrem Anhängern zu? Vor dieser Abgebrühtheit treten selbst die Nazis in den Schatten.

Arbeiter, zerstört diesen schmutzigen Schwindel. Zwingt die Kommunistische Partei, Euch Beweise zu geben, die die Provokateurtätigkeit v.d.L. bestätigen. Lasst die Bonzen weder mit dem Leben noch mit der Ehre von Revolutionären spielen. V.d.L. ist kein Agent der Nazis, sondern ein klassenbewusster Arbeiter, dem die Sympathien des revolutionären Proletariats gehören.

ZUR MARXSCHEN AKKUMULATIONS- UND ZUSAMMENBRUCHSTHEORIE

In Erwiderung des Artikels: "Die Zusammenbruchstheorie des Kapitalismus"
in Nummer 1 der "Rätekorrespondenz "

(Paul Mattick — 1934)

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VOM "REINÖKONOMISCHEN STANDPUNKT"

Die Kritik an Henryk Grossmann's Buch "**Das Akkumulations- und Zusammenbruchsgesetz des kapitalistischen Systems**", die sich zugleich gegen den Standpunkt der **UNITED WORKERS PARTY** of America wendet, welche in ihrem kürzlich erschienenen Manifest die Grossmann'sche Einstellung adoptierte, hat ihren Ausgangspunkt entweder in der willkürlichen Entstellung der Grossmann'schen Auffassung, die die U.W.P. teilt, oder bestens doch in einem mangelnden Verständnis des Marxismus selbst und erfordert so eine Antwort, die zuerst die Entstellungen korrigiert und dann die wirkliche marxistische Position in den angeschnittenen Fragen erneut postuliert. Da die U.W.P. — ohne überhaupt die politische Auffassung H. Grossmanns hinreichend zu kennen oder auch nur in Erwägung ziehen zu wollen — sich doch mit dessen Interpretation des Marxschen Akkumulationsgesetzes identifiziert, so ist diese Anti-Kritik, obwohl sie sich auf die Verteidigung des Grossmann'schen Buches beschränkt, doch als prinzipielle Einstellung der U. W. P. zu werten und ihr kann wohl von vornherein der ungerechtfertigte, gegen Grossmann gerichtete Vorwurf der "bürgerlichen Ökonomie" zu entspringen, erspart bleiben.

Grossmann behauptet *nicht*, wie der Kritiker von ihm sagt, dass der Kapitalismus aus "rein ökonomischen" Gründen zusammenbrechen wird, dass der Zusammenbruch sich "unabhängig vom menschlichen Eingreifen" vollziehen muss. Später muss der Kritiker diese Behauptung denn auch zurücknehmen und er bringt selbst Zitate, die zeigen, dass auch für Grossmann der Zusammenbruch kein automatischer Prozess, sondern der revolutionäre Akt des Proletariats ist. Auch für Grossmann gibt es kein "reinökonomisches" Problem, was ihn jedoch auf keinen Fall hindern kann, aus *methodischen Gründen*, in seiner Untersuchung der Akkumulationsgesetzlichkeit sich auf rein ökonomische Voraussetzungen zu beschränken und so *theoretisch* einen objektiven Endpunkt des Systems zu erreichen. Die *theoretische Erkenntnis*, dass das kapitalistische System aufgrund seines treibenden Widerspruches nur in den Zusammenbruch münden kann, *verpflichtet durchaus* nicht zu der Auffassung, dass der *wirkliche Zusammenbruch* ein automatischer, von den Menschen unabhängiger Prozess ist. Ohne den Menschen gäbe es keine Ökonomie, es lässt sich von ihm nicht absehen. Ehe der theoretisch, aufgrund vieler Abstraktionen, erreichte "Endpunkt" seine Parallele in der Wirklichkeit finden wird, werden die Arbeiter schon ihre Revolution durchgeführt haben. Wenn Grossmann sagt, dass der *Zusammenbruch* unvermeidlich ist, so heißt das praktisch nur, dass die *Revolution* unvermeidlich ist. Er vertritt keinen "reinökonomischen" Standpunkt, sondern den dialektischen, dem jede Abstraktion nur ein Mittel zur Erkenntnis der Wirklichkeit ist.

DIE AKKUMULATION IM LICHT DER MARXSCHEN DIALEKTIK

Der Gesichtspunkt der Totalität in der **Marxschen** Dialektik besagt, dass im Stoffwechselprozess zwischen Mensch und Natur der gesellschaftliche Mensch ein aktiver Faktor ist, dass die geschichtliche Entwicklung nicht nur von objektiven, durch die Natur gegebenen Verhältnissen, sondern ebenso sehr von den subjektiven, gesellschaftlichen Momenten bestimmt wird. Durch alle Gesellschaftsformen hindurch entwickelten sich die Produktivkräfte als Ausdruck des Widerspruches zwischen Mensch und Natur, Sein und Bewusstsein, der sich aus der Arbeit entwickelte. Innerhalb dieses

Prozesses entwickeln sich neue Widersprüche, die rückwirkend den allgemeinen Prozess wieder weitertreiben. Die bewussten Momente wurden dabei so entwickelt, dass es sinnlos geworden ist, noch zwischen Ursache und Wirkung zu unterscheiden, dass jede Trennung von Sein und Bewusstsein unmöglich wurde, da beides sich dauernd und immer neu verschmilzt. Was eigentlich zugrunde liegt, hat mit unserem jeweiligen Endresultat nichts mehr zu tun und diese Endresultate bilden immer neue Ausgangspunkte, so dass erneut zwischen Ursache und Wirkung zu unterscheiden unmöglich wird. Und doch bleibt in diesem dialektischen Prozess als letzte Basis stets die Lebensnotwendigkeit der Menschen, sie bleibt materiell, wirklich. Der Marxismus verwirft jede Scheidung zwischen den objektiven und subjektiven Geschichtsmomenten, da sich diese dauernd gegenseitig beeinflussen und sich dabei selbst dauernd verändern. Eins lässt sich nicht ohne das andere verstehen. So gibt es für den Marxismus auch kein rein ökonomisches Problem, die Dialektik zwingt zur Totalitätsauffassung, die auch den reinen Ökonomismus ausschließt.

Will man jedoch die Marxsche Dialektik theoretisch *illustrieren* so kann man zwischen objektiven und subjektiven Geschichtsmomenten unterscheiden; auf der Basis der Dialektik jedoch, die diese *Unterscheidung eben verwirft*, kann man sich auf sie nicht mehr beziehen. Um die Zusammenbruchsgesetzlichkeit des Kapitalismus theoretisch zu illustrieren, kann man sich auf die rein ökonomische Untersuchung beschränken, der *Zusammenbruch selbst* kann jedoch nur verstanden werden, wenn *alle Faktoren* des Geschichtsprozesses berücksichtigt werden.

Was die einzelnen, bisherigen Wirtschaftsformen unterscheidet, ist das *Tempo*, mit dem sie die gesellschaftlichen Produktionskräfte entwickelten. Der Kapitalismus entwickelte das Tempo ins Ungeheure, darin bestand seine "historische Mission". **Marx** betrachtet den Produktionsprozess von zwei Seiten. Zuerst als den sich durch alle Gesellschaftsordnungen hindurchziehenden "Stoffwechselprozess zwischen Mensch und Natur", und dann diesen Prozess in seiner spezifischen kapitalistischen Form. Das erste zwingt zur Entwicklung der gesellschaftlichen Produktivkräfte, das zweite ist das historisch wechselnde Ergebnis dieses Zwanges, das allerdings rückwirkend, auch wieder die Produktivkräfte mitbestimmt. Der *Ausgangspunkt* der **Marxschen** ökonomischen Analyse bilden die Produktivkräfte, er verfolgt ihre Entwicklung unter den von ihnen geschaffenen kapitalistischen Produktionsverhältnissen, also auf Basis der Wertproduktion und kommt zu dem Schluss, dass an einem hohen Punkt der Entwicklung letztere durchbrochen werden vom Umfang der ersteren. Die Bewegung des Kapitals auf Basis des Wertes ist nichts anderes, als die in diesem historischen Abschnitt dialektische Bewegung der Gesellschaft selbst. Die Verkennung des dialektischen Marxismus durch den Pseudo-Marxismus äußerte sich nirgends klarer, als in dem Verlust der Marxschen Akkumulations- und Zusammenbruchstheorie, mit deren Ablehnung sich die Revisionisten brüsteten, und die von den "Orthodoxen" nicht zu verteidigen gewagt wurde. Wer die **Marxsche** Zusammenbruchstheorie preisgibt, kann nicht zugleich an der dialektischen Methode festhalten; wer den dialektischen Materialismus "philosophisch" akzeptiert, hat keine Wahl, er muss die dialektische Bewegung der heutigen Gesellschaft als Zusammenbruchsbewegung erfassen. Bewegung wird nicht nur, wie das mechanistische Weltbild annimmt, von außen veranlasst, alle Dinge bewegen sich aus sich selbst, aus den schon in ihnen enthaltenen Widersprüchen heraus. Die *Selbstbewegung* der Produktivkräfte als der durch die Notwendigkeit der Arbeit erzeugte Widerspruch zwischen Mensch und Natur, erzeugt wohl immer neue, mit zu berücksichtigende, mitbestimmende, rückwirkende Momente, aber sie bleibt nichtsdestoweniger doch Selbstbewegung. Und der Entwicklung der gesellschaftlichen Produktivkräfte sind im Rahmen der kapitalistischen Produktionsverhältnisse absolute Grenzen gesetzt.

Der *letzte* Grund aller wirklichen Krisen, sagt **Marx**, trotz seiner, sich strikt an das Wertgesetz haltenden, theoretischen Analyse der Akkumulationsgesetzlichkeit, welche die oft erwähnte "Disproportion zwischen Produktion und Konsumtion" nicht kennt und doch schon in den Zusammenbruch mündet, der letzte Grund "bleibt immer die Armut und Konsumtionsbeschränkung der Massen, gegenüber dem Trieb der kapitalistischen Produktion, die Produktivkräfte so zu entwickeln, als ob nur die absolute Konsumtionsfähigkeit der Gesellschaft ihr Grenze bilde." So sehr es auch die "Logik" verletzen mag, aber das Kapital akkumuliert tatsächlich um der Akkumulation willen. Die materielle Produktion, wie die Konsumtion, sind im Kapitalismus den Individuen überlassen, der *gesellschaftliche Charakter* ihrer Arbeiten und ihrer Konsumtion ist nicht *unmittelbar* gesellschaftlich geregelt, sondern regelt sich erst *über den Umweg des Marktes*. Das Kapital produziert nicht Sachen, sondern (Tausch-) Werte. Aber wenn es auch nicht, aufgrund einer solchen Art der Produktion, imstande ist, seine Produktion und Konsumtion den gesellschaftlichen, *wirklichen* Bedürfnissen anzupassen, deshalb müssen diese wirklichen Bedürfnisse doch berücksichtigt werden, sollen die Menschen nicht zugrunde gehen. Ist der Markt nicht mehr imstande, diese Bedürfnisse ausreichend zu befriedigen, so muss eben die Produktion für den Markt, die Wertproduktion durch die revolutionäre Umwälzung beseitigt werden, um einem Produktionsverhältnis, das den gewachsenen Produktionskräften entspricht, Platz zu machen, und das nicht erst auf dem Umweg des Marktes gesellschaftlich, sondern *unmittelbar gesellschaftlichen Charakter* hat und sich nach den Bedürfnissen der Menschen selbst zu richten vermag. Vom Standpunkt des *Gebrauchwertes* ist der Widerspruch zwischen Produktion und Konsumtion in der kapitalistischen Gesellschaft eine offensichtliche Tatsache, aber ein *solcher Standpunkt gilt nicht für die kapitalistische Produktion*. Für sie ist nicht die Wirklichkeit, sondern der Markt die Wirklichkeit. Vom Standpunkt des *Wertes* ist dieser Widerspruch das Geheimnis des kapitalistischen Fortschritts und je größer dieser Widerspruch, desto besser entwickelt sich das Kapital. Aber eben weil dies so ist, muss bei der Akkumulation dieses Widerspruchs ein Punkt eintreten, der zu seiner Aufhebung führt, da die *wirklichen* Produktions- und Lebensbedingungen letztenendes doch stärker sind, als die historisch gebundenen, verdinglichten gesellschaftlichen Verhältnisse, und so bleibt der *letzte* Grund aller wirklichen Krisen doch immer die Konsumtionsbeschränkung der Massen gegenüber dem Trieb des Kapitals, die Produktivkräfte so zu entwickeln, als wenn die gesellschaftliche Konsumtionsfähigkeit unbeschränkt wäre, *ohne* dass damit die kapitalistischen Bewegungsgesetze erklärt wären. Klar wird nur die Notwendigkeit der revolutionären Lösung und selbstverständlich wird, dass, wenn vom Zusammenbruch die Rede ist, die Revolution der Arbeiter darunter verstanden werden muss. Die abstrakte, theoretische Analyse der Wertproduktion zeigte erst, weshalb in der konkreten Wirklichkeit die Revolution unvermeidlich eintreten muss. Weil theoretisch die Verfolgung der kapitalistischen Akkumulationsgesetzlichkeit einen absoluten Endpunkt ergab, wurde erst klar, dass in Wirklichkeit die Verelendung der Massen mit der Kanalakkumulation identisch ist. Der Verelendung zu entgehen, haben die Arbeiter kein anderes Mittel als die revolutionäre Umwälzung des Systems.

Die kapitalistische Wertproduktion findet ihre Grenzen der Mehrwertaneignung in den Grenzen der Ausbeutungsmöglichkeit. Der Konsum der Arbeiter kann nicht auf Null herabgesetzt werden und doch kann die Wertproduktion nur danach streben, diesem Nullpunkt näher und näher zu kommen. Die kapitalistischen Widersprüche entstehen aus dem Widerspruch zwischen Gebrauchs- und Tauschwert. Dieser Widerspruch macht aus der Akkumulation des Kapitals die Akkumulation des Elends. Entfaltet sich das Kapital der Wertseite nach, so zerstört es zu Teich seine eigene Basis, indem es die Anteile der Arbeiter an der Produktion dauernd vermindert. Absolut aufheben lässt sich dieser Anteil

nicht, da der natürliche Selbsterhaltungstrieb der Massen stärker ist als ein gesellschaftliches Verhältnis, welches aus der Unreife der Produktivkräfte erwachsen und an sie gebunden ist. Damit wird die Bourgeoisie "unfähig zu herrschen, weil sie unfähig ist, ihren Sklaven die Existenz, selbst innerhalb ihrer Sklaverei, zu sichern; sie ist gezwungen, sie in eine Lage herabsinken zu lassen, wo sie sie ernähren muss, statt von ihnen ernährt zu werden". Die Analyse der kapitalistischen Akkumulation mündet so in "den Klassenkampf als Schluss, worin sich die Bewegung und Auflösung der ganzen Schmiere vollzieht".

DAS GROSSMANN'SCHE REPRODUKTIONSSHEMA

Grossmann beweist das **Marxsche** Akkumulations- und Zusammenbruchsgesetz, wie der Kritiker glauben machen will, durchaus *nicht* allein am **Bauerschen** Schema, indem er es vom 4. zum 35. Jahr verlängert. Grossmann glaubt auch *auf keinen Fall*, wie der Kritiker behauptet, durch die Verfolgung des Schemas "den wirklichen Kapitalismus" wiederzugeben. Vielmehr schreibt Grossmann, bevor er sich an die Behandlung des Schemas gibt.

"Die Fehler der Bauerschen Analyse ergeben sich nicht aus der Konstruktion seines Schemas selbst, als vielmehr aus der Unklarheit über die methodologischen Aufgaben und Voraussetzungen einer jeden schematischen, d. h. vereinfachenden Darstellung der komplizierten Wirklichkeit. Eben deshalb muss das Schema selbst, und seine Nützlichkeit bei der Analyse des Kapitalismus unter den fiktiven, vereinfachenden Annahmen von der falschen Analyse O. Bauers, der den fiktiven Verlauf der Kapitalakkumulation im Schema mit dem wirklichen Verlauf der Kapitalakkumulation verwechselt, streng unterschieden werden." Das Akkumulations- und Zusammenbruchsgesetz des kapitalistischen Systems" S 100.

Zu behaupten, dass für Grossmann das Schema die *kapitalistische Wirklichkeit* wiedergibt, ist eine Entstellung; die Behauptung, dass Grossmann *allein* von diesem Schema den Zusammenbruch ableitet, ist ebenfalls falsch. **O. Bauer** versuchte mit seinem Schema zu beweisen, dass sich die Kapitalakkumulation ohne Störungen vollziehen kann. Grossmann zeigte, dass *sogar mit diesem Schema* sich der Zusammenbruch und nicht das von Bauer aus ihm gelesene Gleichgewicht ergibt. Grossmann stellte sich nur deshalb "ganz auf den Boden der Bauerschen Voraussetzungen, da eine fruchtbare immanente Kritik nur dann möglich ist, wenn man den Gegner von seinem eigenen Standpunkt aus widerlegt." (Zusammenbruchsgesetz, S. 104).

Auf keinen Fall drückt das Schema den *wirklichen* Akkumulationsprozess aus, wie auch die Zusammenbruchstheorie nicht an dieses Schema gebunden ist. Aufgrund vieler Abstraktionen setzt sich in diesem Schema der Zusammenbruch der Kapitalverwertung durch. Der Marxismus kann sich nicht auf einen schematisch erfassten Kapitalismus beschränken, seine wissenschaftliche Methodik kann nur der Erkenntnis des realen Geschehens dienen. Das Schema kann nur als Illustration einer bestimmten Tendenz betrachtet werden und ist von Grossmann auch nur als Illustrationsmittel gedacht. Die Wahl des Schemas als Demonstrationsmittel *eines von ihm unabhängigen Gedankens* war schon deshalb angebracht (wenn auch nicht notwendig), weil es auch die bisherige Diskussion des Problems berührte. **Grossmann** führte **Bauer** an seinem eigenen Schema ad absurdum und zerschlug damit einen der stärksten theoretischen Pfeiler des Reformismus, der seine Kraft aus der Idee der schrankenlosen Entfaltungsmöglichkeit des Kapitals schöpfte. Trotzdem **Grossmann** sich dabei auch gegen **Rosa Luxemburg** zu wenden hatte, so erfüllte er doch gleichzeitig die Aufgabe, die sie sich selbst gestellt hatte. Das Aufzeigen der Zusammenbruchstendenz am Schema verleitet Grossmann

nicht, wie der Kritiker es sich einredet, zu der Auffassung, "dass der große Kladderadatsch eintritt, ohne dass eine revolutionäre Klasse da ist, die Bourgeoisie zu besiegen und zu enteignen". Diese Klasse und die Expropriation ist für Grossmann aufgrund der objektiven Situation *mit Selbstverständlichkeit* da, weil es für ihn eben kein rein wirtschaftliches Problem gibt. Ja, diese subjektiven Faktoren können nur da sein, wie ebenfalls selbstverständlich, weil die objektive Situation für den Zusammenbruch reif ist. Grossmann schrieb sein Buch in der ("offensichtlich falschen") Annahme, dass in wissenschaftlichen Arbeiten Selbstverständlichkeiten nicht erwähnt zu werden brauchen. Ähnlich wie **Marx** keine *besondere* Zusammenbruchstheorie schrieb, weil es für den Dialektiker *selbstverständlich* ist, dass die Kapitalakkumulation auf Basis des Wertes nur in den Zusammenbruch münden kann. Holen wir das "Versäumnis" nach: Sind die objektiven Verhältnisse zur Revolution gegeben, so sind für den Marxisten auch die subjektiven mit Selbstverständlichkeit vorhanden. Objektive Notwendigkeiten werden von den Menschen letztenendes — mit wieviel Verspätung auch immer — erfüllt. Mit dem Nachweis des ökonomischen Zusammenbruchs ist nur der Nachweis der Unvermeidlichkeit der Revolution erbracht.

Der Kritiker macht sich in diesem Zusammenhang noch darüber lustig, dass, wo **Grossmann** dem Klassenkampf gerecht zu werden versucht, er darunter nur Lohn- und Arbeitszeitfragen versteht. **Grossmann** wies jedoch nach, dass dem Lohn- und Arbeitszeitkampf objektive Grenzen gesetzt sind und sagt damit, dass, wenn selbst für diese Dinge gekämpft wird, der Kampf doch ein revolutionärer, politischer ist, da er die kapitalistische Gesellschaft nicht nur bedroht, sondern sich, an den Grenzen der Akkumulation, nur als revolutionärer Kampf zum Sturz des Kapitals äußern kann. Man vergleiche die diesbezüglichen Bemerkungen des Kritikers mit dem Abschnitt des **Grossmann'schen** Buches "**Die Zusammenbruchstendenz und der Klassenkampf**", und die Lustigkeit des Kritikers wird zum Ausdruck seiner Verlegenheit.

AKKUMULATION UM DER AKKUMULATION WILLEN

Vermisste schon **Rosa Luxemburg** in der "**Akkumulation um der Akkumulation willen**" die "Logik", so hatte **Marx** nach dieser "Logik" nie gefragt. Auch für unseren Kritiker scheint es unsinnig, dass die *Kapitalbewegung ihren eigenen*, d.h. den Verwertungsgesetzen, und nicht den *Möglichkeiten* der Kapitalisten folgt. Sich gegen den im **Grossmann'schen** Schema dauernden technischen Fortschritt wendend, sagt er: "Die Notwendigkeit des technischen Fortschritts wirkt nicht als äußerer Zwang; sie wirkt mittels der Menschen und für diese gilt das Müssen nicht weiter als ihr Können." Jedoch, *gerade deshalb*, weil die Menschen den Kapitalgesetzen folgen müssen, aber nicht *können*, gerade deshalb muss das kapitalistische Produktionsverhältnis zugrunde gehen. Im Kapitalismus beherrschen die verdinglichsten Verhältnisse die Menschen und nicht die Menschen die Dinge. Die Menschen unterliegen einem verdinglichten Tauschverhältnis, das jede Beherrschung der Produktion ausschließt. Sie haben ihm entweder zu folgen, oder haben es zu zerschlagen. Die Grenzen des kapitalistischen "Könnens" werden von den sich entwickelnden Produktivkräften (*die von den Menschen eben noch nicht beherrscht werden*) nicht berücksichtigt, und gerade deshalb muss die Revolution diesem Zustand ein Ende machen und die Dinge der Kontrolle der Menschen unterordnen. Dass, wie der Kritiker ausführt, das Kapital die Produktivkräfte selbst behindert, die Technik aufhält, etc., da es ihre Entfaltung nicht ermöglichen kann und sie nicht entfalten muss, dieses kann er Grossmann nicht als Argument entgegenhalten, denn auch Grossmann bestreitet das nicht. Ja, gerade weil das Kapital die weitere Entfaltung der Produktivkräfte behindert, ja sie zerstört, *gerade deswegen* muss es zugrunde gehen;

denn vorwärts gehen kann es nur, *solange* es akkumuliert, sich ausdehnt, die Produktivkräfte entfaltet. Ohne progressiv wachsende Akkumulation ist die kapitalistische Wirtschaft nur im Krisenzustand möglich. Da es keine "Statik" gibt, muss ein permanenter Krisenzustand in den Zusammenbruch münden. Der Hinweis auf die Grenzen des kapitalistischen "Könnens" besagt nichts gegen Grossmanns Auffassung.

Jedoch während nach der einen Seite hin die Verzögerung der Akkumulation den Zusammenbruch hinausschiebt, verstärkt sie zugleich nach der anderen Seite die Zusammenbruchstendenzen. Jede kapitalistische Lebensverlängerung wird mit der Lebenslänge des Kapitals erkaufte, ein "Paradox", das nichts anderes ist als der Widerspruch zwischen Tausch- und Gebrauchswert selbst. Behindert das Kapital — freiwillig oder unfreiwillig — die Akkumulation, so treibt es in dem damit verbundenen Krisenzustand die Revolution beschleunigt vorwärts. Will es dem Krisenzustand entgehen, muss es weiter akkumulieren, um nur erneut ein Akkumulationsniveau zu erreichen, das zur Behinderung der Akkumulation zwingt, ja sie ausschließt. Die jedesmalige Akkumulationsperiode, die Erhöhung der organischen Zusammensetzung des Kapitals, der Produktivität der Arbeit, der Ausbeutung der Arbeiter durch die damit verbundene Entwertung der Arbeitskraft, senkt notwendig alle Werte. Die ganze kapitalistische Entwicklung ist vom Fallen der Werte begleitet, was sich kapitalistisch im dauernden Senken der Preise äußert. Solange es dem Kapital möglich ist, sich auf einem jeweils niedrigeren Wert- und Preisniveau zu reorganisieren, wird es sich aus der, auf Basis des bisherigen Wertniveaus, erwachsenen Überakkumulation des Kapitals herauswinden können, und auf dem neuen niedrigeren Wertniveau für eine weitere Periode profitabel akkumulieren, bis sich wieder, auch auf Basis des neuen Niveaus, die Unmöglichkeit der weiteren Kapitalsverwertung ergibt und die Akkumulation erneut zum Stillstand kommt.

Der Wert der Arbeitskraft kann nicht auf Null herabgesetzt werden, wie dem absoluten ist auch dem relativen Mehrwert eine objektive Grenze gesetzt, und so muss die Akkumulation auch auf ihre objektive Grenze stoßen. Die Periodizität der Krise ist praktisch nichts anderes, als die immer wiederkehrende Reorganisation des Akkumulationsprozesses, auf einem neuen, niedrigeren Wert- und Preisniveau, das erneut die Kapitalsverwertung garantiert. Ist dies nicht mehr möglich, so ist auch die weitere Akkumulation nicht mehr möglich, *dieselbe* Krise, die bisher zyklisch auftrat und überwunden werden konnte, wird zur permanenten Krise. Deshalb kann und braucht Marx keine besondere Zusammenbruchstheorie aufzustellen, denn die zyklische Krise muss mit Notwendigkeit zur permanenten werden, die aus der relativen die absolute Verelendung des Proletariats macht, die kapitalistischen Positionen immer unhaltbarer macht, und nur in den Zusammenbruch, d.h. die Revolution, enden kann.

Der kapitalistische Expansionsprozess ist zugleich Akkumulationsprozess, eins ist am anderen gebunden. Man kann gegen den, aufgrund der Akkumulation, gegebenen Zusammenbruchsprozess nicht das Moment der kapitalistischen Expansion setzen. Mit dem Ende der Akkumulation ist das Ende der Expansion notwendig verbunden. Absolute geographische Möglichkeiten gibt es für das Kapital nicht, sondern nur Akkumulationsnotwendigkeiten und Grenzen der Akkumulation. Mit der Verstärkung imperialistischer Notwendigkeiten verschwinden zugleich die gegen den Zusammenbruch gerichteten Wirkungen des Imperialismus. Die Akkumulation wie ihr Stillstand sind gleich tödlich für das Kapital. Jede Akkumulation ist nur eine temporäre Lösung und bringt die permanente Krise nur näher. Die Beschränkung, wie die Ausdehnung der kapitalistischen Produktion, sind gleich unabhängig von dem Willen oder dem Können der Kapitalisten, da die kapitalistische Produktion nur der Verwertungsgesetzlichkeit unterliegt. Die Verwertungsgesetzlichkeit, die Produktion von (Tausch-) Werten zwingt

eben zur grenzenlosen Entfaltung der Produktion; sie zwingt zu dem, woran sie zugleich zerbricht. Der kapitalistische Reproduktionsprozess kann sich nur als Akkumulation des Kapitals vollziehen, da es im Kapitalismus keinen gesellschaftlichen Willen gibt, sondern der Markt allein gesellschaftliche Funktionen erfüllt. Die Akkumulation kann sich so mit Notwendigkeit nur nach der Höhe der jeweils erreichten Akkumulation richten.

DER GROSSMANN'SCHE "SCHNITZER"

Wenn das Grossmannsche Schema auch nicht mit der Wirklichkeit verwechselt werden darf, so kann es (kennt man seine beschränkte Gültigkeit) doch als illustratives Beispiel der wirklichen Kapitalbewegung auf Basis des Wertes dienen. Es zeigt z.B., wie die industrielle Reservearmee notwendig aus dem Akkumulationsprozess erwachsen muss, *ohne damit zu sagen*, dass die industrielle Reservearmee, so wie im Schema, oder allein aus den ihm zu entnehmenden Gründen, oder erst an dem im Schema angegebenen Punkte, entstehen muss.

Weshalb sie da sein muss, beim Festhalten an den gemachten Voraussetzungen, das bemüht sich das Schema zu zeigen. Im Schema führt die mangelnde Verwertung zur Reservearmee, zu einem Kapitalüberfluss, zum Einschränken und Stillstand der Akkumulation. Der im Schema angenommene Zwang des jährlich zehnpromzentigen Zuwachses des konstanten Kapitals erlaubt auf einer hohen Akkumulationsstufe durch den eingetretenen Mehrwertmangel nicht mehr die also angenommene fünfprozentige Steigerung des variablen Kapitals; wie es weiterhin auch den Konsumtionsteil der Kapitalisten ausschloss. Damit kann auch das zusätzliche konstante Kapital nicht voll investiert werden, ein Teil bleibt ohne Anlagemöglichkeiten; wir haben als Resultat der Akkumulation auf der einen Seite überschüssige Bevölkerung, auf der anderen überflüssiges Kapital. Der Kritiker schreibt dazu:

"Grossmann hat offenbar nicht bemerkt, dass diese 11 000 Arbeiter nur deshalb arbeitslos werden, weil er, ganz willkürlich, ohne einen Grund anzugeben, das Defizit (an Mehrwert) ganz auf das variable Kapital abwälzt und das konstante Kapital ruhig 10 % zunehmen lässt, als ob nichts los ist; als er dann aber gewahr wird, dass für alle diese Maschinen keine Arbeiter da sind, oder richtiger, kein Geld da ist, ihnen Löhne zu zahlen, lässt er auch diese Maschinen lieber nicht bauen und muss nun Kapital unbenutzt liegen lassen. Nur durch diesen Schnitzer gerät er in das "Schulbeispiel" für eine Erscheinung, die bei den gewöhnlichen kapitalistischen Krisen auftritt. In Wirklichkeit werden die Unternehmer ihre Produktion nur soviel erweitern können, als ihr Kapital, für Maschinen und Lohn zusammen reicht. Ist im Ganzen zu wenig Mehrwert da, so wird er (bei dem angenommenen technischen Zwang) proportional auf die Bestandteile des Kapitals verteilt werden; die Rechnung zeigt dass dann weniger Arbeiter freigesetzt werden (statt 11 000 nur 1356) und vom überschüssigen Kapital ist keine Rede. Führt man das Schema in dieser Weise weiter, so findet statt einer katastrophalen eine sehr langsam zunehmende Freisetzung von Arbeitern statt."

Nehmen wir an (was nicht der Fall ist), der Kritiker wäre hier im Recht. Aber selbst dann ist noch nichts gegen die Zusammenbruchstheorie gesagt. Auch hier unter der veränderten vom Kritiker erwünschten Voraussetzung, würde die Fortsetzung der Akkumulation immer schwieriger, und müsste letztenendes ebenfalls völlig aussetzen. Es entstünde wohl kein Kapitalüberfluss, aber immer noch würde die mangelnde Verwertung, wenn auch langsamer, die Akkumulation zum Stillstand bringen, schon ganz abgesehen davon, dass durch die Verminderung und endliche Aufhebung des Konsumtionsteiles der Kapitalisten die Akkumulation "sinnlos" geworden ist. Auch hier wäre ein Krisenzustand unvermeidlich, selbst ohne Überfluss von Kapital, der nur

überwunden werden könnte durch die Fortsetzung der Akkumulation, die das "Können" der Kapitalisten übersteigt, die *proportionale* Verwendung des verminderten Mehrwerts ausschließt.

Dass jede Krise durch Arbeitslosigkeit und Kapitalüberfluss gekennzeichnet ist, ist jedem ersichtlich. Ebenfalls, dass jede Krise durch die Verschärfung und Vermehrung der Ausbeutung überwunden wird, da diese mit der fortgesetzten Akkumulation identisch ist. Dass dies so ist, gibt der Kritiker denn auch zu, indem er sagt, dass die von Grossmann zur Unterstützung seiner Auffassung herangezogenen Marxzitate wohl richtig sind, sich nur nicht auf einen Zusammenbruch, sondern nur "auf die wirtschaftlichen Krisen, auf den Konjunkturwechsel von Aufstieg und Niedergang" beziehen. Tatsächlich hat ja auch nach Grossmann Marx keine *besondere* Zusammenbruchstheorie verfasst, sondern ist jede Krise als Zusammenbruchserscheinung zu werten und der endgültige Zusammenbruch nichts als eine unlösbare Krise. Die so oft zitierte dialektische Formel des Umschlagens von Quantität in Qualität, zwischen denen notwendig ein Prozess liegt, erklärt auch den Zusammenbruchs begriff, der nichts weiter als das Moment des Umschlagens umreißt. Ein Umschlag, der sich stets auf erweiterter Stufenleiter wiederholt. Weshalb, obwohl jede Krise ein Zusammenbruch in miniature ist, kann sich das System aus ihm herauswinden? Weil es sich auf *erweiterter Basis* herauslösen kann. Ist dies nicht mehr möglich, kann auch die Krise nicht mehr überwunden werden. Gerade, weil bei Grossmann die Krisen- zugleich Zusammenbruchstheorie ist, deckt sie sich mit dem Marxismus; — nichts anderes kann dem Wertgesetz entsprechen.

Wie sehr der Kritiker den Sinn des Schemas missverstanden hat, zeigt der von ihm nachgewiesene "Widerspruch" zwischen dem sich im Schema abrollenden Zusammenbruch und der Grossmannsehen Darstellung der zyklischen Krise. Hier hätte der Kritiker doch schon sehen müssen, dass das Schema nicht als Wiedergabe der Wirklichkeit gelten will, während sich die Krisendarstellung der Wirklichkeit schon mehr annähert. Sie bezieht sich aber noch immer nicht auf die Wirklichkeit "der erst später, durch die Berücksichtigung des mit der Akkumulation verbundenen Wert- und Preisfalles weitere Realität verliehen wird." Das Akkumulations- und Krisenproblem, z.B. wird zuerst unter der Voraussetzung konstanter Preise untersucht, um zu zeigen, " dass die zyklischen Aufschwungs- und Depressionsperioden von den Preisveränderungen der Waren und der Arbeitskraft unabhängig sind; dass sie vielmehr Funktionen der Kapitalsakkumulation sind". Konstante Preise und gleichzeitig Akkumulation sind eine praktische Unmöglichkeit, aber die theoretische Annahme der Preiskonstanz zeigte, dass selbst unter solcher Voraussetzung, die Unrentabilität des Kapitals einsetzen muss, dass vom Preisniveau aus die Krise nicht erklärt werden kann, sondern von den Gesetzen der Akkumulation selbst, dem "Verhältnis zwischen der Zuwachsgröße des Profits und jener des Kapitals". Der "Schnitzer" wie alle anderen Bemerkungen des Kritikers, basieren auf der falschen Annahme, dass das Schema die Wirklichkeit wiedergeben will und verdienen eigentlich keine Zurückweisung. Aber selbst ohne den "Schnitzer" erscheint das Schema dem Kritiker dennoch grundfalsch, da für ihn die Überakkumulation nicht aus mangelnder Verwertung, sondern aus "einem Zuviel an akkumuliertem Mehrwert" erwächst. Mehrwert, der keine Anlage findet. Warum er keine findet, interessiert den Kritiker scheinbar nicht. Er bemüht sich nicht um den Beweis seiner Auffassung. Er gibt aber auch kein stichhaltiges Moment gegen die Auffassung **Grossmanns**. Da wir in dieser Frage völlig auf dem Boden **Grossmanns** stehen, der Kritiker **Grossmanns** Position nicht erschüttert hat, können wir nur dessen Auffassung erneut postulieren:

"Soll die Akkumulation vor sich gehen, so muss die organische Zusammensetzung des Kapitals wachsen, und dann muss aus dem Mehrwert ein relativ immer größerer Teil desselben für die Zwecke der zusätzlichen Akkumulation entnommen werden. Solange

die absolute Masse des gesellschaftlichen Gesamtkapitals — bei niedriger organischer Zusammensetzung — klein ist, ist der Mehrwert relativ groß und führt zu rascher Steigerung der Akkumulation. Z.B. bei einer Zusammensetzung von $200 c \ 100 v \ 1000 m$ kann das konstante Kapital c (die Verwendung des ganzen Mehrwerts zu Akkumulationszwecken vorausgesetzt) um $33 \frac{1}{3} \%$ seiner Anfangsgröße vermehrt werden. Bei einer höheren Stufe der Kapitalakkumulation, bei einer bedeutend höheren organischen Zusammensetzung des Kapitals, z. B. von $14 \ 900 c \ 100 v \ 150 m$, reichte die gewachsene Mehrwertmasse, wenn sie als zusätzliches Kapital verwendet würde, nur zur Vergrößerung um 1% aus. Bei fortgesetzter Akkumulation auf Basis einer stets höheren organischen Zusammensetzung muss ein Zeitpunkt kommen, wo jede Akkumulation aufhört. Dies schon deshalb, weil zur Erweiterung der Produktion nicht jeder beliebige Bruchteil des Kapitals verwendet werden kann, sondern eine bestimmte Minimalgröße erforderlich ist, deren Umfang mit fortschreitender Kapitalakkumulation beständig wachse. Da also im Fortgang der Kapitalakkumulation aus der Mehrwertmasse ein nicht nur absolut, sondern auch relativ stets größerer Teil für Akkumulationszwecke entnommen wird, müsste auf den höheren Stufen der Akkumulation, wo das gesellschaftliche Gesamtkapital großen Umfang hat, dieser für die zusätzliche Akkumulation erforderliche Mehrwertteil so groß sein, dass er schließlich den Mehrwert ganz absorbieren würde. Es müsste ein Punkt eintreten, an dem die für die Konsumtion der Arbeiter und der Kapitalisten bestimmten Mehrwertteile absolut abnehmen. Dies wäre der Wendepunkt, an dem die bisher latente Zusammenbruchstendenz wirksam zu sein beginnt. Wird der für die zusätzliche Akkumulation bestimmte ($a \ c$ Teil) vermindert, das Tempo der Akkumulation verlangsamt, so würde dies bedeuten, dass der Produktionsapparat nicht in dem durch den Fortschritt der Technik erforderlichen Maße erneuert und vergrößert werden könnte, es würde eine relative technische Rückständigkeit des Produktionsapparates Platz greifen. Jede weitere Akkumulation müsste in solcher Lage die Schwierigkeiten vermehren, da bei gegebener Bevölkerung die Mehrwertmasse nur unwesentlich gesteigert werden kann. Der aus den bisherigen Kapitalanlagen fließende Mehrwert müsste brach liegen bleiben, es müsste ein Überfluss von unnützem, vergeblich nach Anlagemöglichkeiten suchendem Kapital eintreten." (H. Grossmann "50 Jahre Kampf um den Marxismus")

GROSSMANN CONTRA MARX

Der Kritiker bemüht sich auf den verschiedensten Wegen, einen Widerspruch zwischen Marx und Grossmann zu konstruieren. So sagt er z.B., dass Grossmann (in der Frage der Freisetzung der Arbeiter) einen Unterschied macht, zwischen der durch die technische Entwicklung verursachten Arbeitslosigkeit und derjenigen, die aus dem Verhältnis zwischen $C : V$ entspringt. Mit Recht sagt der Kritiker, dass für Marx $Pm : A$ (Produktionsmittel und Arbeitskraft) und $C : V$ (konstantes und variables Kapital) identisch sind, nur erübrigt sich diese Bemerkung, da dies auch für Grossmann der Fall ist. Warum es sich dreht ist, dass, obwohl sich $Pm : A$ nicht von $C : V$ trennen lässt, $C : V$ trotzdem für die kapitalistischen Bewegungsgesetze bestimmend ist. $Pm : A$ ist nur die materielle Seite von $C : V$; $C : V$ — ein verdinglichtes Verhältnis ist bestimmend. So hat denn ja auch die kommunistische Revolution $Pm : A$ nichts entgegenzusetzen; sie löst diese vielmehr nur von ihrer kapitalistischen Hülle $C : V$, da diese Hülle — nicht $Pm : A$ — für alle Schwierigkeiten verantwortlich ist.

Dass sich aus der mangelnden Verwertung ein Überfluss von Kapital ergibt, das wiederum zum Kapitalexport zwingt, versucht der Kritiker, weiterhin damit zurückzuweisen, dass er Marx zitiert: "Wird Kapital ins Ausland geschickt, so geschieht

es nicht, weil es absolut nicht im Inlande beschäftigt werden könnte. Es geschieht, weil es zu höherer Profitrate im Auslande beschäftigt werden kann."

Weshalb wohl? Weil die organische Zusammensetzung im Auslande niedrig, die Profitrate hoch ist. **Grossmann** hat nichts gegen das Zitat des Kritikers einzuwenden, aber dieses Zitat sagt nichts gegen **Grossmann** aus. Die bessere Verwertung im Auslande zeigt die schlechtere Verwertung im Inlande an. **Grossmann** sagte ja, dass die mangelnde, Verwertung zum Kapitalexport zum Zwecke besserer Verwertung zwingt. Bringen wir jedoch das Zitat des Kritikers in seiner Vollständigkeit, dann wird noch unverständlicher, was der Kritiker mit dem Hinweis darauf zu sagen beabsichtigte:

"Wird Kapital ins Ausland geschickt, so geschieht es nicht, weil es absolut nicht im Inland beschäftigt werden könnte. Es geschieht, weil es zu höherer Profitrate im Auslande beschäftigt werden kann. Dies Kapital ist aber absolut überschüssiges Kapital für die beschäftigte Arbeiterbevölkerung und für das gegebene Land überhaupt. Es existiert als solches neben der relativ überschüssigen Bevölkerung und das ist ein Beispiel, wie die beiden nebeneinander existieren und sich gegenseitig bedingen." (Kapital III/S. 266)

Aber die Frage des Kapitalexports gehört zu den gegen den Zusammenbruch gerichteten Tendenzen; sie lässt die Akkumulationstheorie unberührt und erklärt nur Modifikationen des allgemeinen Gesetzes.

Mit vielmehr Recht_ verweist der Kritiker auf die unberechtigt_ Grossmannsche Behauptung, dass sich **Marx** oder **Engels** im "Kapital" verschrieben hätten, eine Bemerkung **Grossmanns**, die uns als völlig überflüssig erscheint; denn wenn **Marx** sagt: "Dieselben Gesetze produzieren also für das Gesellschaftskapital eine wachsende absolute Profitmasse und eine fallende Profitrate"; so liegt gerade in diesem Satz die Tatsache des relativen Falls der Profitmasse, denn der Fall der Profitrate drückt dies eben schon aus. Wenn **Grossmann** in seiner diesbezüglichen Fußnote sagt: "Die Profitrate fällt nicht relativ, sondern absolut", um den Schreibfehler Marxens wahrscheinlich zu machen, so besagt dies nichts weiter als eine Unklarheit **Grossmanns**, die jedoch nichts an der Richtigkeit seiner Behauptung, dass auch die Profitmasse fallen muss, zu ändern vermag. **Marx** sagt ja auch nicht, dass die Profitrate *relativ* fällt, sie fällt absolut, was *zugleich* den relativen Fall der Profitmasse zu den Notwendigkeiten der fortgesetzten Akkumulation ausdrückt. Nur solange, als das Kapital schneller akkumuliert als die Profitrate fällt ist die Akkumulation von steigender Profitmasse begleitet, die doch *zugleich relativ zurückbleibt hinter den steigenden Ansprüchen der Akkumulation*, die durch diesen selben Prozess gegeben sind. Deshalb muss mit Notwendigkeit, auf einer hohen Akkumulationsstufe aus der relativen — die absolute Abnahme der Profitmasse erwachsen. Fall der Profitrate und beschleunigte Akkumulation sind zwei Seiten desselben Prozesses; in diesem Satz liegt schon, dass der Fall der Profitrate nur ein anderer Ausdruck für den relativen Fall der Profitmasse ist. Der Kritiker behauptet weiter, dass nicht nur der herangezogene Satz **Marxens**, sondern das ganze 13. Kapitel nichts als eine Darlegung des Gesetzes ist, dass der durch die "Entwicklung der Produktivkraft verursachte Fall der Profitrate begleitet ist von einer Zunahme in der Profitmasse", -- wenn -- ? aber das sagt der Kritiker nicht.

Gerade das dreizehnte Kapitel ist eine einzige Bestätigung für die Grossmannsche Auffassung, — wenn es auch dem Gedanken des Schreibfehlers an der erwähnten Stelle nicht gerecht wird. Marx wies nach und meinte nichts anderes als was er tatsächlich schrieb: dass die Entwicklung der kapitalistischen Produktion gekennzeichnet ist durch das Fallen der Profitrate beim gleichzeitigen Wachsen der Profitmasse. Aber Marx sagte ebenfalls an hundert anderen Stellen, dass die kapitalistischen Produktionsverhältnisse (C V M) zur Fessel der Produktionskräfte werden. Ist der Entfaltung der kapitalistischen Produktivkräfte ein Ende gesetzt, *so auch dem Zustand, wo eine fallende Profitrate durch eine*

wachsende Profitmasse ausgeglichen werden kann. Die Behinderung der weiteren Entfaltung der Produktivkräfte kann eben kein anderer Zustand sein, als der, wo die fallende Profitrate zugleich die fallende Profitmasse anzeigt. Ist die Entwicklung bis zu diesem Punkt durch die Erhöhung der organischen Zusammensetzung des Kapitals gekennzeichnet, so muss der Fall der Profitrate bereits den relativen Fall der Profitmasse anzeigen, — ohne den es keinen Zusammenbruch der Verwertung und auch keine Revolution gäbe. Nur für eine Zeit ist der Fall der Profitrate durch wachsende Profitmasse kompensiert und ersteres drückt den gleichzeitigen relativen Fall des letzteren aus. Gefragt muss werden, *wann* schlägt der relative Fall der Profitmasse in den absoluten um? Marx hat nicht versäumt zu zeigen, wann dies der Fall sein muss. Er sagt:

"Es bedarf ferner hier nur der Erwähnung, dass bei gegebener Arbeiterbevölkerung, wenn die Mehrwertrate wächst, sei es durch Verlängerung oder Intensifikation des Arbeitstages, sei es durch Wertsenkung des Arbeitslohnes infolge der Entwicklung der Produktivkraft der Arbeit, die Masse des Mehrwerts und daher die absolute Profitmasse wachsen muss, trotz der relativen Verminderung des variablen Kapitals im Verhältnis zum konstanten." (Kapital III. 229)

Es ist klar, dass die Wertsenkung des Arbeitslohnes ihre absolute Grenze hat, die Arbeit kann nie vollständig Mehrarbeit sein, auch die Intensifikation der Arbeit hat absolute Grenzen neben dem moralischen Element, das die Erreichung dieser Grenzen nicht zulässt. So muss ein Punkt eintreten, wo die Profitmasse nicht mehr wachsen kann. In diesem Fall ist der Fall der Profitmasse nicht mehr von wachsender Profitmasse, sondern von sinkender Profitmasse begleitet, aber dieser Punkt konnte *weiterhin nur eintreten*, weil die Profitmasse *bereits relativ* sank, da Akkumulation und fallende Profitrate dasselbe sind. Wenn **Marx** sagt "wachsende Profitmasse und fallende Profitrate", so ist dies nur eine andere Benennung für dieselbe Sache: relativer Fall der Profitmasse absoluter Fall der Profitmasse, weshalb **Marx** denn auch zwischen relativer und absoluter Verelendung der Arbeiter unterscheidet.

Weshalb kann der Fall der Profitrate vom Wachsen der Masse des Profits kompensiert werden? **Marx** sagt:

"Fällt die Profitrate um 50 %, so fällt sie um die Hälfte. Soll daher die Masse des Profits gleichbleiben, so muss das Kapital sich verdoppeln. Damit die Profitmasse bei abnehmender Profitrate gleichbleibe, muss der Multiplikator, der das Wachstum des Gesamtkapitals anzeigt, gleich sein dem Divisor, der das Fallen der Profitrate anzeigt. Wenn die Profitrate von 40 auf 20 fällt, muss das Gesamtkapital umgekehrt im Verhältnis von 20 : 40 steigen, damit das Resultat dasselbe bleibe. Wäre die Profitrate gefallen von 40 auf 8, so müsste das Kapital wachsen im Verhältnis von 8 : 40, d.h., um das Fünffache.... Damit der variable Bestandteil des Gesamtkapitals nicht nur absolut derselbe bleibe, sondern absolut wachse, obgleich sein Prozentsatz als Teil des Gesamtkapitals fällt, muss das Gesamtkapital in stärkerem Verhältnis wachsen als der Prozentsatz des variablen Kapitals fällt. Es muss so sehr wachsen, dass es in seiner neuen Zusammensetzung nicht nur den alten variablen Kapitalteil, sondern noch mehr als diesen zum Ankauf von Arbeitskraft bedarf." (Kapital III. 232/233)

Nur solange, als das Kapital *beschleunigt* wächst, kann der Fall der Profitrate durch Masse aufgewogen werden. Ist dies nicht mehr der Fall, dann muss die Profitmasse absolut fallen mit fallender Profitrate. Da das Kapital immer schneller wachsen muss, muss ein Endpunkt eintreten, da dieses Wachstum nicht von der Mehrwertmenge befriedigt werden kann. So muss das *Wachstum selbst*, die Akkumulation bereits den relativen Fall der Profitmasse ausdrücken, — was denn auch mit dem Begriff der fallenden Profitrate identisch ist.

In der amerikanischen Industrie stiegen die Arbeiterlöhne zwischen 1849 - 1914 um 1720 %, Rohmaterialien um 2578 %, fixes Kapital um 4000 %. Das Verhältnis zwischen C : V war 100 : 61. 1919 nach 70 Jahren Wachsen der organischen Zusammensetzung setzte jeder Arbeiter 9 x mehr Produktionsmittel in Bewegung und 7 x mehr Rohmaterialien. Zur selben Zeit sank das Verhältnis zwischen Produktion und fixem Kapital. Die folgende Tabelle zeigt, dass dann weiter auch in der Periode von 1923 - 29 das konstante Kapital schneller wuchs als die Produktion und das variable Kapital. Weiter, dass in dieser Zeit der Wechsel der organischen Zusammensetzung sich beschleunigter vollzog, als während der Zeit von 1849 - 1914. (Aus **Lewis Corey "The Decline of American Capitalism"** — die Zahlen sind offiziellem Material entnommen.)

Wachsen der organischen Zusammensetzung in der amerikanischen Industrie von 1923 - 29 (in Millions of Dollars)

KONSTANTES KAPITAL

	Fixes	Index	Rohmaterialien	Index
1923	21 410	100,0	13 200	100,0
1925	25 457	118,9	13 600	103,0
1927	26 007	121,5	13 450	101,9
1929	28 235	131,9	15 450	117,0

VARIABLES KAPITAL

	Löhne	Index
1923	11 009	100,0
1925	10 730	97,4
1927	10 849	98,4
1929	11 621	105,7

	Produktenwert	Index
1923	39 050	100,0
1925	40 378	103,4
1927	41 035	105,1
1929	47 335	121,2

Verfolgen wir den Fall in der Profitrate:

Amerikanische Industrie 1923 - 29 in Millions of Dollars:

	Netto Profits	Fixes Kapital	Profitrate	Totalkapital	Profitrate
1923	3 174	21 410	14,8	33 491	9,8
1924	2 418	22 410	10,7	36 491	6,1
1925	3 245	25 457	12,7	42 366	7,7
1926	3 213	26 618	12,1	45 273	7,1
1927	2 662	26 007	10,2	48 049	5,5
1928	3 461	27 025	12,8	50 017	6,9
1929	3 951	28 235	13,9	52 694	7,5
1930	878	28 987	3,0	52 121	1,7

Die Profitmasse blieb hinter dem Wachstum des Kapitals zurück. Der Fall der Profitrate drückte nichts anderes aus als den relativen Fall der Profitmasse im Verhältnis zur Akkumulationsnotwendigkeit.

"Diese doppelseitige Wirkung (steigende Profitmasse, fallende Profitrate), sagt Marx" "kann sich nur darstellen in einem Wachstum des Gesamtkapitals in rascherer Progression als die, worin die Profitrate fällt."

Dieses Wachstum ist zugleich die steigende Verhinderung der Möglichkeit weiteren Wachstums und damit die relative Abnahme der Profitmasse, selbst wenn sie absolut wächst. Vom Standpunkt des Wertgesetzes ist denn auch nichts anderes möglich. Marx sagt:

"Die Akkumulation des Kapitals, dem Wert nach betrachtet, wird verlangsamt durch die fallende Profitrate, um die Akkumulation des Gebrauchswertes noch zu beschleunigen" während diese wieder die Akkumulation, dem Wert nach, in beschleunigten Gang bringt.

Die kapitalistische Produktion strebt beständig diese ihre immanenten Schranken zu überwinden, aber sie überwindet sie nur durch Mittel, die ihr diese Schranken aufs neue und auf gewaltigerem Maßstabe entgegenstellen." (Kapital III I S. 260)

So muss der Punkt eintreten auf den Grossmann hingewiesen hat, wo die Ansprüche der Akkumulation so groß sind, dass sie vom vorhandenen Mehrwert nicht mehr gedeckt werden können. Um diesen Punkt zu erreichen ist es selbstverständlich, dass diese Tendenz bereits den relativen Fall der Profitmasse enthält, die sich im Fall der Profitrate manifestiert.

DER HISTORISCHE MATERIALISMUS

Fast alles, was der Kritiker vom historisch-materialistischen Standpunkt Grossmann entgegenzuhalten hat, ist nichts weiter als die künstliche Erschaffung eines Gegensatzes zwischen **Grossmann** und dem Marxismus; denn auch **Grossmann** wird die meisten der vorgebrachten Argumente nicht ablehnen. Alles was der Kritiker bei Grossmann vermisst, versteht sich von selbst und bedarf keiner Erwähnung in einem Buch, das sich an Kenner des historischen Materialismus wendet. Wir wiesen schon darauf hin, dass es für Grossmann keinen reinen Ökonomismus gibt, womit sich der Kritiker auch den Vorwurf des Mechanismus ersparen kann. Der Arbeitslohn, der für Grossmann "keine elastische, sondern eine fixe Größe ist", (was kann sie anders auf dem Boden des Wertgesetzes sein?) enthält für den Kritiker, für **Marx**, *aber auch für Grossmann* zugleich — im Gegensatz zu anderen Waren — ein historisches moralisches Moment. Sicher ist die Verteilung des Mehrwerts kein automatischer Prozess, sicher bestimmt im dialektischen Totalprozess der Klassenkampf mit den Anteil der Arbeiter, aber doch ist der Kampf um die Verteilung des Mehrwerts durchaus begrenzt. Und auf diese Begrenzung hinzuweisen ist unerlässlich, um die revolutionäre Bewegung der Arbeiterschaft zu verstehen, um zu verstehen, weshalb aus dem Kampf um die Verteilung des Mehrwerts notwendig der Kampf um die Abschaffung der Wertproduktion erwachsen muss. Marx zeigte auf, wie der Lohn der Arbeiter für längere Zeit eine bestimmte Stufe nicht übersteigen kann, unter bestimmtes Niveau nicht auf die Dauer sinken kann. Das Wertgesetz ist zuletzt bestimmend. Nicht der Klassenkampf bestimmt in *letzter Instanz* die Löhne der Arbeiter, sondern diese bestimmen ihren Klassenkampf. Die Kapitalbewegung ist stärker als die Lohnbewegung. Deshalb muss die Lohnbewegung zur revolutionären werden.

DIE NEUE ARBEITERBEWEGUNG

Der Kritiker weist auf die für ihn nur scheinbare nahe Verwandtschaft der politischen Einstellung der neuen Arbeiterbewegung mit den sich aus den

Grossmannschen Auffassungen resultierenden Schlussfolgerungen hin. Er führt z.B. an, dass, da sich die neue Arbeiterbewegung gegen die Gewerkschaften stellt, es ihr dienlich erscheinen kann, sich auf Grossmann zu beziehen, der auf die "objektive Schranke" der Gewerkschaftsbewegung hingewiesen hat. Und doch sagt er: "Die Grundlage der beiden Auffassungen ist verschieden. Die schon lange eingetretene Machtlosigkeit der gewerkschaftlichen Aktion, ist nicht einem ökonomischen Zusammenbruch zuzuschreiben, sondern einer gesellschaftlichen Machtverschiebung." Für den Kritiker ist es die Kapitalkonzentration, die die Macht der Gewerkschaften beschränkt und aufhebt. Aber diese Machtverschiebung, der Konzentrationsprozess ist zugleich ein Zusammenbruchsprozess und es_ ist eine leere Tautologie, dem Zusammenbruch die Machtverschiebung entgegenzusetzen. Allerdings kann die Machtverschiebung im *Sinne des Kritikers* nicht als "objektive" Grenze bezeichnet werden, da für ihn scheinbar diese Machtverschiebung nur politisch — nicht wirtschaftlich wirkt. Jedoch, erst wenn aus der relativen die absolute Verelendung der Arbeiterklasse wird, kann man von einer objektiven Grenze sprechen, die bloße Machtverschiebung setzt keine Grenzen, da auch der Konzentrationsprozess zuerst die Besserung der Lage auf der Basis relativer Verelendung zulässt. Die Klassenkämpfe sind von der Klassenlage des Proletariats abhängig, sie werden so mit Notwendigkeit stets wirtschaftlichen Charakter haben. Erst, wenn der Zusammenbruch einsetzt, das heißt, wenn das Kapital nur noch auf Basis der absoluten und dauernden Verelendung der Massen weiter existieren kann, schlägt dieser wirtschaftliche Kampf, ob dies den Massen bewusst wird, oder nicht, in den politischen um, der die Machtfrage stellt. Die ökonomische Situation bleibt das Wesentliche, die Revolution, wird den Menschen durch diese ökonomische Situation aufgezwungen. Man kann der ökonomischen Zusammenbruchstheorie nicht die aus dem Willen der Arbeiter geborene Revolution entgegensetzen, beides ist identisch. Aber diese Identität macht auch klar, was wirkliches Klassenbewusstsein ist, und dass die Argumentation des Kritikers gegen Grossmann völlig verfehlt ist. Wie die kapitalistischen Produktionsverhältnisse an einem hohen Punkt der Entwicklung die weitere Entfaltung der Produktivkräfte hindern, so hindern sie auch die volle Anwendung der Bewusstseinsmomente im gesellschaftlichen Lebensprozess. Und doch hat sich das Bewusstsein letztenendes durchzusetzen, und es kann dies unter solchen Bedingungen nur, indem es sich konkretisiert. Die Menschen tun aus Notwendigkeit, was sie unter freien Verhältnissen aus ihrem Willen heraus täten. Wie das Tauschverhältnis im Kapitalismus, obwohl nur ein Verhältnis zwischen Personen und kein fassbares Ding, doch durchaus konkrete Funktionen erfüllt, sich verdinglicht, so wird jetzt in der revolutionären Situation, die, für die Masse der Menschen durchaus realistische Alternative: Kommunismus oder die Barbarei: zur aktiven Betätigung, als wenn diese Aktivität *direkt* dem Bewusstsein entspränge. Die realistische Situation wird zum revolutionären Verhältnis, das als, solches die Massen erfüllt und sie treibt ohne dass der ganze Zusammenhang ihrem Intellekt verständlich ist. Die Massenerhebung kann sich nicht aus dem "Intellekt - Bewusstsein" heraus entwickeln; die kapitalistischen Lebensverhältnisse schließen diese Möglichkeit aus, da das Bewusstsein letztenendes doch immer nur das der bestehenden Praxis ist. Und doch, die materielle Lebensnotwendigkeit der Massen zwingt sie zu Handlungen, als wären sie tatsächlich revolutionär erzogen; sie werden "Tat - bewusst ". Ihre Lebensnotwendigkeiten haben" keine andere als die revolutionäre Äußerungsmöglichkeit. Die revolutionäre Tat des Proletariats kann nicht aus anderen, als aus Gründen ihrer materiellen Lebensnotwendigkeiten erklärt werden. Diese sind gebunden an den ökonomischen Zustand der Gesellschaft. Ist dem Kapital keine ökonomische Grenze gesetzt, dann ist auch auf eine Revolution nicht zurechnen. Aber

für, den Marxisten und für **Grossmann** sind die ökonomischen Grenzen und die proletarische Revolution identisch.

The Permanent Crisis — Henryk Grossman's Interpretation of Marx's Theory Of Capitalist Accumulation

(1934)

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I.

According to Marx, the development of the productive forces of society is the motive power of historical development. In acquiring new productive forces men change their mode of production, and in changing their mode of production, their manner of gaining a living, they change all their social relations. The transformation of the spinning wheel, the hand-loom and blacksmiths sledge, into the self-tending mule, the power-loom and the steam hammer was not only accompanied by a change of the small individual shops of the craftsmen into huge industrial plants employing thousands of workers, but there also came with it the social overturn from feudalism to capitalism; that is, not merely a material revolution, but a cultural revolution as well.

Capitalism as an economic system had the historical mission of developing the productive forces of society to a much greater extent than was possible under any previous system. The motive force in the development of the productive forces in capitalism is the race for profit. But for that very reason this process of development can continue only as long as it is profitable. From this point of view capital becomes a barrier to the continuous development of the productive forces as soon as that development comes into conflict with the necessity for profit. "Then the monopoly of capital becomes a fetter upon the mode of production which has sprung up and flourished along with, and under it. Centralisation of the means of production and socialization of labor at last reach a point where they become incompatible with their capitalist integument".

Marx always considers the economic laws of motion from two points of view: first, as "a process of natural history"; second, in its specific, social form. The development of productive forces went on in every social system, a process consisting of an ever increasing productivity of labor due to better working tools and methods. The productive process under capitalism, in addition to producing the necessities of life, also produces value and surplus value, and it is only due to this fact that capitalism has been able to accelerate the development of the productive forces so tremendously. They are not only machines, raw-material and labor power, but also capital. The development of the instruments of production means the expanding of production and reproduction of capital,

and this is only possible when surplus value or profit is the result of the productive process of capital. By analysis of the process of producing surplus value, Marx finds the tendency of a conflict between the material productive forces and their capitalist integument. When insufficient surplus value results from production, if capital cannot be "utilised", there is no possibility of continuing the development of the productive forces. The capitalistic forms must burst asunder to make place for a higher, more advanced, economic and social system.

In the capitalist system wage labor is necessary for the production of surplus value. In buying labor power, the capitalist acquires the right to use it for his own benefit. By his labor, the worker is able to produce a greater value than he consumes, ie – he produces more value than the capitalist pays him in the form of wages. Since the capitalist buys labor-power at its exchange value, and has full control of its use value, the result is the creation of surplus value out of which he takes a part for additional capital, for accumulation, pays interest to the banker and rent to the landlord, allows the merchant his commercial profit, and retains the rest for his own consumption.

All commodities have in common the quality of being products of labor; they are measured and exchanged in proportion to the socially necessary labor time incorporated in them; this includes also the commodity labor-power. The development of the productive forces means increased productivity of labor, and increased productivity means less labor incorporated in each commodity, or less value, and consequently less surplus value. This decrease in the value of one single commodity can only be compensated by the increase of the quantities of commodities produced, which means an increase in the exploitation of labor. This is done by two main methods: by lengthening the working day ("absolute surplus value"), or by shortening the labor time necessary for reproducing the wages of the workers ("relative surplus value"). If the lengthening of the working day is impossible, then there only remains the shortening of the necessary labor time which can only be done by decreasing the value of labor-power. The decrease in the value of commodities is the only means of reducing the value of labor power, but this in its turn can only be the result of increased productivity. This process is, at the same time, an accelerator forcing technical development at an ever increasing tempo towards mass production and gigantic and costly machinery, concentrated in huge industrial plants, eliminating individual and small capitalists in favor of big capitalists and corporations.

Since wage labor is the source of his profit, the capitalist should be interested in exploiting as many workers as possible. The more workers, the more surplus labor and value, the more profit. But it is nevertheless a fact that from the very beginning of the capitalist epoch, the number of workers employed relative to the capital employed, has been falling. Even if their number has absolutely increased for a period, they have increased more slowly than capital has accumulated. Today the number of workers employed has fallen, not only relatively, but absolutely. (Since 1918, the number of those employed in American industry has continuously decreased though production increased until 1929.) Increased productivity coupled with the process of concentration of capital thus results in a constantly growing mass of commodities produced by fewer and fewer workers — increased production, in increased unemployment. This fact, in the face of the capitalists' urgent need for more extensive exploitation, indicates the limits of capitalist production. The more exploitation is intensified, the faster these limits are reached. "The same circumstances which have increased the productive power of labor, augmented the mass of produced commodities, expanded the markets, accelerated the accumulation of capital, both as concerns its mass and value, and lowered the rate of profit, these same circumstances have also created a relative over-population and continue to create it all the time, an over-population of laborers who are not employed by the surplus capital on

account of the low degree of exploitation at which they might be employed, or at least on account of the low rate of profit which they would yield with the given rate of exploitation.”

The law of value is, according to Marx, the regulator of the production of commodities and determines in what proportion the work of society is distributed, but this only holds good for society as a whole, not for individual capitalist units. In reality, the law of value is only enforced through the competition of individual enterprises; actual exchange of commodities does not take place according to value, but according to price of production. If one capitalist sells above value, another capitalist sells below. Competition, which results in the establishment of the average rate of profit, also established the law of value as the final and general law which underlies the sum total of individual transactions at the prices of production.

Without this, the rate of profit would differ from one branch of production to another according to the rate of surplus value, period of capital turnover, and the organic composition of capital. The greater the rate of surplus value, the higher the rate of profit. (The rate of surplus value or exploitation is the surplus value divided by the capital invested in wages – the variable capital. The rate of profit is the surplus value divided by the total capital including constant capital:- means of production, and variable capital.) The quicker the turnover of capital – ie the quicker the capitalist gets his capital outlay plus surplus value back – the higher the rate of profit, and vice-versa. The ratio between the means of production and labor power, expressed in value form as constant and variable capital, we call the organic composition of capital. The higher the organic composition, the lower the rate of profit.

As not only the rate of profit for individual capitals, but also the average rate of profit continuously sinks on account of the rise in the organic composition of capital, small capitals would be destroyed if they were unable to increase their capital sufficiently. The existence of the capitalist depends on a continuous increase of his capital by lowering production costs below normal. He strives to gain an extra profit by producing and selling his products over their individual but below their social value. Each capitalist has of necessity the same desire and so each capitalist must accumulate.

If he stops re-investing part of his surplus value in his enterprise, he runs the risk of his capital becoming valueless, if its technical form is falling behind the general development of the productive forces. This fact results in again raising the organic composition and further lowering the rate of profit, and thereby hastens the tempo of development by stimulating the search for extra profit. To resist would mean economic suicide for the capitalist.

To understand the action of the law of value and accumulation, we must first disregard these individual and external movements, and consider accumulation from the point of view of total capital, since the total social capital values and total prices are identical. “The most important factor in this inquiry is the composition of capital and the changes it undergoes in the course of the process of accumulation”. In the capitalist mode of production, and in that alone, is the development of the productive power not only expressed as a growth of means of production in order to have more results with less labor, (as it is expressed in all economic systems) but as a rise in the organic composition of capital, more constant capital, less variable capital and a consequent falling rate of profit. “A fall in the rate of profit and a hastening of accumulation are insofar only different expressions of the same process as both of them indicate the development of the productive power. Accumulation in its turn hastens the fall of the rate of profit, inasmuch as it implies the concentration of labor on a large scale and thereby a higher composition of capital”.

The fall in the rate of profit is at the same time accompanied by an increase in the mass of profit as long as capital accumulates faster than the rate of profit falls. The sinking of the rate of profit and the growth of the mass of profit are therefore both caused by capitalist accumulation. At the same time the sinking rate of profit acts as an *index to the relative fall of the mass of profit*. When the accumulation of capital reaches a certain point, the mass of profit will fall not only relatively to the total capital invested, but also absolutely; *a larger social capital will bring an absolutely smaller profit*. But this point only appears at the end of a certain period of accumulation. Up to that point, “the same development of social productivity of labor expresses itself in the course of capitalist production on the one hand in a tendency to a progressive fall of the rate of profit, and on the other hand in a progressive increase of the absolute mass of the appropriated surplus value, or profit; so that in the whole, a relative decrease of variable capital and profit is accompanied by an absolute increase of both.” This is the characteristic expression of the progressive development of the productive power of labor under the capitalist mode of production.

II. Accumulation and Crisis

The fall in the rate of profit has thrown bourgeois economy out of balance. For Marx “the falling rate of profit turns into an antagonism of this mode of production at a certain point and requires for its defeat periodical crisis.” Accumulation and a higher organic composition of capital are identical. With it goes the fall of the rate of profit. With an organic composition (1:1) say 30 constant capital and 30 variable capital, and a rate of exploitation of 100%, the rate of profit will be 50%. With an organic composition (5:1) say 250 constant capital and 50 variable capital, and the same rate of exploitation, the rate of profit will be 16.6%. (As stated before, the rate of surplus value (here 100%) is determined by the proportion between the necessary and the surplus labor time. But the rate of profit is surplus value divided by the total capital; ie – constant and variable both.) In the above example, both constant and variable capital is increased. Not only is the scale of production expanded, but the number of workers employed increased. We began with a low organic composition (1:1) and end with a high (5:1). This is both a cause and expression of the increased productivity of labor that also must be expressed in an increased rate of surplus value. We had a rate of surplus value of 100%, but the increased productivity shortens the necessary labor time and increases the rate of surplus value, which counteracts the fall of the rate of profit. If the rate of surplus value is increased from 100% to 300%, then even a high organic composition of capital (5:1) would yield the same rate of profit, that is 50%, as the low organic composition (1:1) with a rate of surplus value of 100%. Besides this, through the increased productivity of labor, the rate of surplus value may also rise due to other causes and thereby compensate for the increase in the organic composition. We shall later investigate this, but in whatever way this may be accomplished, the fact is that the falling rate of profit is accompanied by a rise in the mass of profit that counteracts the danger implied in a falling rate. But this growth of capital in turn implies a further fall in the rate of profit. Thus the sinking rate of profit creates further attempts to raise the surplus value as is actually the case.

Since at first the fall in the rate of profit is accompanied by an increase in the mass of profit, it is difficult to understand how the collapse of capitalism would result from the decline in the rate of profit, and what relation there is between periodic crisis and the falling rate of profit. An explanation of this connection has often been attempted, but all of those attempts have failed because in each case the explanation was based on, and limited to, *the investigation of the falling rate of profit alone*. Henryk Grossman was the

first to point out that the crisis and the final collapse *must be explained not only by the falling rate of profit, the mere index of profit, but by the actual mass of profit underlying it*. According to Marx, capitalist accumulation is determined not only by the rate of profit, but also by the mass of profit. In other words, the surplus value may absolutely increase, but it will nevertheless be insufficient for the needs of accumulation because the rising organic composition constantly swallows an ever greater part of surplus value.

Capital accumulation initiated a series of great booms interrupted by periodic crises. As the rate of accumulation grew, the intensity of the crises grew with it. The capitalist process of reproduction repeats itself, not in the form of a circle, but as a spiral, narrowing to a point. The production of values must, due to its inherent contradictions, lead to its own negation; but only the accumulation of these contradictions can transform them into something qualitatively different: into revolution. *The same laws which had at first constituted the motive force of a rapid development of capitalism, now become the driving force of capitalist collapse*. But this collapse does not develop evenly and in a straight downward line. It is continuously interrupted as capitalist reality modifies the general abstract law of capitalist accumulation. Marx elaborated no special theory of crises, but his analysis of the laws of capitalist reproduction, or accumulation, was also a theory of crisis. Let us illustrate with an abstract table the law of capitalist reproduction.

In order that accumulation may be possible, the surplus value must be divided into three parts; one to be invested in additional constant capital, one in additional variable capital, and the remainder to be consumed by the capitalist class as individuals. During the rise of capitalism, variable capital grows as well as constant capital, only more slowly. We begin, in our table below, with an organic composition of 2:1. The constant capital grows at a yearly rate of 10%, the variable at 5%. The rate of surplus value remains 100%. (Constant capital we call **C**, variable **V**. The consumption fund of the capitalists is **R**. **AC** is surplus value available for accumulation of constant capital; **AV** for variable. The value of the yearly product we call **VYP**; the percentage of surplus value consumed by the capitalists we call **R%**; the rate for accumulation **A%**, the rate of profit **P%**).

Yr	C	V	R	AC	AV	VYP	R%	A%	P%
1	200,000	100,000	75,000	20,000	5,000	400,000	75.00	25.00	33.3
2	220,000	105,000	77,750	22,000	5,250	430,000	74.05	25.95	32.6
3	242,000	110,250	80,539	24,200	5,511	462,500	73.04	26.96	31.3
4	266,000	115,762	83,374	26,600	5,788	497,524	72.02	27.98	30.3

We see how in this table accumulation increases in spite of a falling rate of profit. Accumulation pays for the capitalists, for while their revenue becomes smaller relative to the surplus value as a whole, it increases absolutely. During the first year the capitalists command 75,000 as revenue (**R**); during the fourth year, 83,374.

This table is a fiction that should in no wise be mistaken for reality. A progressively higher organic composition accompanied by a constant rate of exploitation is an impossibility, nay an absurdity. The table is only meant to illustrate the tendency of accumulation with no disturbing and complicating tendencies. Even with a constant rate of surplus value, accumulation can take place so much faster with an increased rate of exploitation. This table also reflects accumulation only in its value-form, not expressed in the quantity of use values; to express it thus, would cause many modifications. The

devaluation of capital necessarily connected with accumulation here has been disregarded.

If we, like Henry Grossman, extend this table to the 35th year, we shall be able to show if not actual capitalist accumulation, at least its "inner law". But to arrive at capitalist reality, we must in addition to basing ourselves on the inner law of capitalist accumulation also take into account the elements disregarded in the illustrating table. It must be borne in mind, however, that the elements disregarded in the table only determine the *tempo* of the process of accumulation, either hastening or slowing it down; but in either case the process remains essentially the same. Let us follow the table:

Yr	C	V	R	AC	AV	VYP	R%	A%	P%
5	292,600	121,500	86,213	29,260	6,077	535,700	70.93	29.07	29.3
6	321,860	127,627	89,060	32,186	6,381	577,114	69.70	30.30	28.4
20	1,222,252	252,961	117,832	122,225	12,634	1,727,634	46.63	53.37	17.1
21	1,344,477	265,325	117,612	134,447	13,266	1,875,127	44.33	55.67	16.4
34	4,641,489	500,304	11,141	464,148	25,015	5,642,097	0.45	99.55	9.7
35	5,105,637	525,319	0	510,563	14,756	6,156,275	0	104.61	9.3

The table shows that the same forces which at first made the rise of capitalism possible at a certain phase of accumulation lead to *over-accumulation* and its consequences. The constant capital that in the first year (first table) was 50% of the year's production, demands in the 35th year (second table) 82.9%. The revenue (**R**) that until the 20th year only increased relative to the total mass of surplus value as shown by (**R%**) from then on decreases absolutely. In the 35th year it disappears completely. It is only after the 20th year that the fall in the rate of profit is first felt as an absolute fall in that part of the mass of profit which the capitalist class had at its disposal for its own private consumption. Until the 20th year, accumulation was a paying proposition as measured by the returns. From the 21st year, these returns dwindle down to a vanishing point. Besides that, from the assumption made that the additional variable capital increases yearly 5%, **AV** has a deficit. Instead of the needed 26,265 in the 35th year, only 14,756 is available, leaving a deficit of 11,509. This deficit would represent the industrial reserve army as the inevitable outcome of the capitalist process of accumulation. The capital accumulated in the 35th year can't function completely. Because 11 509 workers cannot be employed, the whole additional constant capital (**AV**: 510,563) cannot be reinvested. On the basis of our assumption, a population of 551,548 in the 36th year would require a constant capital of 5,616,200; consequently, by a population of 540,075 only 5,499,015 constant capital could be invested. There is a capital surplus of 117,185 that cannot be used. Insufficient capital "utilisation" has led to over-accumulation. We have a surplus of capital unable to expand and an unusable surplus population. (The empirical researches, eg by WC Mitchel in the USA has shown that in time of economic expansion profit is uninterruptedly increasing, while a crisis is preceded by a decrease of profits.) Thus, increasing "utilisation" of capital is the chief cause of capital accumulation, and the lack of a sufficient "utilisation" of capital the cause of crisis.

The theoretical formulation of the theory of over-accumulation as here presented was first undertaken by Henryk Grossman who considers his work as only a reconstruction of Marx's theory of accumulation which is the theory of crisis and collapse. According to Grossman, if accumulation is to take place, the organic composition of capital must increase and then a relatively ever greater part of the surplus

value must be taken for the purpose of the additional constant capital (**AC**). As long as the absolute mass of the total social capital of a low organic composition is small, the surplus value is relatively large, and leads to a rapid increase in accumulation. For example: by a composition of 200C :100V :100S (surplus value), the constant capital can (assuming the total surplus value to be used for the accumulation) be increased by 50% of its original size. At a higher stage of capital accumulation, with a considerably higher organic composition, eg 14,900C: 100V: 150S, *the increased mass of surplus value is only sufficient, when used as additional capital (AC) for an increase of 1%.*

By continued accumulation on the basis of an ever higher organic composition, a point must be reached when all accumulation ceases. Not every fragment of capital can be used for expansion of production. A definite minimum proportion is needed which grows continuously with the progressive accumulation of capital. Therefore, since in the development of capital accumulation, a not only absolutely but also relatively greater part of the mass of surplus value must be used for the purpose of accumulation. At a higher stage of accumulation, where the total social capital is of huge size, the part of surplus value demanded for additional constant capital (**AC**) must become so great that it finally absorbs all of the surplus value. A point must come when the parts of surplus value to be used for additional workers and for capitalist consumption (**AV** and **R**) must decrease absolutely. This would be the turning point at which the previously latent tendency to collapse begins to be active. It is now evident that conditions necessary for the progress of accumulation no longer can be met, that the mass of surplus value though grown absolutely is insufficient to take care of its three functions. If the additional constant capital (**AC**) is taken from the surplus value in necessary quantity, then the revenue at disposal is insufficient to take care of the consumption of workers and employers at the prevailing scale. A sharpened struggle between the working class and employers over the division of the revenue thus becomes inevitable. If, on the other hand, the capitalists by pressure from the workers are forced to maintain the wage scale and the part earmarked for accumulation (**AC**) thus decreases, the tempo of accumulation slows down, and the productive apparatus cannot be renewed and expanded to keep pace with technical progress. All further accumulation must, under such conditions, increase the difficulties, since for a given population the mass of surplus value can only be raised by a trifling amount. Surplus value flowing from the previously invested capital must therefore lie fallow, and there arises a surplus of idle capacity vainly looking for possibilities of investment.

Thus accumulation is a process that inevitably leads to overproduction of capital, to ever increasing unemployment, to a surplus of capital unable to function profitably, and an unuseable surplus population. And this is the final great contradiction of capitalist production that causes it to go to pieces. "The fact that the means of production and the productivity of labor increases more rapidly than the productive population, expresses itself, therefore, capitalistically in the inverse form that the laboring population always increase more rapidly than the conditions under which capital can employ this increase for its own self-expansion".

On the basis of this analysis of accumulation, the question no longer is whether the capitalist system will collapse, but rather why it has not already collapsed. We have hitherto followed the process of accumulation in a fictitious capitalism. Reality is different. The law of capitalist collapse as demonstrated by us functioned in a "pure" capitalism – a capitalism that actually does not exist. In order to best illustrate the law of capitalist accumulation and consequences following there from, we have had to disregard the secondary features and tendencies that are characteristic of the real capitalism. For the purpose of our investigation up to now, they were quite irrelevant since they only obscure

the inner law of the process of capitalist accumulation. Outside of the already mentioned simplifications, we dealt only with the process of production, disregarding modifications of accumulation by the process of circulation. Only the dynamics of society as a whole interested us, so that we did not consider the individual spheres of production, and disregarded competition and its modifying effect on the tempo of accumulation. In our analysis of accumulation there was no foreign trade which from the point of view of capitalist production is of great importance. We disregarded the middle class groups, and spoke only of capital and labor. There was in our analysis no credit problem. We disregarded it as well as other more important items that more or less modify the absolute law of accumulation. In short, our analysis of accumulation is based on a non-existent capitalism. All that we set out to do was to demonstrate that by following the process of accumulation in such a "pure" capitalist system, the result would with mathematical certainty be the collapse of the system.

Since, in reality, there is no such "pure" capitalist system, it follows that the tendency to collapse does not operate in the above described "pure" form. Instead, the "pure" tendency of capitalist accumulation is slowed down in its dizzy pace by counteracting tendencies which also arise out of the capitalist development. The tendency towards collapse which is expressed through crises is nevertheless slowed down and temporarily halted by these very crises though they be the embryonic form of the final collapse; but the counter-tendencies are essentially of a temporary character. They can postpone the collapse of the system. *If the crisis is only an embryonic collapse, the final collapse of the capitalist system is nothing else but a crisis fully developed and unhindered by any counter tendencies.*

If the causes of crisis are over-accumulation which makes the "utilisation" of capital impossible, then new means must be established to assure again the necessary capital "utilisation" in order to end the crisis. According to Marx, a crisis is only a process of healing, a violent return to further profitable expansion; from the point of view of the capitalists, a "cleaning out". But after the "cleaning", with its series of capitalistic bankruptcies, and the starvation of the workers, the process of accumulation is continued and after a while the "utilisation" of capital again becomes insufficient. The self-expansion stops as the accumulated capital again becomes too large on its new basis. The new crisis sets in. In this manner, the tendency towards collapse is broken up into a series of apparently independent cycles.

III. How Crises Are Overcome

The changing periods in the economic cycle may be longer or shorter, but their periodicity is a fact. It is furthermore a fact that the boom periods are always growing shorter, while the duration and intensity of the periods of crisis is increasing. This reveals the fact that the tendencies which serve to delay the collapse of capitalism, while being an integral part of capitalist accumulation, are nevertheless greatly weakened with every passing cycle; and the overcoming of crisis becomes an ever-greater difficulty. The United States has passed through a series of industrial crises followed and preceded by boom periods. The crisis of 1837 was preceded by a feverish activity of construction. A nationwide network of roads was built, canals were constructed and steamship traffic developed. Gigantic amounts of capital were imported, and a general optimistic anticipation of profits developed speculation. By the first sign of insufficient profit-production, "business" flowed into speculation that then took the most bandit-like forms. A crisis shortly followed. To bourgeois economists, the crisis appeared to be caused by the "impossibility of paying interest on borrowed capital, as the rate of profit that could

be yielded was too small". The panic of 1857 was preceded by a period of intoxication due to the discovery of California gold, and the large railroad constructions aiding industrial development in general. Again prosperity was transformed into intensified speculation which is always the case when profits become small. The crisis was again explained by the problems of "interest". According to bourgeois conceptions, the railroads were constructed too "quickly", industry developed too "hastily", and it became impossible to pay interest on the money invested in industry. Capital had grown faster than the possibility of "utilising" this growth. This was followed by the crisis of 1873, 1893, 1907, 1921 – to name only the most important.

In whatever manner these crises were explained, each individual explanation suggested that profits were insufficient, that further expansion of industry was unprofitable and for that reason could not take place, so that each explanation, unconsciously in its true, gives over-accumulation as the cause of crises. But no one spoke about this as the inevitable outcome of the capitalist process of accumulation; this fact was always disguised as "overproduction of commodities", "a too heavy burden of debts and inability to pay interest". The fall of prices, therefore, was accepted as the cause of crisis.

According to Marx, *in times of crisis, the rate of profit and with it the demand for industrial capital almost disappears. There is no lack of purchasing power with which to expand production, but no use is made of this purchasing power because it does not pay to expand production since expanded production does not bring in more but less surplus value than on the previous scale.* Though expansion of production has become unprofitable, production at first continues at its previous volume. By this continuation of production at its previous rate, each year, there is produced surplus value part of which is intended for accumulation, but without any chance for such application. Thereby the stock of unsold means of production, of unsold goods in general grows; cost of storing increases, plant equipment is unnecessarily tied up since there is no reflux through sales of commodities produced. The capitalist must at any cost sell, to obtain the means of continuing production at its previous scale. This leads to price cutting and limited operations of factories. Enterprises go bankrupt; unemployment grows.

The capitalist solution to this problem lies in the re-establishment of the "utilisation" of capital. To do this, either the value of the constant capital must be decreased, or the surplus value increased. Both possibilities are found in the sphere of production as well as in the sphere of circulation. We shall deal here only with a few of the tendencies that overcome crises and delay the collapse of the system.

We said the capitalist always sees the fall of prices as the cause of crisis. A rise in prices, consequently means to him the beginning of recovery. Bourgeois economists claim that as prices fall, bankruptcies increase proportionally, and they offer statistical demonstrations of this fact. According to them, price stability is a guarantee of social stability. But what they really show is only the increased productivity of labor expressed in prices. The bemoaning of bankruptcies only illustrates the process of capitalist concentration, in spite of this, bourgeois economists have always, in their superficial manner pointed to the fall of prices as the cause of crises, and they still hold to this stupid explanation in face of the fact that in the US since 1925 a boom period took place with falling prices. It is also a fact that the expansion of the productive apparatus takes place in times of depression when prices are low. Only when the demand created by that expansion exceeds supply will prices increase. Therefore, the rise in prices, if it takes place, which is not absolutely necessary, is the effect and not the cause of recovery. Nay, profitable operation must be made possible at the low price level before recovery can

begin. This demands increased productivity of labor which again means higher organic composition of capital, or the reproduction of the crisis on a higher plane.

Increased productivity is, besides other things, a process of concentration and centralisation accompanied by amalgamation of industrial units and general rationalisation. So that the crises, even though they are accompanied by "overproduction" are always overcome, in spite of that, by a further expansion of production. That this leads to increased laying off of workers first relative to capital employed, later also absolutely does not alter its necessity. Statistics show that in periods of upswing in the United States those bankruptcies which occurred involved small enterprises, and that while these bankruptcies increased, trusts made superprofits in spite of falling prices. Trustification made larger profits at lower prices possible, while the small enterprises outside this movement of "rationalisation" succumbed. Prof Eitemann writes:

"The low prices which had prevailed during the depression of 1873, encouraged the introduction of labor-saving devices by industry in order to cut cost of manufacture. This search for cheaper methods of production continued even after the return of prosperity, and resulted in a steady downward trend of prices".

The increased productivity of labor, and the thereby relatively diminished cost of constant capital, makes the "utilisation" of capital again possible. This tendency is apparent during the present crisis. Reports like the following are not infrequent:

"General Electric's new power plant of \$4 000 000 will be ready for operation next spring. According to the estimates of the engineers, the plant will produce steam and kilowatt hours of energy at a lower cost than has ever before been attained".

At the same time that the "Merchant Fleet Corporation" allowed 124 ships of approximately one million tons to be destroyed, the construction of 20 million tons of new ships are planned even though "overproduction" leaves a great number of these ships idle in port. In the crisis, in spite of "overproduction", the apparatus of production instead of becoming restricted has been enlarged. Nevertheless, previous crises have passed. The crisis, then, is not a restriction of the real apparatus of production, but a breakdown of an accepted system of prices and values, and its reorganisation on a new level.

According to Marx, the tendency in the fall of the rate of profit is accompanied by an increase in the rate of surplus value, or in the rate of exploitation of labor. By the development of the productive forces, commodities are made cheaper. Insofar as this happens to commodities consumed by the workers, the elements of variable capital are made cheaper. The value of labor power sinks and rate of exploitation increases. The same effect is gained by intensifying labor by technical rationalisation and by more pitiless modes of speed-up, or by lengthening the working day. One of the most important means is by the forcing of wages below the value of labor power by taking advantage of the growing army of the unemployed during a crisis. (The lowering of wages below value has already become a "basis" of existence for the whole system.) The ridiculous conception that by increasing the purchasing power of labor the crisis can be overcome has always and still is answered by capitalism reducing that purchasing power still further. It is exactly in this manner, by wage cutting, that capitalism tries to overcome the crisis. Thus, the "Commercial and Financial Chronicle" writes:

"The manufacturer is no longer able to produce goods at a profit, and accordingly he stops producing at all and as a consequence, hosts of wage-earners find themselves idle and out of employment. If the President could be induced to prevail upon the wage earners to adjust wages to a lower basis, one more nearly in accord with the times, trade depression would soon become a thing of the past."

Statistics, for example those of the US Steel Corporation, show that crisis and increasing exploitation run parallel.

Aug. 1,	1918	10% increase in wages
Oct. 1,	1918	8 hour basis day adopted
Feb. 1,	1920	10% increase in wages
May 16,	1921	20% decrease
June 6,	1921	Basic 8 hour day abolished
Aug. 29,	1921	Decrease to 30 cent hourly
Sept. 1,	1922	20% increase
April 16,	1923	11% “
Oct. 1,	1931	10% decrease

The crisis of 1921 destroyed the previously adopted 8 hour day and led to sharp wage cutting. In 1931 this was repeated. The intensification of exploitation is one of the strongest tendencies working against capitalist collapse.

The shortening of the time of capital turnover is also a force acting against collapse. The main means for accomplishing this, outside of increased productivity, are better and more direct means of communications, especially transport, and diminution of stock in storage, etc. Furthermore, an increase in use-values at the same exchange-value, and the founding of new spheres of production with lower organic composition weakens the tendency towards the collapse since these branches of production yield exceptionally high profits. As the capitalist class cannot dispose of the appropriated surplus value alone, but must divide it with the middle-class groups, the crisis is always the beginning of an intensified fight between these groups in the form of a fight of “actual” producers against ground-rent, commercial profits, and all other “parasitical” elements. In short, a fight of industrial capitalists against all other capitalist and the middle class groups who exploit labor indirectly through the industrialists.

An important element in re-establishing profitable operations is the devaluation of capital. This devaluation is expressed by the same amount of means of production being represented at a smaller value. The technical composition (MP:L) remains; the organic composition (c:v) sinks. The mass of surplus value remains the same, but as it is now calculated on a smaller capital basis, the rate of profit has risen. In practice, devaluation takes the place of sale at ruinous prices. Crisis and capitalist wars are gigantic devaluations of constant capital by violent destruction of value as well as of use value forming its material base.

By ever drawing in new foreign use-values, capitalist production is expanded and the tendency towards collapse weakened. The importing of cheap foodstuffs lowers the value of labor power and increases the rate of surplus value proportionally. By the furnishing of cheap raw materials, the elements of constant capital are made cheaper and the rate of profit increased. This is why the struggle for sources of raw materials contributes one of the main objectives of international capitalist politics. Through the tendency of the equalisation of profits, the more highly developed countries can appropriate part of the surplus value created in the less developed countries. This extra profit counteracts the sinking of the rate of profit. By foreign trade, the movement towards collapse is slowed down, and as this, with the development of accumulation, becomes a matter of life and death to the capitalist system, it leads imperialist expansion to become more and more violent.

The international character of crisis develops with foreign trade. The same factor also leads to the development of world monopolies, yet even though so much capital has been accumulated that further accumulation, though necessary, is unprofitable, a collapse of the system need not follow as long as sufficient capital in the form of foreign loans and investments can find a new and satisfactory basis for "utilisation". This makes the export of capital characteristic of imperialism. All these elements, concentrated in imperialism, are remedies against the insufficiency of profits. The final consequence of imperialism is the political annexation of foreign territories, so that the securing of an additional stream of surplus value helps to postpone capitalist collapse. As the progress of accumulation makes the threat of collapse more imminent, the imperialist tendencies are proportionally strengthened.

IV. Permanent Crisis

We have previously shown that the Marxist theory of accumulation is the law of the collapse of the capitalist system. We have further demonstrated that this law is overcome by counter-tendencies for certain periods. But these counter-tendencies are themselves overcome in the course of development or lose their effect through overaccumulation. Rationalisation becomes failing rationalisation. Amalgamation, or merging of industrial units, is made unfavourable by the dead weight of closed-down units. Wage-cutting and intensified exploitation also have their limits. The workers cannot permanently be paid below their cost of reproduction. Dead and starving workers produce no surplus value. The shortening of the time of capital turn-over has its limits beyond which it breaks the continuity of production and circulation. Even if commercial profits were eliminated altogether, the sinking of the rate of profit would still continue. Foreign trade as a counter-tendency eliminates itself by turning capital-importing countries into capital exporting countries by forcing their industrial development through a hot house growth. As the force of the counter-tendencies is stopped, the tendency of capitalist collapse is left in control. Then we have the permanent crisis, or the death-crisis of capitalism. The only means left for the continued existence of capitalism is then the *permanent, absolute and general pauperisation of the proletariat*.

In previous crises it has been possible to regain sufficient capital "utilisation" without permanent cutting of real wages. Marx said: "In the measure as capital accumulates, the situation of the workers, whatever its pay, high or low, must become worse". All statistics available show that accumulation and pauperisation of the workers are two sides of the same process. But in the period of the rise of capitalism only a relative, but not necessarily absolute, pauperisation of the workers took place. This fact formed the basis for reformism. Only when the proletariat *must necessarily be absolutely pauperised are objective conditions ripe for a real revolutionary movement*.

If, instead of misleading ourselves by the actual increase of nominal wages in the United States during the last three decades, we examine the trend of wages in relation to production, we shall have a true picture of the relative pauperisation of the American proletariat. If we divide the index of real wages by the index of production, we have the index of the purchasing power of the workers.

Year	Index of purchasing	Year	Index of purchasing
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	power		power
1899	100	1922	73
1904	91	1923	68
1909	70	1924	76
1914	70	1925	68
1919	65	1926	68
1920	67	1927	71
1921	91	1928	70

The purchasing power of factory workers in the United States has not increased in proportion to the total product of the factories; it has lagged. The workers' position is relatively worse. This is true in spite of real wages having increased from 100 in 1900 to 123.6 in 1928. But in the same period the volume of production increased from 100 in 1899 to 283.8 in 1928. The workers lived better, but were more exploited in 1928 than in 1900. To Marx this relative pauperisation *was only a phase of absolute pauperisation*. If wages at first only decline relatively to general wealth, they later decline absolutely as the quantity of commodities falling to the worker's share becomes absolutely smaller. This relative worsening of the workers' position in the face of absolute improvement, only continues as long as conditions permit sufficient increase in the mass of surplus value to allow sufficient "utilisation" of capital. In the final phase of capitalism, the surplus is insufficient for the maintenance of both previous wage levels and satisfactory "utilisation". Therefore, the crisis can now only be overcome by a satisfactory rate of accumulation and the re-establishment of profits at the cost of the workers. What differentiates the final from all previous crises is that with renewed profitable operation the wage level cannot be re-established – that the latter will sink permanently in times of "prosperity" as during the crisis. While capital "overcomes" the crisis, the workers remain under its sway, and if they refuse to let themselves be destroyed, they have no other recourse but the abolition of the capitalist system.

The level of world industrial production is today below the scale of 1904. The depression is world-wide. Relative to the high stage of accumulation, the crisis may vary from country to country, but the international character of the crisis is everywhere perceptible. The shrinking of the domestic market sharpens competition in the world market which likewise shrinks due to protective tariffs. The shrinkage of world trade intensifies the crisis by making their economic and financial status more precarious. These events are paralleled by a heavy loss in profits. The condition of bank capital is catastrophic. The number of unemployed in the United States alone in 1933 was about 16 millions. All this indicates that the present crisis in the United States as everywhere differs from all previous crises by its extent and intensity. It is the greatest crisis in capitalist history; whether it will be the last for capitalism, as well as for the workers, depends on the action of the latter. The "Roosevelt prosperity" in the United States to which the bourgeois press referred as the "end" of the depression was of a very temporary character and did not affect the world crisis at all. Anything the US did gain for a short while was a loss for some other country. The inflationary policy allowed the United States to compete better on the world market, but only as long as the other countries were

not ready to hit back, by inflating their own money or find other means of fighting the American competition. Inflation as the means of general wage cutting and the elimination of the middle class, as well as the elimination of profit-eating bank capitalists, to a certain extent may spur production because this again becomes profitable for a short while. *But this profit is only gained by a pauperisation process, not only of relative but of absolute character. It is a "boom" in the death-crisis, a gain that does not indicate development but decay. It shows that we are not at the "end", but only at the beginning of the crisis.*

The actual beginning of the present depression in the United States is always connected with the stock market crash, though the latter was the effect rather than the cause of the crisis which had already begun. As far back as 1927 the "utilisation" of capital in the US had become more and more difficult. The falling rate of profit indicated the over-accumulation. But in spite of that, expansion of industry took place until 1929, but not to such an extent as would have been necessary according to the rate of accumulation in previous years, and on the basis of accumulated capital already existing. Industrial profits, which could not more fully be reinvested in industry, flowed to the banks. The surplus lay fallow in the banks; deposits in member banks of the Federal Reserve System was, by the end of 1927, 17 billions of dollars more than in 1926. While an increase of 5% was considered normal, this amounted to 8%. Simultaneously, available credit grew. Speculative loans for the stock market and speculatively inflated stock quotations were the result, bringing on the Wall Street fever of speculation ending in the stock market crash. But the speculative fever was only the index of the lack of possibilities for sufficient productive investments. As the surplus of capital lowered the rate of interest to 1 percent, the industrial crisis was followed by a bank crisis; and in spite of the low rate of interest, from which the bourgeois economists expected the turn towards prosperity, no credit was demanded by industry. The "Chicago Daily Tribune" writes: "What idle money has piled up in banks had difficulty in finding safe outlets, interest rates dropped but loans and investments did not increase". This situation is not peculiar for the United States, but general throughout the whole world. JP Morgan testified at a Senate inquiry: "The depression, for the first time as far as I know in the history of the world, is so widespread no country can lend money in any other. At the present time, there is no demand for capital for industry."

This situation can, nevertheless, only be overcome by further accumulation; ie — expansion of the productive apparatus or renewal of the fixed capital on a larger scale. The mass necessary for accumulation is dependent on the previous volume of fixed capital regardless of whether this has only been utilised at half of its capacity, because accumulation is determined by the rate of speed it has previously gained; and this accumulation must take place on a lower price level as expansion of production is coupled with a fall in prices. Therefore, if accumulation is to continue, then the expansion of production must lower the cost of production so that the expected mass of profit will compensate for the fall in the rate of profit. For this reason, "Barrons Weekly" says in its yearly survey: "the extent to which the pressure of accumulating capital may be effective in promoting economic recovery depends on whether the necessary adjustments have been made in other parts of the mechanism — in cost of production and prices, in supply and demand relationship for individual commodities, and in the governmental services, in their cost to the taxpayer and their real value to the country; in short, on whether capital can earn a profit and keep it".

A static system of capitalism is an impossibility; capital must either go forward, ie — accumulate, or collapse. Accumulation presupposes reestablishment of profitable operation; hence we see violent efforts on an international scale to achieve this end. But

all previous measures taken to overcome the depth of the present crisis have failed miserably.

As we have said before, the resumption of profitable operation depends on the lowering of the organic composition of capital, or the increase, by other means, of the surplus value. The devaluation of capital lowers the organic composition. In practice, this means the ruin of many individual capitalists; from the point of view of total capital, from the point of view of the system, it means rejuvenation. The devaluation of capital is a continuous process, an expression of increased productivity of labor, but in the crisis it progresses violently. The increased rate of bankruptcies shows that the devaluation of capital is also taking place today. But bankruptcies, while expressing the speedy and violent devaluation taking place, are not symptoms of an intensification of the crisis; up till now they have been aids in overcoming it. In all previous crises, the number and speedy growth in the number of bankruptcies were connected with a speedier overcoming of the crisis. That today this effect is gone merely proves that accumulation has reached a point where devaluation ceases to be an effective element in overcoming the crisis.

There are not enough bankruptcies, or the devaluation accomplished is insufficient to lower the organic composition of capital enough, to make continued profitable accumulation again possible. This fact is closely connected with the structural change in capitalism from competition to monopoly capital.

“Classical” capitalism answered a crisis with a general fall in prices that led to widespread bankruptcies and forced the survivors to adapt themselves to the new price level by installing new machinery. The demand of fixed capital felt in some industries caused other industries to be drawn into the boom. But in monopoly, or as Lenin called it, “stagnant” capitalism, the crisis does not have the same results. Here we have a prolonged condition of huge masses of industrial machinery lying idle without being destroyed as the characteristic feature of crisis under monopoly capitalism. The reserve funds of fixed capital created by monopoly capitalism are, in boom periods, put at the service of production and make the construction of additional enterprises unnecessary, and thereby increase the difficulties of a transition to expanding production. When the crisis comes, production is restricted, and when later the demand increases it is supplied by opening the closed enterprises. In this manner technical progress is hindered by monopoly capitalism, and the market for means of production narrowed. How small the importance of violent devaluation of capital is can be seen when one compares the monopolies with the total of socially productive forces. (We have in the United States 37 tyre producers; five of them account for 70% of the total production, the other 32 divide the remaining 30% among themselves. In the automobile industry, 75% of the total production is accounted for by two enterprises: General Motors and Ford. Two steel trusts (US Steel and Bethlehem) control 52% of the total steel production. In the meat packing industry 70% of the total production is controlled by four firms: Swift, Armour, Wilson and Cudahy.) In other industries similar situations are found. What effect can the collapse of small enterprises have here? The fusion of capital and the resulting strengthening of monopolies strengthen this tendency towards stagnation and decay, which really means that permanent depression is a characteristic of monopoly capitalism. Even the huge writing down of capital values is only a raid on the small share holders, but not a move towards recovery. It is also clear that a technical revolution scrapping huge masses of capital by antiquating them, cannot be expected today since the restriction of productive forces has become a “necessity” of capitalism. To expect an end of depression through devaluation is to pin hope on a still higher form of capitalism than monopoly-capitalism, and that is impossible within the framework of private property in the means of production. (State capitalism is not a higher economic form of monopoly capitalism, but only a different political mask

trying to straighten out the maladjustments of class forces, which due to the narrowing down of the ruling class and its retainers under monopoly capitalism needs more direct state interference to maintain class rule.)

To increase the mass of surplus value, the cost of production must be lowered. This is attempted through the process of general rationalisation; but increased rationalisation leads to irrationalisation. For a time the profits of individual enterprises are increased by its application, but the net income from the total social labor is diminished. Individuals become richer, society poorer. How far this sort of rationalisation has gone can be seen by the researches of the technocrats. Rationalisation is only effective when the saving in wages made possible is greater than the increased cost of fixed capital made necessary. Rationalisation causes the shut-down of many enterprises, and therefore the saving in wages must exceed, not only the increased cost of fixed capital in the rationalised enterprises, but in addition, balance the loss caused by depreciation of fixed capital in idle enterprises. If the costs of fixed capital are increased, all enterprises become more sensitive to downward fluctuation of economic activity. Rationalisation, therefore, leads to an increase instead of a decrease in cost of production, and thus increases the difficulties of overcoming the crisis. By overdeveloping the productive apparatus, rationalisation at a high stage of accumulation hastens the collapse of capitalism instead of delaying it. The American productive apparatus was rationalised in the years of prosperity following 1921, and this was one of the causes of the length of that phase. In spite of continued rationalisation, the crisis arrived and created a situation which hardly allowed the utilisation of 50% of the rationalised enterprises, and thereby annulled the increase in surplus value gained by rationalisation. This case of "irrationalisation" shows definitely the impossibility of recovery through further rationalisation.

Increase in surplus value through shortening the time of capital turnover, likewise finds its objective limits in the development of accumulation. The period of turnover of total capital has been prolonged by the decreased utilisation of fixed capital. The same rate of profit for one period of turnover becomes thus a much smaller yearly rate of profit. The fall of prices, though limited by monopoly capitalism, today outweighs the still remaining possibilities of reducing the period of turnover. Decreasing the stock to raise the rate of profit is limited by the demand for continuity in production and circulation. Outside of this, the action of the crisis causes an increase in the stock of unsold commodities that further decrease the rate of profit both by the cost of storing and by the further causing a fall in prices through forced sales. The net effect is that stock on hand increases, the period of turnover is prolonged, and the rate of profit falls. The increased stock is especially evident in raw materials. The world's supply of raw materials were at the end of 1929 – 192, and 1933 – 265. To reduce them to normal would mean the cessation of world production for months.

The cost of circulation increases due to sharpened competition during the crisis. While the number of workers engaged in production permanently decreases, the number of those in distribution increases. (Advertising expenses alone have lately been over a billion dollars a year in the United States.) This naturally further decreases profits.

In the crisis of 1920 and 1921, 30% of all enterprises in the United States were idle representing approximately a 30 billion dollar investment. If depreciation and maintenance is estimated at 10%, this means a clear loss of three billion dollars or the value of the labor of one and a half million workers. This takes place today on an even larger scale causing a further fall in the rate of profit. As 16 million workers are unemployed in the United States, it becomes necessary for those employed besides compensating for the causes already mentioned, also to produce as much additional surplus value as these workers would have produced if employed, or the mass of profit

will decrease and sufficient accumulation becomes still more difficult. The decrease in the mass of profit sharpens the struggle for its division. The banks have advanced capital to industrial enterprises during the period of prosperity; credit that was based on prices as they then were. Falling prices “freeze” these credits and cause, first, industrial bankruptcies, and second, bank failures, hastening the process of concentration of capital generally. At the same time, there has been an enormous change in the division of profits between industrial and money capital in favour of the latter. The acuteness of the crisis and the price fall makes the load of debts unbearable for industrial capital. Only a general reduction of debts makes general bankruptcies unnecessary. This is done through inflation, which unloads the liquidation of these debts on the workers, the professional middle class, and money capital.

The depth of the crisis is also shown in the vicious attacks of capital on the standard of living of the middle class groups. In spite of increasing expropriation of the middle classes, reducing those catering directly to capitalist consumption, the crisis continues to deepen, nullifying those methods of retaining a greater part of surplus value in the hands of the capitalist class. But after all, these groups could only be eliminated once, and even before this was done, another barrier would have been set up against further expropriation of them by the fact that the continued rule of the capitalist class depends on their existence. And in contradiction to these strenuous efforts to eliminate expenditures for unproductive activity, these expenditures are increasing. The growth in taxation was more rapid than the growth of the national income in the United States. Increasing pauperisation causes increasing relief expenditures, and increasing expenditures for the purpose of violent repressions of revolt, and for imperialist designs.

In the present crisis, a fall in the ground rent “has to some extent softened the fall in the rate of profit” but at the cost of raising the threat of agrarian revolt. As a matter of self-preservation, it has been necessary for the capitalist class to counteract these tendencies favourably to themselves by allotment plans, agrarian protective tariffs, price subsidies, etc. A sufficient increase of profit by a decrease in ground rent cannot longer be expected.

In this crisis, all forces working towards overcoming it have thus either neutralised each other, or have been insufficient! This even applies to the strongest imperialist means of recovery: capital export. During the last years there has practically been no capital exported from the United States. In other imperialist countries, the situation is similar. This has sharpened the competitive struggle for the world market tremendously between all industrial nations. The profit flowing back to the United States from previous capital export in the form of interest on foreign investments can neither be invested here or abroad. Simultaneously, the United States makes it impossible for the debtor nations to pay interest by forcing them out of their markets for means of production. This also makes it impossible for them to buy raw materials and foodstuffs, as they are unable to sell means of production to pay for them. The end of this development must either be an insoluble, irrational crisis, or a new world-scale butchery.

The law of accumulation is the law of the collapse of capitalism. A collapse delayed by counteracting tendencies until these tendencies have spent themselves or become inadequate in face of the growth of capital accumulation. But capitalism does not collapse automatically; the factor of human action, though conditioned, is powerful. The death crisis of capitalism does not mean that the system commits suicide, but that the class struggle assumes forms that must lead to the overthrow of the system. There is, as Lenin said, no absolutely hopeless situation for capitalism; it depends on the workers as to how long capitalism will be able to vegetate. The “Communist Manifesto” sounds the alternative: Communism or Barbarism! A static capitalism is impossible; if the

accumulation cannot continue, the crisis becomes permanent, and the condition of the workers will continually worsen. Such a crisis is barbarism!

Today, half the workers in the great industrial countries are unemployed and the enormous increase of exploitation does not compensate for the smaller number of workers employed; and still there is no other way for capitalism but continuous attacks on the workers. The general, absolute and permanent pauperisation of the workers has become an absolute necessity to the existence of capitalist society. Thus, according to Marx, the final and most important consequence of capitalist accumulation and the final reason for every real crisis is the poverty and the misery of the broad masses, in contradiction to the essential driving force of capitalism to develop the productive forces to such an extent that only the absolute consumption possibilities of society be its barrier. Under such conditions, the bourgeoisie can rule no longer, since, as the “Communist Manifesto” pointed out, “it is unfit to rule because it is incompetent to assure an existence to its slaves within his slavery, because it cannot help letting him sink into such a state that it has to feed him, instead of being fed by him”.

The analysis of capitalist accumulation ends, as Marx said in a letter to Engels: “In the class struggle as a finale in which is found the solution of the whole smear!” In the phase of accumulation where the further existence of the system is only based on the absolute pauperisation of the workers, the class struggle is transformed. From a struggle over wages, hours and working conditions or relief, it becomes, even as it fights for those things, a struggle for the overthrow of the capitalist system of production – a struggle for proletarian revolution.

World-wide Fascism or World Revolution?

Manifesto and Program of the United Workers Party of America. (1934)

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PREFACE.

In a period of world-wide crisis constantly deepening; during a process of general and absolute pauperization of the working-class thru-out the world; in the face of the imperialistic tendencies towards a new world scale butchery; with the sight of the march of fascism covering the globe before us; in spite of the temporary triumph of the capitalist forces on the grave of a once powerful international labor movement, after the most serious defeat of international Communism, the UNITED WORKERS PARTY OF AMERICA presents this small pamphlet to all serious revolutionists, to help them and us to better understand our real situation, and to clear up to some extent the present ideological confusion in which the working class finds itself.

The dialectic movement of the world makes every problem an historical problem. It also changes in its course the role of organizations and ideas. What once was revolutionary becomes with general development, reactionary. Organizations, tactics and ideologies that were once the expression of progressive development of the proletarian

struggle against capitalism, in time and in the course of that struggle become obstacles in the path of further development. What was once revolutionary, in spite of the fact that it is has now become reactionary, lives on as a Tradition in its original content and form, and hinders the development of the new and the real revolutionary forces. This is why it is necessary that the weapon of criticism becomes the criticism of the weapons.

The Party and its Program is but the expression of the role that revolutionary consciousness plays in history. It is a part of history, not history itself. A Program alone is of no value unless it is followed up by action on the part of the working class. If it is practical, if it is realistic, then it becomes a force which in combination with the revolutionary forces created by the objective conditions brought about by capitalist development itself, may be able to shorten the birth-throes of the new society.

It is our opinion that we are not at the end but at the beginning of the general crisis of world capitalism; and parallel to this objective situation, we are not at the end but at the beginning of a real revolutionary labor movement, which must and will develop on an entirely new principle and tactical basis. Beginnings are always difficult and every revolutionary voice is first a voice in the desert, but we are convinced that sooner or later reality itself will move toward the advanced thought and what seems today still an abstraction will become the actual practice of the fighting proletariat. Traditions must be broken down to bring about unity between theory and practice. Revolution is only possible when this *unity* becomes an actuality. The purpose of this pamphlet is to help the revolutionary movement come closer to this situation.

THE UNITED WORKERS PARTY OF AMERICA.

March 1934.

World Wide Fascism or World Revolution?

THE PERIOD of GENERAL CRISIS for CAPITALISM.

Five years of crisis on a world-wide scale have passed. All tendencies are pointing to a further deepening of the international crisis. Industrial world production is below the scale of 1914 and is decreasing. The unemployed army, although it has already one-half of the industrial world proletariat in its ranks, increases still further. The economic-political chaos forces everything in its deadly downward trend. The theories of the economists of the ruling class become more ridiculous, and the illusions of the petite-bourgeoisie change to a deadly fear. From an advancing element, Capitalism has become a restricting one. Its movement toward collapse is a situation of catastrophes which bring to the human race increasing misery and suffering on a larger scale than in any previous crisis.

Traditions hinder the workers from *grasping* the fact that the present depression cannot be overcome within the capitalistic boundaries. The hope which the ruling-class has planted in the heads of the workers, that a new boom-period will come, has not vanished although it is becoming ever *more* difficult to defend the system as illustrated by its daily practice. Capitalism has surpassed many crisis and depressions during its development. Each of these crises was but a step for further progressive development which made the basis for a new crisis on a higher plane; but each depression period was followed by an upswing, a boom. All other depressions were overcome, so why not this one also? The world-wide extent and the depth of the present crisis may explain its intensity and its length, but it cannot prove the permanency of its character.

It is necessary that the working-class should understand that the present crisis is permanent for capitalism. The analysis of the present situation must take into consideration the fact that we are living in a new historical period; a period of positive decline for the capitalist order. On the position that the labor movement takes in relation to the crisis and the final collapse of capitalism, will the real character of the movement be shown. If it fails to explain, on the basis of the laws of motion of present society, the tendencies of the present system, then it will fail in its task.

The Historic Extent of Capitalistic Development.

The capitalist process of reproduction repeats itself, not in the form of circle, but as a spiral narrowing to a point. Capitalist production must, due to its inherent contradictions, lead to its own negation; but only the accumulation of these contradictions can transform them into something different; into revolution.

According to Marx, the development of the productive forces of society is the motive power of historical development. When the productive forces increase, then productive relations also must change so as not to become contradictory to this development. Capitalism as an economic system had the historical mission of developing the productive forces of society to a much greater extent than was possible under any previous system. The race for profit under capitalism is the motive force in the development of the productive forces. For this reason then, this process of development can continue only as long as it is profitable. There is no economic collapse as long as the profit made, satisfies the wants of a progressive accumulation. When accumulation can no longer be resumed, as in the present crisis, then capitalism has reached its historic extent. It then goes into the stage of decline. It is only in this period that a REAL revolutionary movement of the workers becomes possible.

Marx always considers the economic laws of motion from two points of view; first, as “a process of natural history”; second, in its specific, social, historical forms. The development of productive forces went on in every social system; a process consisting in an ever increasing productivity of labor, due to better working tools and methods. The productive process has in a capitalistic system besides its natural, general content, which it shares with all other economic system, also the form of being a process producing values and surplus value. Due to that feature, capitalism has been able to accelerate the development of the productive forces so tremendously. The productive forces are not only machines, raw materials and labor power, but also capital. Their development means the expanding of production and reproduction of capital, and this is only possible when surplus value or profit is the result of the production process. By analysis of the process of producing surplus value, Marx finds the tendency of a conflict between the material productive forces and their capitalistic integument. When insufficient surplus value results from production, there is no possibility of continuing the development of the productive forces. The capitalistic forms must then burst asunder to make place for a higher, *more* advanced, economic and social system.

The Accumulation Process of Capitalism.

The general progressive development of man-kind is expressed in all forms of societies by the development of the means and methods of production. This results in an increase in the productivity of labor, of the mass of products by a decrease in the actual exercised labor-power. In Capitalism this expresses itself by more and more capital being invested in means of production and less and less for labor. It is true of course that when Capitalism is on the upswing, then as there is invested more and more capital in the means of production, the amount of capital invested in labor-power increases also, but

slower than the first. On a high spot of the capitalistic development the number of workers employed in relation to the total capital does not only decrease relatively but also absolutely. Since the exploitation of workers is the only source of profits this already indicates that the profits of the capitalist must decrease with an increasing accumulation.

The increase of the organic composition of capital is accompanied by a falling rate of profit. This falling rate of profit alone is of no danger to capitalism as long as it has the possibility of accumulating faster than the rate of profit sinks. This is made possible by an increase in exploitation as well as with the expansion of the fields of capitalistic production. But even if the increase in the mass of profit compensates for the fall in the rate of profit, or even exceeds the later, the mass of profit grows slower than the amount of profit which is needed to satisfy the ever increasing needs of accumulation. The fall in rate of profit is an index to the relative fall in the mass of profit which in a higher stage of accumulation becomes an absolute fall.

If accumulation is to continue, more and more of the surplus-value produced by the workers must be used for the development of the productive apparatus; decreasing by this, the parts intended for additional labor and for the consumption of the capitalists. Eventually this process has to come close to a point where all of the surplus-value is needed if a sufficient accumulation should be made possible. At this point the capitalist are forced to increase the exploitation of the workers tremendously so as to make possible some profit to compensate for this development. The class struggle sharpens. If the amount of surplus-value produced should not be sufficient for the needs of the accumulation process, despite the most intense exploitation, then the process of accumulation stops and Crisis results.

A standstill in the accumulation process leads to a general crisis affecting all spheres of production. The capital which is too small to be profitably reinvested now becomes in actuality a surplus of capital. The growth of Capital has been faster than growth of possibilities for profitable expansion. Over-accumulation is the result; which means on the one hand a surplus of capital which cannot be reinvested in profitable production and on the other a vast army of unemployed who can no longer find jobs. Only with the possibility of profit can the process of accumulation be resumed; if this possibility is excluded, then the crisis of necessity becomes permanent in character. A permanent crisis means for Capitalism, collapse.

The Collapse of Capitalism and its Counter-tendencies.

Marx's theory of accumulation is the law of capitalist collapse. The tendency of collapse is expressed in the crisis and is overcome in the crisis. **If crisis are an expression of collapse, then the final collapse is nothing but a crisis unhampered by countertendencies.**

Counter-tendencies are in the main, try-outs to re-establish expansion of capital on a profitable basis by reorganizing of the total mechanism of production and distribution. In all previous crisis the success of these counteracting tendencies changed the depression to a new boom period. Rationalization generally, lowering of production costs, lowering of wages, lowering the income of the capitalist middle class, capital depreciations, writing off of capital, devaluation of capital, securing extra surplus-value by imperialistic expansion, imperialistic movements to get cheaper raw materials, improving the relation to markets domestically and on the world market, and many other factors act as tendencies to aid Capitalism overcome crisis.

The tendencies against the collapse of Capitalism however, are like everything else, also of an historical nature. In the course of development they lose their power or are overcome entirely. At a certain point in capitalistic development intensifying the

productivity of labor does not increase but decreases profits. The pauperization of the working-class *has its* absolute limits. Capitalist expansion on a world-scale reaches its limits before it reaches the natural borders of the world. There is an absolute limit to which capitalist production can be expanded and developed. The tendencies which have successfully operated to help Capitalism out of previous crisis have failed in the *present* depression. They no longer exist as countertendencies or they are too weak in relation to the depth of the present crisis of international Capitalism.

The conclusion that this crisis is permanent and that we are in the dying stage of the Capitalist system depends on the analysis of the counteracting tendencies. If there are any possibilities for restoring profits, further accumulation, further expansion, then these must be considered.

Monopoly Capitalism and the Vanishing Counter-tendencies.

Monopoly Capital in a depression, restricts production by closing some of its enterprises. If a larger demand sets in, it satisfies this by reopening the necessary plants or factories. The big reserve of productive capacities in Monopoly Capitalism does not necessitate new and big investments for fixed capital. In this sense it restricts also technical progress. At a higher stage it restricts the development of the markets for means of production instead of developing them.

The possibility of a technical revolution which would lead to the moral depreciation of large masses of capital can no longer be expected because the restriction of the productive power has become a "life necessity" for monopoly capitalism. This is true even though it indicates a process of collapse for the system. Capitalism now lives by dying.

In previous crisis the devaluation of capital has been an important factor toward recovery. It has lowered the organic composition of capital and by this made the total capital smaller so that profits became relatively higher. In previous crisis too, after the mass bankruptcies had forced out great numbers of capitalist enterprises, the ones who survived were forced by competition in a period of dropping prices to lower their production costs. New and bigger machines which could operate at a profit at the new lower price level were needed. The demand for new fixed capital increased and this demand carried with it other industries into a new boom. In the present crisis however the large amount of bankruptcies did not have a similar effect.

How little a forced devaluation of capital in monopoly capitalism means becomes clear if we confront the production of monopoly capital in relation to the total social production. There are industries where 90% of the total social production is done by monopoly capital. This is especially true in the U. S. Almost the half of the total social production on an international scale, in the most important branches of production, is done by monopoly capital. What result could bankruptcies of small enterprises have under this condition? The present depression has demonstrated that this counter-tendency, devaluation of capital, is about gone.

Rationalization still may enrich an individual capitalist and in some instances solve their individual problems; but for society as a whole, the rationalization process in monopoly capitalism tends to make society poorer. It may still bring about a saving in wages and decrease the production costs but all that is saved is eaten up by nonproductive expenses coming from the idle capital in the form of closed enterprises and by the *further* restriction of the market possibilities as a result of the process itself. In the later stage of accumulation it becomes a failing rationalization; it no longer serves as a medium to overcome the crisis but tends to deepen the depression.

The export of capital, which in Imperialism is one of the most powerful means for capitalist upswing and a most important factor for overcoming crisis, has decreased to almost nothing on an international scale. Imperialist competition for foreign markets became ever more sharp as a consequence. The tendencies toward war on a world proportion continues as a constant menace.

The present crisis is distinguished from all previous ones by the fact that the counteracting tendencies are either not present or are too weak to operate successfully and restore profits to a point where further expansion is possible, where idle capital can be put to work and the process of capital accumulation again be resumed.

Capitalism In Its Death-crisis.

The decrease in the total surplus value intensifies the struggle between the different capitalist groups for their portion of the surplus value. The political maneuvers of the different interests mirror this economic situation. The severity of the present crisis for example, makes it impossible for industrial capital to pay obligations to bank capital or to even pay the interests on this money. Industrial bankruptcies are followed by bankruptcies of banking capital. Inflation and similar measures are taken to liquidate these debts and the cost of this liquidation is foisted onto bank capital, the middle classes and the working class.

In its struggle to increase its available profits capitalism is forced to make heavy onslaughts against the petite-bourgeoisie to eliminate as much of the profit consuming middle stratas as possible. The growth of the middle class goes slower than the process of their proletarianization. The total elimination of the middle class however is impossible in capitalism because in order to assure its own existence capitalism needs the middle class.

With the death crisis of monopoly capitalism the chronic agrarian -crisis deepens. The disproportion between the industrial prices and the prices of the agrarian products has forced the farmers *in* many countries of the world into open rebellion. Reluctantly capitalism is compelled to make concessions *to* the agrarian population in the form of tariff reforms, loans *and* credit by the state, stabilizing of prices, direct relief in exchange for a decrease in production, etc. These concessions however are usually made at the expense of the workers.

The process of pauperization of the working class develops concomitant with the development of Capitalism. *On* the upswing of capitalism it acts as a relative pauperization but in the death crisis this changes to absolute pauperization. Wage cuts and general worsening of the conditions of the proletariat results *in* mass misery. To prevent social unrest the capitalists are forced to dispense relief. They are also forced to strengthen their "power of coercion" the repressive power of the state *to* prevent uprisings. The maintenance of the state becomes more and more expensive. In contradiction to the necessity of increasing profits for Capitalism, there is a decrease in available profits and with it an increase in the cost for unproductive things.

As the crisis deepens the possibilities for even partial recovery diminish and capitalistic collapse as a tendency becomes more and more active. Political collapse as a tendency follows but here are also counter-tendencies which must be considered.

TENDENCIES TOWARDS "STATE CAPITALISM" and "A PLANNED ECONOMY."

The hope that capitalism will overcome its present crisis, presupposes the other hope that it is possible to develop a higher economical form than monopoly capitalism. This hope is impossible within the framework of private property. "State Capitalism" is in

an economic sense not a higher from *than* monopoly capitalism, but only a new face for the latter. It is a political measure to counteract the political dangers accompanying the class-shiftings in the last phase of capitalism. The political basis of the ruling class becomes too small at this stage, and it has to engage state power in the interest of monopoly capitalism more directly.

The shortage of profits and the impossibility of overcoming the depression, leads to intensification of the struggle for the division of surplus value. The social-political relations in capitalism become very unstable. The struggle between financial, industrial and agrarian interests intensifies the fight for the control of government. This struggle is but a political reflex of the deepening world-crisis. In spite of many possible modifications, the strongest capitalist group, Monopoly Capital, will finally control the situations.

The Struggle of the Middle Strata.

The middle class which lives directly or *indirectly* on surplus-value, have no economic or political common cause with the proletariat, although they often try to engage the workers for their special cause. Their hope and their struggle is to promote themselves from their petite position into the position of a real bourgeois. This is only possible when capitalism functions; and chances are better when it functions well. The actual pauperization of the middle class as a rule does not at first change their attitude against the working-class, but only sharpens their struggle to escape a proletarian status. They become, not less, but more, capitalistically inclined. As long as their hopes can be retained, they remain the allies of the ruling class, and with them, the strongest force against proletarian revolution.

The Agrarian Interests.

The farmers generally, with the exception of those whom by the industrialization of their farm enterprises already regard themselves as capitalists, have different interests from the industrial and financial capitalists. Development is partially based on the destruction of the old style farm. It is to the interests of capital to hold the profits of the farmers as small as possible, to assure themselves bigger profits. To cut wages in industry, it is necessary to have cheap prices for farm products. The technical backwardness of the agrarian production has allowed the farmers certain privileges as their profits were not in-calculated in the average rate of profit. The elimination of the farmers profit, means the easing of the burden of the depression for the capitalist. By the use of more and more fixed capital in agriculture, this privilege of the farmers is being eliminated, but before the whole of agriculture is really industrialized, it has still a long way to go. In the meantime, the struggle between the farmer and the capitalist will never cease, and this struggle is only another expression of the growing socialization of labor. The increasing specialization of agrarian production enables capital also move and more to control prices and profits of the farmers.

The farmer does not fight against Capitalism, but for their “interests” inside of Capitalism. The farmers defend their private property which is endangered by the expropriation process of monopoly capital. The struggle will continue as long as capitalism lasts. In the struggle one part of the farmers will be played against the other part.

A situation of energetic struggle for existence results, each striving to avoid elimination. The farmers become more radical and also more rebellious, but in a reactionary sense. The struggle of the farmers for their private property does not bring them closer to the workers, but makes them more of an enemy of the working-class.

The policy of the farm movement sometimes looks very friendly to the workers hoping for their support. Actually they are interested in high wages for the industrial workers, because they are interested in high prices for their products which goes into the consumption of the industrial working class. This attitude, however, changes at once into a bitter fight against the working class when it becomes a question of communism or capitalism. Communism is no solution for the farmers, as communism expropriates their private property and makes it social property. In communism this is a radical act. The expropriation process which goes on in monopoly capitalism is a gradual one and involves only a small fraction of the farmers at a time.

The fronts of the class struggle in monopoly capitalism become clearer than they ever were before. On the one side, they have something to lose, even if this may only be their hopes; but *on* the other side, they have nothing to lose, not even hopes.

In the upswing of capitalism, the concentration and centralization process expressed itself in the continuation of accumulation of the total capital. Now in the decline period of capitalism, this same process is carried on only by the elimination of the weaker capitalists, and by the restriction of and the lowering of the living standards of the middle class and farmers, and the general and absolute pauperization of the *workers*. The tendency toward State Capitalism is the political expression of this process in the stagnation period of monopoly capitalism. Economic concentration necessitates also more political concentration into the hands of the ruling capitalist group.

“State Capitalism” can only be realized as a tendency. It can never be completed. This is another proof for the fact that monopoly capitalism has become a fetter to the social development of productivity. It proves also the permanent character of the present crisis. /

The Tendencies toward a “Planned Economy.”

The tendencies of “State Capitalism” are closely related to the capitalist tendencies towards a more “planned economy.” Attempts are made to copy the Russian example, disregarding the difference in the economic development in the various countries. This is especially true of fascist nations and those who are leaning toward fascism. An intensive propaganda for planned economy which will do away with disproportion in the different fields of production, eliminate competition, regulate wages, labor time, and prices of commodities by the state, is carried on. Even the control of profits is taken into consideration.

Capitalist “planned economy” is an impossibility because the system can only develop and function as long as it is anarchistic. Under capital relation a planned economy would presuppose a static capitalism and a stationary capitalism means a permanent crisis. Even if these theories of planned economy were applied they would be done away with at once as a new boom would set in. A new boom period is only possible with accumulation being resumed. This means impetus to capitalist production not restriction, it means increase not decrease in capitalistic anarchy.

The experiments in “planned economy” tried in the U. S., Italy, and Germany have proofed that this process is only supposed to serve the interests of monopoly capital. They take the form of, forced trustification, organizing of cartels, state credits, wage agreements on the basis of spread the general misery, exploitation of cheap labor of the unemployed, lowering the cost of unemployed relief, etc. All of these things help ; none of them hurt the interests of Capitalism, but they do not solve the crisis.

The New Deal.

The New Deal program of the Roosevelt regime was nothing other than the new conception of the monopoly movement of American capital in the permanent crisis. Its only value for capitalism as a whole was the strengthening of the capitalistic ideology. The means to accomplish this were very simple ones. Roosevelt borrowed from the American Labor Movement, which is still following the conceptions of liberalism, the slogans of reforms. These slogans and ideas were formulated to solve the disproportion in the different fields of production; to do away with unfair competition; to promote higher wages(?); a shorter work day; higher prices.; a better banking system and other phrases that at times became even sensational.

In contrast to the slogans and propaganda of the New Deal, its practice was entirely different. Every one of its attempts failed. Every one of these ideas proved bankrupt. No recovery was attained. No expansion of production set in; industrial credits did not increase and the unemployment figures were not affected. The farm projects remained only as demonstrations of the insanity of the system by its destruction of farm products and its restrictions of production; but in no way did this lift the burden of the farmer. The elimination of "unfair competition" was only directed against the competing sweat-shops of small capitalists, and at that was a means for the further concentration of capital which led to a deepening of the general crisis. The result of shortening the work-day was negated by further rationalization, and did not effect the unemployed situation. All the beautiful theories failed as a means to overcome the depression.

It is true that the C. W. A. gave temporary employment to a large number of the unemployed, which resulted in turn with a slight boom in certain industries; but the statistics prove that the sum of the total wages did not increase, but in actuality decreased. Prices for consumption goods which the workers need grow faster than the wages. With the New Deal the workers, as a class, received less of the total social product than they did before. The Roosevelt policy only increased the tempo of the general pauperization process. It resulted only in a more planned distribution of misery for the working class. Even granting much success in the elimination of competition, the Over-accumulation of Capital is still working and leads to capitalist collapse.

FASCISM.

The decrease in profits in the general crisis, intensifies the class struggle. The political, as well as the economic struggle, becomes sharper. Due to the concentration process, the political basis to rule for capitalism becomes too small. It becomes necessary for the capitalists to strengthen their political forces by engaging the middle class and the farmers to their support. The old democratic methods are not longer satisfactory; they must be exchanged for snappier and more direct methods. A government is no longer sufficient; what is needed is a dictatorship. The ferment and social unrest in the last stage of capitalism must be suppressed and controlled that the system may survive.

The Social Ideology.

Social consciousness is in capitalism an ideology like in all other class societies. The purpose of this ideology is to hide the real character of capitalism; to hide the different class interests and the class struggle. In capitalist reality, no common interests exist. It has to fake, by way of ideology, an appearance of common interest to enable a social practice. The needs of capitalism are identified as the needs of the whole human race.

With the sharpening of the actual class struggle, and the growing contradiction between ideology and reality, it becomes more and more difficult to uphold the sham of class collaboration as being the interests of all classes. It becomes necessary to fight the idea of class struggle more ruthlessly. Capital by way of its middle-class spokesman becomes "social"; it no longer ignores the class struggle but it makes the class struggle responsible for all capitalist difficulties. The class struggle is not a result of the crisis; but now, for capitalism, the crisis is the result of the class struggle. The idea of the class struggle is given as an invention, brought by Marxian criminals into the world. It is dangerous, not only for capital, but for the whole of society. Real "socialism" makes the abolishment of the class struggle necessary. The class struggle is not done away with by the elimination of the classes, but by the destruction of the Marxist class struggle "idea." The middle classes, who prefer to remain as a middle class rather than to become proletarians, take to this idea, and by this are brought into a front with monopoly capital against the workers. The labor-movement has pointed out what distinguishes the classes; now capitalism points to what unites the classes.

Ultra-nationalism also becomes a large part of the capitalist ideology, so Fascism becomes "national-socialistic." The nation is set against the rest of the world, or against special enemies. A "third" factor, not the class system, is responsible for all the misery in which the people find themselves in a particular country. The propaganda for imperialistic adventures is strengthened by this immensely.

Fascism, however, is not necessarily bound to a specific ideology. It may vary with the peculiarities, the history, the degree of development, and other special things in the different countries. The essential thing, however, is the same everywhere. It is developed in order to preserve the existing social order.

The desires of the middle class were better fulfilled in the past than at present. This makes of the Fascist ideology a reactionary one. "Back to the good old times" is the cry of fascism in Europe; "back to the days of the frontier" is the cry in America, but it is reactionary only as an ideology. In reality, it satisfies the further concentration process of capitalism and saves profits for the ruling class.

The fact that fascism exists in the lesser developed countries, also, does not alter the conclusion that it is a form of government under monopoly capitalism. Czarism for example is only distinguished from the German fascism by the fact that in the first case a feudal regime tried to hold power; and in the second, a capitalist regime fights to remain in control of society.

Fascism in the general crisis is a situation of capitalist barbarism. Killing becomes a political science; robbery goes on as economy. Pauperization of the workers, as the only source for making possible profits, makes a passive proletariat necessary. To accomplish this, enough privileges must be given the killers. The rebellion of the middle class is essentially not directed against capitalism, but against their own pauperization. Fascism makes use of all the energies of the middle class, and engages them in the interests of capitalism against the only revolutionary class – the proletariat.

In America, with the breakdown of the New Deal, it is considered a likelihood that the Roosevelt regime will become a fascist dictatorship; but this conclusion is not necessarily correct. Fascism is the best form of government in the permanent crisis for monopoly capital; but it is not an absolute necessity. A dictatorship of the capitalist class, themselves, is possible here where the middle class are relatively weak. Only when a condition exists where the workers are in a menacing condition, when the middle class becomes rebellious, when a really revolutionary situation lies before capitalism, then the ruling class will be forced to further the fascist tendencies.

The new fascist organizations which are being organized in America, and which try to copy the Hitler movement, are not the essential fascist forces; but are merely private enterprises of small politicians. The real fascist reserves are in the older organizations, such as the American Legion and the American Federation of Labor, which have always been the expression of every reactionary force of the middle class and the labor aristocracy. These organizations are not yet fascist because the class struggle has not yet developed to a point where it will be necessary for American capitalism to engage its last reserves. When the middle class become more pauperized than at present, the fascist movement will grow faster in the United States than anywhere else; in fact as the situation stands now in America, fascism has more chance to develop than the revolutionary movement of the workers.

The old labor movement dies with capitalism. This enables fascism, even to draw many workers into their ranks. From social reform, the development leads to social fascism. In spite of this development, however, to escape their misery, nothing else is possible for the working class than to overthrow fascism and the capitalist system. The death crisis is in this respect different from all previous crisis, in that, even if a part of the capitalist class should overcome the depression from the viewpoint of their profits, for the workers the continuation of capitalism means only the constantly worsening of their conditions. The portion the workers get from the social product will be always smaller; starvation and death are the only perspectives under capitalism for the workers.

The international character of the depression, the international character of the class struggle, will force the dictatorship of the ruling class all over the world. Fascism becomes a world menace. To escape this situation, nothing else is possible but that the workers overthrow capitalism with the world revolution. History has set the stage; – World Fascism or World Revolution – Barbarism or Communism.

THE OLD LABOR MOVEMENT.

The economic analysis has shown that the objective situation for social revolution is present. The political situation however is different. In a relative sense the international bourgeoisie was politically never stronger despite their chaotic economic status. The revolutionary working-class movement has suffered one defeat after another culminating with the annihilation of the German movement which was the key to the world revolution. These defeats can be attributed not alone to the unreadiness of the movement, but also to the fact that the workers failed to grasp the significance of the permanent crisis and that the movement did not rid itself of the methods and traditions of the old labor movement which are obstacles to the revolution.

The old labor movement had its beginning and development during the upswing period of Capitalism, a period in which the pauperization process of the workers only occurred in a relative manner. The Marxian theory that with the accumulation of capital the accumulation of misery of the workers went hand in hand, was for the superficial onlooker defeated. Apparently as the productivity increased, so too, the living standard of the workers became better. The fact that in relation to what they produced the workers were getting less and less – that the workers were getting a smaller and smaller part of the social product was ignored. *The* trade-union and social-reform-parliamentary organizations grew and even the political influence of the workers seemed to increase. An opportunistic *policy* wherein the workers gained reforms by aligning themselves with capitalistic groups against other capitalistic groups, thus taking advantage of the divisions amongst the capitalists, showed nothing but the backwardness of the class struggle. This was the basis of the old labor movement in a period when only reforms were possible.

Even the labor movement could only have a capitalist policy. The struggle between capital and labor was for a greater share of the social product – a struggle on the basis of, and inside the framework of capitalist society.

The theory of economic collapse and the principle of revolution was easily lost and in its place grew the ideal of “peacefully growing into socialism” The interests of the labor movement was made identical with the interests of society as a whole, and so in consequence with the interests of the capitalists. For reformism the cause of crisis was the insufficiency of capitalistic organization. The problem was not in capitalist production but in circulation of commodities and in competition. This would be solved by the concentration of capital and by education of the workers to the extent where they would acquire legalistic political power enough to bring socialism about by legislation. The revolutionary struggle was thrown overboard and these capitalistic policies took their place to the degree that the movement became only a tool in the control of capitalism.

From Social Reform to Social Fascism.

With the advent of the World War the pre-war old labor movement which was combined in the Second International, dropped all Socialist phrases and turned to defend the capitalists in the various countries. They proved that their reactionary form was but a cloak for their reactionary content. They also showed in the revolutionary period at the end of the war, that these organizations which were built up to fight for reforms inside of Capitalism, could not take advantage of a revolutionary situation.

In the thunder of the Russian and Middle European revolutionary uprisings the new labor movement was born. A revolutionary movement in a revolutionary period. The goal was the overthrow of the capitalist system. The means, were the new organizations of the workers,- the committees of action, the workers’ councils, the Soviets.

Once more the old labor movement was able to serve Capitalism. It defeated the young revolutionary movement with the slaughter of many thousands of revolutionary workers in Germany, and by taking the control out of the hands of the workers’ Soviets in Russia and instituting the dictatorship of the Bolshevik Party over the workers. With new names, new slogans, and new leaders, the Third International became the center of the newly organized remnants of the old labor movement. A new appearance, but the same old social democratic content. Thus started a new period of trade-unionist horse-trade and parliamentary fakery in which the working-class has gone from one defeat to another.

The Russian Development.

To understand the Third International, the Bolshevik movement with its various oppositions, such as the Neo-bolsheviks of the “Fourth International,” a review of the Russian development is necessary.

The industrial workers who took the lead and fought in the Russian revolution, fought in the interest of communism. The peasants, however, who were the vast majority and the real force of the revolution, did not go beyond the new distribution of soil. Their principle urge was a revolt against Feudal conditions to bring about the possibilities of development of capitalistic agrarian technique. They have been continuously a determining factor in the development of Russia since 1917.

The backward economic character of the country did not allow the building up of a socialist society. The only policy possible under these conditions was to make whatever concessions were necessary, in order to hold power. This policy of making concessions on both a national and international scale has developed to a point where it is now directed against the interests of the industrial world proletariat and the world revolution.

It is true that this policy of concessions was to be adopted only temporarily, and would be abolished as soon as the world revolution would spread over Europe; but with the defeat of the German workers in 1919, and again in 1923,--the hope of a continuing world revolution was given up. The main object now became one of holding and strengthening the power of the Bolshevik Party in Russia.

The Russian Communist Party being the largest in the Third International became the dominating section. The location of the International at Moscow strengthened this tendency. With the national and international interests of Russia as a determining influence, the Third International proceeded to build up mass parties in the various countries to support the Russian development. The different section of the Communist movement were forced to adopt reformistic and opportunistic policies to compete with the parties of the Second International in order to control and use large portions of the working-class. Defense of the Soviet Union became the first principle of all the Communist parties of the Third International. The world revolution of the proletariat was pushed aside, and the first duty now of communists everywhere was the support of the Bolshevik regime and "building socialism in Russia." Any critic against this policy was immediately cast out. The tradition of Bolshevik success of 1917 covered up their counter-revolution practice.

The breathing-spell which was to safeguard the Bolshevik regime led to the growth of a strong bureaucracy. The "Dictatorship of the workers" became a dictatorship of the bureaucracy over the workers. They identified their interests with the interests of the Russian workers, and even with those of the international working-class. All the expediencies which they have found necessary have been done "in the interest of the world revolution." Trade alliances, military alliances with capitalist countries, world peace in order to carry on the industrialization process and to prepare for imperialistic action, killing off of all real revolutionary movements in the name of communism, building up a new system of exploitation of workers under the name of "state communism," sums up the present policy of the bureaucracy and of its tool – the Communist International.

The principle activity of the various sections of the Third International has become one of propaganda on behalf of Russia. By portraying the wonderful progress made in the "Worker's Fatherland," the workers of other countries are to be convinced that to follow the example of the Russian workers is their solution. Here again, as with the Second International, the revolutionary process becomes one of propaganda alone. Some day the workers will be convinced, and as a result of their consciousness they will act. Those who can advertise the best will succeed. This is called "Marxism" and Leninism.

Building "Socialism"?

Lenin's goal: "The worker's state" or "state capitalism under the control of the workers" (which is after all a Utopia) has really led to the development of a state capitalism which controls the workers. All socialist tendencies are being killed, while the capitalist tendencies are becoming stronger. In the prevailing ideology, which is necessary to cover up the realities, it is described as "state communism" and "building socialism." The economic basis, however, is the exploitation of workers. In place of the old Capitalistic and Feudal exploiters, new ones – the organized bureaucracy – are in control. This bureaucracy, not the workers, have control over the means of production and consequently control over the products as well. With this the exploitation of the workers is guaranteed.

It is explained that although exploitation now goes on, it will at a later stage of development, be returned to the workers in the form of social benefits and increasing

wages. The practice of state communism has proven, however, that with its development the workers are not less but more exploited. It is true that they can show that the wages of workers have increased, but they have not increased as fast as productivity. Here we have the relative pauperization process of the workers which in a later stage of development becomes absolute pauperization. In pointing out that there is no unemployment, it proves nothing but the fact that the industrial development has not been able to convert the peasantry into industrial wage-workers as fast as is required by present day technique. At a later stage of industrialization, unemployment must of necessity develop just as in other capitalistic countries.

The wage and capital relation of Russian production, the production of exchange values, the control over the means of production by the bureaucracy and not by the workers, excludes any development towards communism in Russia. This new system of exploitation develops a new ruling class, which is just as much an enemy to the *proletarian* revolution, as were the capitalists before. A new proletarian revolution becomes the perspective of the Russian workers. The capital relation in production is bound to result in increasing misery for the workers, in crisis and ultimate collapse.

The policy of the Third International of converting the character of the communist movement into a defense corps for Russia diverts these organized workers from the actual class struggle, and the real struggle for proletarian revolution and communism.

Bolshevik Traditions.

Traditions from the past always hinder the real development of the present. The workers continue to fight in the class struggle in the same manner they fought in the past. In spite of the fact that both the Internationals have collapsed as revolutionary organizations, the ideology of these organizations still exist and hinder the development of real revolutionary consciousness. In the countries where the labor movement has been destroyed, the workers build up again on the old principles and in the old forms which they had before.

The opposition groups who severely criticize the Third International for its opportunism and its contradictions try to build a Neo-Bolshevist movement. The criticism they offer, however, is purely on the basis of tactics. The incorrect tactics of the Communist International and its various sections result because of the poor leadership.

The question becomes one of good or bad leadership, a position based on pure speculation because no one can tell how long leaders will continue to be good, or how soon they will become bad. The competitive struggle between leaders and bureaucracies in the movement characterizes the struggle between the Communist International and its oppositions. In their fight they try to elevate the struggle between political factions to world history.

The whole program of the Neo-Bolsheviks of the "Fourth International" groups can be summed up in their slogan, "Back to Lenin." As far as Lenin is concerned, he did nothing more nor less than to propose the Marxian demand for the dictatorship of the proletariat in a backward country in a modified form. The modification of this demand, from the dictatorship of the workers to the dictatorship of the party resulted from the backwardness of the country. The Bolshevik success of 1917 is an historical one. The success of their policy at that time does not assure success in another country in another historical period. "Back to Lenin" is in reality a meaningless, stupid phrase. A distinction between Leninism and Stalinism is not possible, as the latter is but the outcome of the former. It is not merely a defeat of Stalinism that confronts the world movement, but the whole Bolshevik period which started with Lenin has found its historical end. The question today has become *Bolshevism* or Communism.

For the Bolshevik movement as well as for the Reformist movement of the Second International, the development of class consciousness was determined by the development of the Party. Without the right Party, without the right tactics and right leadership, the workers were helpless. The workers may fight, but their struggles could not be successful without the right party in the lead. So the Party becomes the determining thing. The correct party is the one with the most correct program and tactic. The correct tactic depends upon the correct leadership, and so in the last analysis, history again becomes the work of great men.

The Trade Union Question.

The struggle of the competing bureaucracies in the movement manifests itself in the attempts of building up mass organizations. With this objective, their approach to the trade union movement becomes one of trying to win workers by working within the trade unions, or shows itself in attempts at capturing control of the unions. An analysis of the trade union movement is necessary.

The success of the trade unions depends on the condition wherein a section of the workers better themselves at the expense of the rest of the working class. It presupposes a division of the workers into the organized minority and the unorganized majority. It can at no time represent the interests of the working class. It can only function in capitalism, and the more stable capitalism is, the better it can function. Its function centers about the fight of the organized section of the workers for reforms in the struggle against the *relative* pauperization process in the upswing period of capitalism. In the permanent crisis when the pauperization process becomes absolute, the trade union movement loses all possibility to function even in the interest of the organized section. Worse, they become not only passive in the struggles between capital and labor, but actually reactionary to the extent that they operate to defeat all real struggles of the workers against the encroachment of capital on their living standard.

Because of the tendency toward spontaneous strikes, and the possibility that the bureaucratic leadership of the trade union movement may lose control of the workers in the last stage of capitalism, it even loses its value for the capitalist class. As a result, it changes to a "bulwark against revolution" and becomes one of the best supporters of the system. By neutralizing large sections of the workers, it is as strong a force in behalf of Fascism as the Fascist movement is by fighting for it.

The "boring from within" policy to capture the unions or to revolutionize the trade unions is just as impossible as the Socialist policy of revolutionizing the capitalist government. The new communist trade unions, in countries where they had a chance to develop, turned just as reactionary as the old ones.

When the capitalist crisis deepens to a dangerous stage, capitalism will destroy the trade unions or make them servile Fascist organizations operating against the workers. They can no longer allow them to function independently because of the danger that the leadership may lose their control and the workers may precipitate a struggle which would be dangerous to capitalism in such a precarious period.

In the permanent crisis, the trade union movement has reached its historical end, and must be demolished as a menace to the revolutionary movement.

Participating In Parliamentary Politics.

The parliamentary-political parties are build up like the trade unions with a bureaucratic leadership at the top who control the members and the activities of the organization. The organization always functions in the interests of the bureaucracy rather than in the interests of the workers.

Parliaments belong to the capitalist class, and the capitalist system. Their function is to serve as an instrument for the legal differences between the capitalist groups inside the system. It is absolutely useless as a “revolutionary Tribunal,” and in the permanent depression cannot even allow the slightest reform in favor of the workers. The use of elections as a “barometer of the ripeness of the working-class” is just another cover for parliamentary fakery a “revolutionary parliamentarism” is impossible as participation in parliamentary activity is based on compromise, and that means the workers must give up their real class interests.

Parliament also serves as a means of putting illusions into the heads of the workers. The active struggle and initiative of the workers is not necessary. The leaders will get the results for them in the parliaments. In the face of growing World Fascism, it is a crime to call for the participation in parliamentary activity which distracts the workers from the real struggle to an illusionary one.

In the last stage of monopoly capitalism, parliamentarism loses its value even for the capitalist class. Even as an ideology, “Democracy” cannot be tolerated. Fascist dictatorship becomes the only means of absolute control necessary to capitalism.

The activity of building up the historically out-worn parliamentary political parties defeats the revolutionary movement of the working class in the fact that they thereby neglect the real class struggle and the real revolutionary movement.

THE NEW REVOLUTIONARY LABOR MOVEMENT.

For Reformism, as well as for Bolshevism, the development of class-consciousness means the development of the Party. The Party is the head, the brain, the director in the class struggle and of the revolution. Without a Party, and especially without a party with the right program and the right tactics, the workers are helpless. The workers may revolt, but without the leadership of the party they cannot fight successfully. The tempo of development of the party is the tempo of the revolution itself. Correct slogans, correct tactics are important and the leadership is the most important of all. The initiative of the masses is killed; discipline to the party-line is what counts. The influence of the party is everything, the revolution is only the result of this influence.

Loyalty to the party means in the last analysis loyalty to the bureaucracy in control. There can be no control of the workers themselves; nor can there be any real united front of the workers possible because of the competition between the various groups of leaders.

The conception of the old labor movement from Kautsky to Lenin, that the workers by themselves will never develop real class-consciousness; that the party is necessary to bring this consciousness to the masses; is a mechanical conception of the role that consciousness plays in the class struggle and has nothing to do with Marx or Marxism. For Marx the revolution of the proletariat is inevitable. It grows out of the social process of the *development* of the productive *powers*. The proletariat, a productive power in itself, a class independent of the ideology of any organization, is the materialization of class-consciousness which results from the dialectic movement of society from a lower to a higher form. Even if revolution and consciousness is an interchanging process, revolution is the primary factor. Revolution not ideology is the determining factor.

Class-consciousness does not have to be expressed in the party-form; it can also be expressed in other organizational forms. If the party *expressed* the crystallization of class-consciousness at one time during the historical process it does not follow that this will always be the case. The fact that never in the last twenty years, has the party been the determining factor in any revolutionary situation is an undisputable fact. The Soviets, the

committees of action, the workers and soldiers councils were the spontaneous expression of the fighting workers.

Revolutionary class-consciousness can be expressed and is expressed in Capitalism as an ideology. But it is more than this; it is also identical with the material struggle of the workers regardless of their ideology. It grows out of the needs and struggles of the workers in action, as the economic and historical process develops. Class consciousness apart from the working-class in action means nothing.

The Soviets.

In the last stage of the period of capitalistic decline, the ruling class cannot tolerate even the slightest economic disturbance. Their position becomes so precarious that they must suppress the least movement on the part of the workers. They are forced to fight the workers as if they were revolutionists, regardless of how backward may be the ideology of these workers. They thereby force the workers to fight back as if they were fighting for revolutionary goals. Against their will, the ruling class teaches the workers the weapon of Civil War. Capitalism not only produces its own grave-diggers, but it also shows them how to fight capitalism successfully.

Fascism will destroy the old labor movement, but will need to build up a new bureaucracy in its place. To hold power, to assure its own existence, the new bureaucracy must suppress the movement of the workers continually. The permanent crisis forces permanent terror, an expression of capitalistic barbarism in its last stage. It may retard the organizing of the workers, but it cannot stop the class struggle.

New organizations will grow and vanish, and again new ones will grow in their place. None of them will be permanent or powerful enough to control large portions of the workers. Big, centralized organizations will no longer be possible in a situation of capitalist dictatorship.

The political necessity of the ruling class, however, to isolate, to atomize the workers as it were, does not change the economic necessity of having workers in large quantities together in factories, in industries, unemployed centers, civil work projects, etc. Where workers are combined together with common interests, common situations, they will organize in the new form which cannot be controlled or destroyed. They will organize for action and select from their own ranks a leadership. The **committees of action** are here the only possible leadership in the workers councils,-the Soviets. The leadership of workers, never separate from the fighting workers, under the control of the workers will suffer in case of defeat just as the workers who are defeated. The Soviets, or workers councils, which have been the real organization of workers in all working-class uprisings, becomes in the permanent crisis of capitalism the only possible form of organization. Capitalist suppression brings into being the organization and instruments of struggle.

These organizations, in spite of their organizational weakness, will have in their ranks the real revolutionists. Their clarity will mean more in the coming mass actions, than the automatic following of leaders which distinguishes the old labor movement. The self-initiative of the workers will characterize these movements. The Soviets becomes the practice of the working-class, and with this – revolution becomes the question of the day. The revolution, is the work of the *proletariat* as a class, and the class can only be brought into action above all party and group interests, and can only be successful in this function in the form of Soviets.

The Role of the Party.

The communist revolutionary party is an instrument of revolution and as such it must serve that purpose. It has no interests separate from the working-class, but is only an expression of the fact that minorities become consciously revolutionary earlier than the broad masses. It uses this advantage only in the interests of the working-class. It does not look for power for itself or for any bureaucracy, but works to strengthen the power of the workers councils, Soviets. It is not interested to hold positions, but to place the power in the hands of workers committees, exercised by the workers themselves. It does not seek to lead the workers, but tells the workers *to* use their own initiative. It is a propaganda organization for Communism, and shows **by example** how to fight in action.

The communist revolutionary party does not compete with other organizations for members or for control of masses of workers. It seeks no power inside of capitalism, so has no use for parliaments or trade unions; but realizing the reactionary nature of these, must fight all organizations which tend to lead workers away from the real struggle and the revolutionary objective.

Because the exploitation of workers in capitalism is only possible because the capitalist class controls the means of production and so also the product, the party will fight not only for the revolution, but to place this control into the hands of the workers. The proletarian revolution for communism must abolish the wage *system*, and so the party stands for doing away with the wage and capital relationship. The party fights against “state communism” for real communism as it fights the dictatorship of the party for dictatorship of the proletariat.

Although the stage is not yet set in the U. S. A. for the final conflict between capitalism and communism, this does not exclude the possibility of a real revolutionary program. The party, because it has no interests separate from the working-class, fights with them *in* their struggles for existence at all times, always pointing to the final necessity of proletarian revolution. The party engages in the struggles for immediate demands as long as the workers themselves are directly and actually engaged in the struggle. It refuses to do anything for the workers, as no one can do anything for them which they cannot themselves accomplish. The party will participate in the struggle of the unemployed, in strikes, and in all activity which will deepen and sharpen the class struggle, and develop the self-initiative and militancy of the workers. The party under no circumstances engages in any form of parliamentary activity, or deals as a medium between capital and labor *in* the union field. It is only interested in the fight and struggle of the workers and in the proletarian revolution; to make *a business* of the labor movement it leaves to its enemies.

We, of the working-class, find ourselves in this the death crisis of capitalism, in a situation of continuously worsening conditions, general wide-spread misery, subject to the onslaughts of a ruthless ‘capitalist class, menaced by a vicious world-wide movement of Fascism, betrayed by the reactionary so-called labor leadership, hampered by outworn traditions, and confronted with numerous intensified struggles. It is necessary in this situation, not only to understand the historic process but also to recognize our enemies. Our duty, our historic task lies before *us*. As the world crisis deepens, the revolutionary situation approaches, wherein must be fought the final conflict against Capitalist barbarism for the dictatorship of the proletariat and for the realization of real communism, – the association of free and equal producers.

PROGRAM of THE UNITED WORKERS PARTY of AMERICA.

The present crisis definitely establishes that Capitalism has passed its zenith and is now in the stages of decline. It will be a permanent crisis as long as the Capitalist order lasts. From now on the Capitalists can only retain their position as ruling class by the general, absolute and continuous pauperization of the working-class. In order to insure this uninterrupted pauperization process, it becomes necessary to discard the democratic political structure and open dictatorship takes its place. World-wide Fascism confronts the working-class, unless they carry through a successful proletarian revolution, establish the dictatorship of the proletariat in the form of Soviets.

The old labor movement cannot fulfill this necessity; they have no chance to survive the onslaughts of the ruling-class. They are unable to fulfill the historic task of the Proletariat. The Reformist, the Trade-union, the Bolshevik and the Neo-bolshevik movements, even against their own wishes, will act in the interests of Capitalism. They must be pushed aside to make room for the workers' Soviets, the fighting organizations of the revolution.

In distinction to other parties, who in their anxiety for numerical strength and influence make concessions to the agrarian classes and petite-bourgeoisie, the United Workers' Party maintains that the only real revolutionary class in society is the proletariat. We fight with the workers in their struggles for immediate demands as long as the workers themselves are engaged in these struggles, always pointing out that the only final solution for the working-class is in the proletarian revolution.

We are opposed to all parliamentary and trade-union activity as these activities can accomplish nothing in the period of permanent crisis, but tend to act against the interests of the workers as a class; only the actual struggle of the workers themselves can accomplish any results. Only during the period of collapse of Capitalism is the proletarian revolution historically possible and the only form of organization which can survive and function successfully during this stage is the *workers'* councils led by the committees of action.

Our theory and practice is a Marxian one, and we consider ourselves the real communist movement of the present and the future. We shall work for unity between groups such as ours in the many countries throughout the world, to bring into being a real revolutionary International on the basis of this program.

The Lenin Legend

(1935)

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The yellower and more leathery the skin of the mummified Lenin grows, and the higher the statistically determined number of visitors to the Lenin Mausoleum climbs, the less are people concerned about the real Lenin and his historical significance. More and more monuments are erected to his memory, more and more motion pictures turned out in which he is the central figure more and more books written about him, and the Russian confectioners mould sweetmeats in forms which bear his features. And yet the fadedness of the faces on the chocolate Lenins is matched by the unclarity and the improbability of the stories which are told about him. Though the Lenin Institute in Moscow may publish his collected works, they no longer have any meaning beside, the fantastic legends which have formed around his name. As soon as people began to concern themselves with Lenin's collar-buttons, they also ceased to bother about his ideas. Everyone then fashions his own Lenin, and if not after his own image, at any rate after his own desires. What the Napoleonic legend is to France and the legend of Fredricus Rex to Germany, the Lenin legend is to the new Russia. Just as people once absolutely refused to believe in the death of Napoleon, and just as they hoped for the resurrection of Fredricus Rex, so in Russia still today there are peasants to whom the new 'little father Czar' has not died but continues to indulge his insatiable appetite in demanding from them ever fresh tribute. Others light eternal lamps under the picture of Lenin: to them he is a saint, a redeemer to whom one prays for aid. Millions of eyes stare at millions of these pictures, and see in Lenin the Russian Moses, St. George, Ulysses, Hercules, God or Devil. The Lenin cult has become a new religion before which even the atheistic communists gladly bend the knee: it makes life easier in every respect. Lenin appears to them as the father of the Soviet Republic, the man who made victory possible for the revolution, the great leader without whom they themselves would not exist. But not only in Russia and not only in popular legend, but also to a large part of the Marxist intelligentsia throughout the world, the Russian Revolution has become a world event so closely bound up with the genius of Lenin that one gets the impression that without him that revolution and hence also world history might possibly have taken an essentially different course. A truly objective analysis of the Russian Revolution, however, will at once reveal the untenability of such an idea.

"The assertion that history is made by great men is from a theoretical standpoint wholly unfounded." Such are the words in which Lenin himself turns on the legend which insists on making him alone responsible for the 'success' or the 'crime' of the Russian Revolution. He considered the world war determining as regards the direct cause of its outbreak and for the time of its occurrence. Yes; without the war, he says, "the revolution would possibly have been postponed for decades longer." The idea that the outbreak and the course of the Russian Revolution depended in very large measure on Lenin necessarily implies a complete identification of the revolution with the taking over of power by the Bolsheviks. Trotsky has made a remark to the effect that the entire credit for the success of the October uprising belongs to Lenin; against the opposition of almost all his party friends, the resolution for insurrection was carried by him alone. But the seizure of power by the Bolsheviks did not give to the revolution the spirit of Lenin; on the contrary, Lenin had so completely adapted himself to the necessities of the revolution that practically he fulfilled the task of that class which he ostensibly combated. Of course it is often asserted that with the taking over of state power by the Bolsheviks the originally bourgeois-democratic revolution was forthwith converted into the socialist-proletarian one. But is it really possible for anyone seriously to believe that a single political act is capable of taking the place of a whole historical development; that seven months — from February to October — sufficed to form the economic presuppositions of a socialist

revolution in a country which was just engaged in getting rid of its feudal and absolutistic fetters, in order to give freer play to the forces of modern capitalism?

Up until the Revolution, and in very large measure even yet today, the decisive role in the economic and social development of Russia was played by the agrarian question. Of the 174 million inhabitants prior to the war, only 24 million lived in cities. In each thousand of the gainfully employed, 719 were engaged in agriculture. In spite of their enormous economic importance, the majority of the peasants still led a wretched existence. The cause of their deplorable situation was the insufficiency of soil. State, nobility and large landed proprietors assured to themselves with Asiatic brutality an unconscionable exploitation of the population.

Since the abolition of serfdom (1861) the scarcity of land for the peasant masses had constantly been the question around which all others revolved in Russian domestic politics. It formed the main object of all reform endeavours, which saw in it the driving power of the approaching revolution, which had to be turned aside. The financial policy of the czarist regime, with its ever new levies of indirect taxes, worsened the situation of the peasants still more. The expenditures for the army, the fleet, the state apparatus attained gigantic proportions the greater part of the State budget went for unproductive purposes, which totally ruined the economic foundation of agriculture.

'Freedom and Land' was thus the necessary revolutionary demand of the peasants. Under this watchword occurred a series of peasant uprisings which soon, in the period from 1902 to 1906, assumed significant scope. In combination with the mass strike movements of the workers taking place at the same time, they produced such a violent commotion in the heart of Czarism that that period may in truth be denoted as a 'dress rehearsal' for the revolution of 1917. The way in which Czarism reacted to these rebellions is best illustrated by the expression of the then vice-governor of Tambiovsk, Bogdanovitch: "Few arrested, the more shot." And one of the officers who had taken part in the suppression of the insurrections wrote: "All around us, bloodshed; everything going up in flames; we shoot, strike down, stab." It was in this sea of blood and flames that the revolution of 1917 was born.

Notwithstanding the defeats, the pressure of the peasants grew more and more menacing. It led to the Stolypin reforms, which, however, were only empty gestures, stopped short with promises and in reality brought the agrarian question not a single step forward. But once the little finger has had to be extended, there will soon be snatching for the whole hand. The further worsening of the peasants' situation during the war, the defeat of the czarist armies on the fronts, the growing revolt in the cities, the chaotic czarist policy in which all reason was thrown overboard, the general dilemma resulting to all classes of society, led to the February revolution, which first of all finally brought about the violent solution of the agrarian question; which had been a burning one during the past half century. Its political character, however, was not impressed upon this revolution by the peasant movement; this movement merely gave it its great power. In the first announcements of the central executive committee of the Petersburg workers' and soldiers' councils the agrarian question was not even mentioned. But the peasants soon forced themselves upon the attention of the new government. Tired of waiting for it to take action in the agrarian question, in April and May of 1917 the disappointed peasant masses began to appropriate the land for themselves. The soldiers on the fronts, fearful of failing to get their proper share in the new distribution, abandoned the trenches and hurried back to their villages. They took their weapons with them, however, and thus offered the new government no possibility of restraining them. All its appeals to the sentiment of nationality and the sacredness of Russian interests were of no avail against the urge of the masses to provide at last for their own economic needs. And those needs

were embraced in peace and land. It was related at the time that peasants who were implored to remain on the front, as otherwise the Germans would occupy Moscow, were quite puzzled and answered the government emissaries: "And what's that to us? Why, we're from the Tamboff Government."

Lenin and the Bolsheviks did not invent the winning slogan 'Land to the Peasants'; rather, they accepted the real peasant revolution going on independently of them. Taking advantage of the vacillating attitude of the Kerensky regime, which still hoped to be able to settle the agrarian question by way of peaceful discussion; the Bolsheviks won the goodwill of the peasants and were thus enabled to drive the Kerensky government out and take over the power themselves. But this was possible for them only as agents of the peasants' will, by sanctioning their appropriation of land, and it was only through their support that the Bolsheviks were able to maintain themselves in power.

The slogan 'Land to the Peasants' has nothing to do with communist principles. The cutting up of the large estates into a great number of small independent farming enterprises was a measure directly opposed to socialism, and which could be justified only on the ground of tactical necessity. The subsequent changes in the peasant policy of Lenin and the Bolsheviks were powerless to effect any change in the necessary consequences of this original opportunistic policy. In spite of all the collectivising, which up to now is largely limited to the technical side of the productive process, Russian agriculture is still today basically determined by private economic interests and motives. And this involves the impossibility, in the industrial field as well, of arriving at more than a state-capitalist economy. Even though this state capitalism aims at transforming the farming population completely into exploitable agricultural wage workers, this goal is not at all likely to be attained in view of the new revolutionary encounters bound up with such a venture. The present collectivising cannot be regarded as the fulfilment of socialism. This becomes clear when one considers that observers of the Russian scene such as Maurice Hindus hold it possible that "even if the Soviets were to collapse, Russian agriculture would remain collectivised, with control more perhaps in the hands of the peasants than of the government." However, even if the Bolshevik agricultural policy were to lead to the desired end, even a state capitalism extending to all branches of national economy, the situation of the workers would still remain unchanged. Nor could such a consummation be regarded as a transition to real socialism, since those elements of the population now privileged by the state capitalism would defend their privileges against all changes in exactly the same way as did the private owners previously at the time of the 1917 revolution.

The industrial workers still formed a very small minority of the population, and were accordingly unable to impress upon the Russian Revolution a character in keeping with their own needs. The bourgeois elements which likewise were combating Czarism soon recoiled before the nature of their own tasks. They could not accede to the revolutionary solution of the agrarian question, since a general expropriation of land might all too easily bring in its train the expropriation of industry. Neither the peasants nor the workers followed them, and the fate of the bourgeoisie was decided by the temporary alliance between these latter groups. It was not the bourgeoisie but the workers who brought the bourgeois revolution to its conclusion; the place of the capitalists was taken over by the Bolshevik state apparatus under the Leninist slogan: 'If capitalism anyhow, then let's make it.' Of course the workers in the cities had overthrown capitalism, but only in order now to convert the Bolshevik party apparatus into their new masters. In the industrial cities the workers' struggle went on under socialist demands, seemingly independent of the peasant revolution under way at the same time and yet in a decisive sense determined by this latter. The original revolutionary demands of the

workers were objectively incapable of being carried through. To be sure, the workers were able, with the aid of the peasants, to win the state power for their party, but this new State soon took a position directly opposed to the workers' interests. An opposition which even today has assumed forms which actually make it possible to speak of a 'Red Czarism': suppression of strikes, deportations, mass executions, and hence also the coming to life of new illegal organisations which are conducting a communist revolt against the present bogus socialism. The talk just now about an extension of democracy in Russia, the thought of introducing a sort of parliamentarianism, the resolution at the last soviet congress about dismantling the dictatorship, all this is merely a tactical manoeuvre designed to compensate for the government's latest acts of violence against the opposition. These promises are not to be taken seriously, but are an outgrowth of the Leninist practice, which was always well calculated to work both ways at the same time in the interest of its own stability and security. The zigzag course of the Leninist policy springs from the necessity of conforming constantly to the shiftings of class forces in Russia in such manner that the government may always remain master of the situation. And so there is accepted today what was rejected the day before, or vice versa; unprincipledness has been elevated into a principle, and the Leninist party is concerned with only one thing, namely, the exercise of state power at any price.

At this place, however, we are interested only in making clear that the Russian Revolution was not dependent on Lenin or on the Bolsheviks, but that the decisive element in it was the revolt of the peasants. And, for that matter, Zinoviev, still in power at the time and on Lenin's side, had stated as late as the 11th Bolshevik Party Congress (March-April 1921): "It was not the proletarian vanguard on our side, but the coming over to us of the army, because we demanded peace, which was the decisive factor in our victory. The army, however consisted of peasants. If we had not been supported by the millions of peasant soldiers, our victory over the bourgeoisie would have been out of the question." The great interest of the peasants in the matter of land, the slight interest with reference to the question of government, enabled the Bolsheviks to conduct a victorious struggle for the government. The peasants were quite willing to leave the Kremlin to the Bolsheviks, provided only that they themselves were not interfered with in their own struggle against the large estate owners.

But even in the cities, Lenin was not the decisive factor in the conflicts between capital and labour. On the contrary, he was helplessly drawn along in the wake of the workers, who in their demands and actual measures went far beyond the Bolsheviks. It was not Lenin who conducted the revolution, but the revolution conducted him. Though as late as the October uprising Lenin restricted his earlier and more thorough-going demands to that of control of production, and wished to stop short with the socialisation of the banks and transportation facilities, without the general abolition of private ownership, the workers paid no further attention to his views and expropriated all enterprises. It is interesting to recall that the first decree of the Bolshevik government was directed against the wild, unauthorised expropriations of factories through the workers' councils. But these soviets were still stronger than the party apparatus) and they compelled Lenin to issue the decree for the nationalisation of all industrial enterprises. It was only under the pressure brought to bear by the workers that the Bolsheviks consented to this change in their own plans. Gradually, through the extension of state power, the influence of the soviets became weakened, until today they no longer serve more than decorative purposes.

During the first years of the revolution, up to the introduction of the New Economic Policy (1921), there was actually of course some experimentation in Russia in the communist sense. This is not, however, to be set down to the account of Lenin, but of

those forces which made of him a political chameleon who at one time assumed a reactionary and at another a revolutionary colour. New peasant uprisings against the Bolsheviks first drive Lenin to a more radical policy, a stronger emphasis upon the interests of the workers and the poor peasants who had come off short-handed in connection with the first distribution of land. But then this policy proves a failure, since the poor peasants whose interests are thus preferred refuse to support the Bolsheviks and Lenin 'turns the face again to the middle peasants'. In such a case Lenin has no scruples about strengthening the private-capitalist elements anew, and the earlier allies, who have now grown uncomfortable, are shot down with cannon, as was the case in Kronstadt.

The power, and nothing but the power: it is to this that the whole political wisdom of Lenin finally reduces. The fact that the paths along which it is attained, the means which lead to it, determine in their turn the manner in which that power is applied, was a matter with which he had very little concern. Socialism, to him, was in the last instance merely a kind of state-capitalism, after the "model of the German postal service." And this state capitalism he overtook on his way, for in fact there was nothing else to be overtaken. It was merely a question of who was to be the beneficiary of the state capitalism, and here Lenin gave precedence to none. And so George Bernard Shaw, returning from Russia, was quite correct when, in a lecture before the Fabian Society in London, he stated that "the Russian communism is nothing more than the putting into practice of the Fabian programme which we have been preaching the last forty years."

No one, however, has yet suspected the Fabians of containing a world-revolutionary force. And Lenin is of course first of all acclaimed as a world revolutionary, notwithstanding the fact that the present Russian government by which his 'estate' is administered issues emphatic denial when the press publishes reports of Russian toasts to the world revolution. The legend of the world-revolutionary significance of Lenin receives its nourishment from his consistent international position during the world war. It was quite impossible for Lenin at that time to conceive that a Russian revolution would have no further repercussions and be abandoned to itself. There were two reasons for this view: first, because such a thought was in contradiction with the objective situation resulting from the world war; and secondly, he assumed that the onslaught of the imperialist nations against the Bolsheviks would break the back of the Russian Revolution if the proletariat of Western Europe failed to come the rescue. Lenin's call for the world revolution was primarily a call for support and maintenance of Bolshevik power. The proof that it was not much more than this is furnished by his inconstancy in this question: in addition to making his demands for world revolution, he at the same time came out for the 'right of self-determination of all oppressed peoples', for their national liberation. Yet this double-entry bookkeeping sprang likewise from the Jacobinical need of the Bolsheviks to hold on to power. With both slogans the forces of intervention of the capitalist countries in Russian affairs were weakened, since their attention was thus diverted to their own territories and colonies. That meant a respite for the Bolsheviks. In order to make it as long as possible, Lenin established his International. It set for itself a double task: on the one hand, to subordinate the workers of Western Europe and America to the will of Moscow; on the other, to strengthen the influence of Moscow upon the peoples of Eastern Asia. Work on the international field was modelled after the course of the Russian Revolution. The goal was that of combining the interests of the workers and peasants on a worldwide scale and control of them through the Bolsheviks, by means of the Communist International. In this way at least the Bolshevik state power in Russia received support; and in case the world revolution should really spread, the power over the world was to be won. Though the first design was attended with success, at the same time the second was not accomplished. The world

revolution was unable to make headway as an enlarged imitation of the Russian, and the national limitations of the victory in Russia necessarily made of the Bolsheviks a counter-revolutionary force on the international plane. Hence also the demand for the 'world revolution' was converted into the 'theory of the building of socialism in one country'. And this is not a perversion of the Leninist standpoint — as Trotsky, for example, asserts today — but the direct consequence of the pseudo world-revolutionary policy pursued by Lenin himself.

It was clear at that time, even to many Bolsheviks, that the restriction of the revolution to Russia would make of the Russian Revolution itself a factor by which the world revolution would be impeded. Thus, for example, Eugene Varga wrote in his book 'Economic Problems of the Proletarian Dictatorship', published by the Communist International (1921): "The danger exists that Russia may be cut out as the motive power of the international revolution ... There are Communists in Russia who have grown tired of waiting for the European revolution and wish to make the best of their national isolation... . With a Russia which would regard the social revolution of the other countries as a matter with which it had no concern, the capitalist countries would at any rate be able to live in peaceful neighbourliness. I am far from believing that such a bottling up of revolutionary Russia would be able to stop the progress of the world revolution. But that progress would be slowed down." And with the sharpening domestic crises in Russia around that time, it was not long before almost all communists, including Varga himself, had the feeling of which Varga here complains. In fact, still earlier, even in 1920, Lenin and Trotsky took pains to stem the revolutionary forces of Europe. Peace throughout the world was required in order to assure the building of state capitalism in Russia under the auspices of the Bolsheviks. It was inadvisable to have this peace disturbed either by way of war or new revolutions, for in either case a country like Russia was sure to be drawn in. Accordingly, Lenin imposed, through splitting and intrigue, a neo-reformist course upon the labour movement of Western Europe, a course which led to its total dissolution. It was with sharp words indeed that Trotsky, with the approval of Lenin, turned on the uprising in Central Germany (1921): "We must flatly say to the German workers that we regard this philosophy of the offensive as the greatest danger and in its practical application as the greatest political crime." And in another revolutionary situation, in 1923, Trotsky declared to the correspondent of the Manchester Guardian, again with the approval of Lenin: "We are of course interested in the victory of the working classes, but it is not at all to our interest to have the revolution break out in a Europe which is bled and exhausted and to have the proletariat receive from the hands of the bourgeoisie nothing but ruins. We are interested in the maintenance of peace." And ten years later, when Hitler seized power, the Communist International did not move a finger to prevent him. Trotsky is not only in error, but reveals a failure of memory resulting no doubt from the loss of his uniform, when today he characterises Stalin's failure to help the German communists as a betrayal of the principles of Leninism. This betrayal was constantly practised by Lenin, and by Trotsky himself. But according to a dictum of Trotsky's, the important thing is of course not what is done, but who does it.

Stalin is, as a matter of fact, the best disciple of Lenin, in so far as concerns his attitude to German fascism. The Bolsheviks have also of course not refrained from entering into alliances with Turkey and lending political and economic support to the government of that country even at a time when the sharpest measures were being taken there against the communists - measures which frequently eclipsed even the actions of a Hitler.

In view of the fact that the Communist International in so far as it continues to function is merely an agency for the Russian tourist trade, in view of the collapse in all

countries of the communist movements controlled from Moscow, the legend of Lenin the world-revolutionist, is no doubt sufficiently weakened that one may count on its disappearance in the near future. And of course even today the hangers-on of the Communist International are no longer operating with the concept of the world revolution, but speak of the 'Workers Fatherland' from which they draw their enthusiasm so long as they are not forced to live in it as workers. Those who continue to acclaim Lenin as the world revolutionary *par excellence* are as a matter of fact getting excited about nothing more than Lenin's political dreams of worldwide power, dreams which faded to nothingness in the light of day.

The contradiction existing between the real historical significance of Lenin and that which is generally ascribed to him is greater and at the same time more inscrutable than in the case of any other personage acting on modern history. We have shown that he can not be made responsible for the success of the Russian Revolution, and also that his theory and practice can not, as is so often done; be appraised as of world-revolutionary importance. Neither, in spite of all assertions to the contrary, can he be regarded as having extended or supplemented Marxism. In the work of Thomas B. Brameld entitled 'A Philosophical Approach to Communism', recently published by the University of Chicago, communism is still defined as "a synthesis of the doctrines of Marx, Engels and Lenin." It is not only in this book, but also generally, and quite particularly in the party-communist press, that Lenin is placed in such a relation to Marx and Engels. Stalin has denoted Leninism as 'Marxism in the period of imperialism'. Such a position, however, derives its only justification from an unfounded overestimation of Lenin. Lenin has not added to Marxism a single element which could be rated as new and independent. Lenin's philosophical outlook is dialectical materialism as developed by Marx, Engels and Plekhanov. It is to it that he refers in connection with all important problems: it is his criterion in everything and the final court of appeal. In his main philosophical work, 'Materialism and Empirocriticism', he merely repeats Engels in tracing the oppositions of the different philosophical points of view back to the one great contradiction: Materialism vs. Idealism. While for the first position, Nature is primary and Mind secondary; exactly the opposite holds of the other. This previously known formulation is documented by Lenin with additional material from the various fields of knowledge. And so there can be no thought of any essential enrichment of the Marxian dialectic on the part of Lenin. In the field of philosophy, to speak of a Leninist school is impossible.

In the field of economic theory, also, no such independent significance can be ascribed to Lenin. Lenin's economic writings are more Marxist than those of any of his contemporaries, but they are only brilliant applications of the already existing economic doctrines associated with Marxism. Lenin had absolutely no thought of being an independent theoretician in matters of economics; to him, Marx had already said everything fundamental in this field. Since, to his mind, it was quite impossible to go beyond Marx, he concerned himself with nothing further than proving that the Marxist postulates were in accord with the actual development. His principal work on economics, 'The Development of Capitalism in Russia', is eloquent testimony on this point. Lenin never wanted to be more than Marx's disciple, and so it is only in legend that one can speak of a theory of 'Leninism'.

Lenin wanted above all else to be a practical politician. His theoretical works are almost exclusively of a polemic nature. They combat the theoretical and other enemies of Marxism, which Lenin identifies with his own political strivings and those of the Bolsheviks generally. To Marxism, practice decides regarding the truth of a theory. As a practician endeavouring to actualise the doctrines of Marx, Lenin may have actually rendered Marxism an enormous service. However, as regards Marxism again, every

practice is a social one, which can be modified and influenced by individuals only in very limited measure, never decisively. There is no doubt that the union of theory and practice, of final goal and concrete questions of the moment, with which Lenin was constantly concerned, may be acclaimed as a great accomplishment. But the criterion for this accomplishment is again the success which attends it, and that success, as we have already said, was denied to Lenin. His work not only failed to advance the world revolutionary movement; it also failed to form the preconditions for a truly socialist society in Russia. The success (such as it was) did not bring him nearer to his goal, but pushed it father into the distance.

The actual conditions in Russia and the present situation of the workers throughout the world ought really to be sufficient proof to any communist observer that the present 'Leninist' policy is just the opposite of that expressed by its phraseology. And in the long run such a condition must without doubt destroy the artificially constructed Lenin Legend, so that history itself will finally set Lenin in his proper historical place.

Die Gegensätze zwischen Luxemburg und Lenin

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Rosa Luxemburg und Lenin sind aus der Sozialdemokratie hervorgegangen. Beide spielten in ihr eine bedeutende Rolle; ihre Arbeit beeinflusste nicht nur die russische, polnische und deutsche Arbeiterbewegung, sie war von internationaler Bedeutung. In beiden symbolisierte sich die Oppositionsbewegung zum Revisionismus der Zweiten Internationale. Was beide verband, war der gemeinsame Kampf gegen den Reformismus der Vorkriegszeit und den Chauvinismus der Sozialdemokratie während des Krieges. Aber dieser Kampf war zugleich begleitet von der Auseinandersetzung zwischen Luxemburg und Lenin um den Weg der Revolution, und da sich die Taktik nicht vom Prinzip trennen läßt, letzten Endes ebenfalls eine prinzipielle Auseinandersetzung um Inhalt und Form der neuen Arbeiterbewegung, der Revolution und der Diktatur des Proletariats.

Ist es auch bekannt, daß Luxemburg und Lenin Todfeinde des Revisionismus waren, so ist es heute doch äußerst schwierig, sich ein wirkliches Bild der Differenzen zwischen beiden zu machen. Wohl hat im Verlauf des letzten Jahrzehnts die Dritte Internationale in Verbindung mit ihren inneren politischen Krisen oft Rosa Luxemburgs Namen gebraucht und mißbraucht; speziell in den Kampagnen gegen den „konterrevolutionären Luxemburgismus“, aber weder ist dadurch das Werk Luxemburgs bekannter geworden, noch wurden die Differenzen, die sie mit Lenin hatte, wirklich bloßgelegt. Allgemein hält man es für besser, die Vergangenheit begraben zu lassen und wie einst die deutsche Sozialdemokratie die Publizierung der Arbeiten Rosa Luxemburgs „aus Geldmangel“ verweigerte, so hat auch die Dritte Internationale das durch Clara

Zetkin gegebene Versprechen, ihr Werk zu verbreiten, gebrochen. Wo immer sich jedoch der Dritten Internationale die Konkurrenz entgegengesetzt, da liebt man es, sich auf Rosa Luxemburg zu beziehen. Sogar die Sozialdemokratie ist oft geschmacklos genug, mit Liebe und Wehmut von der „irrenden“ Revolutionärin zu sprechen, die mehr als ein Opfer ihres „heißen Temperaments“ als das der viehischen Brutalität der Landsknechte des Parteigenossen Noske bedauert wird. Und selbst dort, z. B. bei der von Trotzki beeinflussten Bewegung, wo man nach den Erfahrungen mit beiden Internationalen sich angeblich bemüht, nicht nur eine wirklich revolutionäre Bewegung aufzubauen, sondern auch gleichzeitig die Lehren der Vergangenheit verwerten will, da reicht die Beschäftigung mit Luxemburg und Lenin auch nicht zu mehr, als der Reduzierung ihrer Gegensätze auf den Streit um die internationale Frage und hier noch speziell fast ausschließlich auf die, die polnische Unabhängigkeit berührenden, taktischen Probleme. Dabei bemüht man sich noch, diesem Gegensatz seine Schärfe zu nehmen, ihn zu isolieren und mit der, allen Tatsachen entgegengesetzten Behauptung abzuschließen, daß Lenin aus diesem Streit als Sieger hervorging.

Der Streit zwischen Luxemburg und Lenin über die nationale Frage kann nicht von den anderen Problemen, die beide trennten, herausgelöst werden. Diese Frage ist mit allen anderen der Weltrevolution aufs engste verknüpft, und sie ist nur eine der Illustrationen des grundsätzlichen Unterschiedes zwischen Luxemburg und Lenin, oder dem zwischen der jakobinischen und der wirklich proletarischen Vorstellung von der Weltrevolution. Hält man z. B. die Auffassung Luxemburgs gegen die nationalistischen Abenteuer der Stalinperiode der Dritten Internationale für berechtigt, so muß man sie auch als gegen Lenin berechtigt ansehen. So sehr sich die Politik der Dritten Internationale seit dem Tode Lenins auch geändert haben mag, in der nationalen Frage ist sie echt leninistisch geblieben. Ein Leninist muß mit Notwendigkeit gegen Luxemburg Stellung nehmen, er ist nicht nur ihr theoretischer Gegner, sondern ihr Todfeind. Die luxemburgische Einstellung schließt in sich die Vernichtung des leninistischen Bolschewismus, und deshalb kann niemand, der sich auf Lenin beruft, gleichzeitig Luxemburg für sich in Anspruch nehmen.

Gegen den Reformismus

Die Entwicklung des Weltkapitalismus, die imperialistische Entfaltung, die fortschreitende Monopolisierung der Wirtschaft und die damit verbundenen Überprofite gestatteten die vorübergehende Bildung einer Oberschicht innerhalb der Arbeiterklasse, die Durchführung sozialer Gesetzgebungen und die allgemeine Verbesserung des Lebensstandards der Arbeiter, was alles zur Entfaltung des Revisionismus und zur Herausbildung des Reformismus in der Arbeiterbewegung führte. Der revolutionäre Marxismus wurde, als den Tatsachen der kapitalistischen Entwicklung entgegengesetzt, verworfen, und die Theorie des langsamen Hineinwachsens in den Sozialismus auf dem Wege der Demokratie dafür angenommen. Mit dem unter diesen Umständen möglichen Wachstum der legalen Arbeiterbewegung wurden größere Teile des Kleinbürgertums für sie gewonnen, die bald die geistige Führung in ihr übernahmen und sich in die materiellen Vorteile der bezahlten Posten innerhalb der Bewegung mit den Arbeiteremporkömmlingen teilten. Um die Jahrhundertwende hatte sich der Reformismus auf der ganzen Linie durchgesetzt. Der Widerstand gegen diese Entwicklung der sozialistischen Bewegung durch die sogenannten „orthodoxen“ Marxisten mit Kautsky an der Spitze, der stets nur einer der Phrase war, wurde auch phraseologisch bald aufgegeben. Von den bekannteren Theoretikern jener Zeit sind die Namen Luxemburgs und Lenins als die bedeutendsten zu nennen, die ihren Kampf rücksichtslos, und bald

auch so gegen die „Orthodoxen“, zu Ende führten, im Interesse einer wirklich revolutionären Arbeiterbewegung.

Von allen Angriffen gegen den Revisionismus waren wohl diejenigen Rosa Luxemburgs die kräftigsten. In ihrer gegen Bernstein gerichteten Polemik **Sozialreform oder Revolution** wies sie, gegen den Unsinn des reinen Legalismus erneut darauf hin, daß die Ausbeutung der Arbeiterklasse als ein ökonomischer Prozeß nicht durch gesetzliche Bestimmungen im Rahmen der bürgerlichen Gesellschaft abgeschafft oder gemildert werden kann. Die Sozialreform, betonte sie, bildet „nicht einen Eingriff in die kapitalistische Ausbeutung, sondern eine Normierung, eine Ordnung dieser Ausbeutung“ im Interesse der kapitalistischen Gesellschaft selbst. „Das Kapital“ sagt Rosa Luxemburg, „drängt nicht zum Sozialismus, sondern zum Zusammenbruch und auf diesen Zusammenbruch ist die Arbeiterschaft einzustellen; nicht auf die Reform, sondern auf die Revolution.“ Deshalb braucht man jedoch nicht auf die Gegenwartsfragen zu verzichten, auch der revolutionäre Marxismus kämpft für die Verbesserung der Lebenslage der Arbeiter innerhalb der kapitalistischen Gesellschaft. Im Gegensatz zum Revisionismus jedoch interessiert ihn bei weitem mehr wie gekämpft wird, als um was gekämpft wird. Für den Marxismus geht es in den gewerkschaftlichen und politischen Kämpfen um die Entwicklung der subjektiven Faktoren der Arbeiterrevolution, um die Förderung des revolutionären Klassenbewußtsems. Die schroffe Gegenüberstellung: Reform oder Revolution ist falsch, diese Gegensätze müssen in die Gesamtheit des gesellschaftlichen Prozesses eingeordnet werden. Das Endziel, die proletarische Revolution, darf nicht durch den Kampf um die Tagesforderungen erstickt werden. In ähnlicher Weise attackierte etwas später auch Lenin den Revisionismus; auch für ihn waren die Reformen nur Nebenprodukte des auf die Eroberung der politischen Macht gerichteten Kampfes. Beide waren sich im allgemeinen einig in ihrem Kampf gegen die Entartungen der marxistischen Bewegung und stellten sich auf den Boden des revolutionären Kampfes um die Macht. Sie traten sich zuerst als Gegner gegenüber, als die russischen Zustände vor, während und nach der Revolution von 1905 den revolutionären Kampf um die Macht zu einer brennenden und aktuellen Frage machten, die konkret zu beantworten war. Der Streit der zwischen Luxemburg und Lenin entbrannte, drehte sich so zuerst um taktische Probleme, um Fragen der Organisation und um die nationale Frage

Um die nationale Frage

Lenin, stark von Kautsky beeinflusst, glaubte gleich Letzterem, daß die nationalen Unabhängigkeitsbewegungen als fortschrittlich anzusehen seien, weil der „nationale Staat die besten Bedingungen für die Entwicklung des Kapitalismus garantiert.“ In seiner Polemik gegen Rosa Luxemburg mit Bezug auf das Selbstbestimmungsrecht der Nationen behauptet er, daß die Forderung des Selbstbestimmungsrechtes deshalb revolutionär sei, „weil diese Forderung eine demokratische sei, die sich in nichts von den übrigen demokratischen Forderungen unterscheidet.“ Ja, „In jedem bürgerlichen Nationalismus der unterdrückten Nationen“, behauptet er, „ist ein demokratischer Inhalt gegen die Unterdrückung enthalten und diesen Inhalt unterstützen wir unbedingt.“

Die Stellung Lenins zum Selbstbestimmungsrecht war — wie auch aus anderen Schriften ersichtlich — dieselbe, wie die zur Demokratie. In seinen Thesen über „Die sozialistische Revolution und das Selbstbestimmungsrecht der Nationen“ führt er aus, „es wäre grundfalsch zu denken, daß der Kampf um die Demokratie das Proletariat von der sozialistischen Revolution ablenken kann. Umgekehrt, so wie der siegreiche Sozialismus, der nicht die volle Demokratie verwirklicht, unmöglich ist, so kann sich auch das Proletariat, das nicht einen allseitigen, konsequenten, revolutionären Kampf um die

Demokratie führt, nicht zum Siege über die Bourgeoisie vorbereiten.“ So sind für Lenin die nationalen Bewegungen und Kriege nichts anderes als Bewegungen und Kriege um die Demokratie, an denen das Proletariat sich zu beteiligen hat; denn für ihn war ja der Kampf um die Demokratie die notwendige Voraussetzung des Kampfes um den Sozialismus. „Wenn der Kampf um die Demokratie möglich ist“, schreibt er, „so ist auch der Krieg um die Demokratie möglich.“ Und so sind ihm denn auch „in einem wirklich nationalen Krieg die Worte ‚Verteidigung des Vaterlandes‘ durchaus kein Betrug“, und Lenin ist in einem solchen Falle für die Verteidigung. „Sofern die Bourgeoisie der unterdrückten Nation gegen die unterdrückende kämpft“, schreibt er, „sofern sind wir immer in allen Fällen und entschiedener als alle dafür, weil wir die unerschrockenen und die konsequenten Feinde jeder Unterdrückung sind.“

Dieser Einstellung sind beide, Lenin bis zuletzt, und der Leninismus bis heute treu geblieben — solange sie nicht die bolschewistische Parteiherrschaft selbst in Frage stellte. Nur eine kleine Änderung wurde vorgenommen. Waren für Lenin vor der russischen Revolution die nationalen Befreiungskriege und -bewegungen ein Teil der allgemeinen demokratischen Bewegung, so wurden sie nach der Revolution ein Teil des proletarischen weltrevolutionären Prozesses.

Diese hier zusammengefaßte Einstellung Lenins erschien Rosa Luxemburg als völlig falsch. In ihrer während des Krieges erschienenen **Juniusbroschüre** faßt sie ihren eigenen Standpunkt wie folgt zusammen: „Solange kapitalistische Staaten bestehen, namentlich solange die imperialistische Weltpolitik das innere und äußere Leben der Staaten bestimmt und gestaltet, hat das nationale Selbstbestimmungsrecht mit ihrer Praxis im Kriege wie im Kriege nicht das geringste gemein. In dem heutigen imperialistischen Milieu kann es überhaupt keine nationalen Verteidigungskriege mehr geben, und jede sozialistische Politik, die von diesem bestimmten historischen Niveau absieht, die sich mitten im Weltstrudel nur von den isolierten Gesichtspunkten eines Landes leiten läßt, ist von vornherein auf Sand gebaut.“ An dieser Auffassung hielt Rosa Luxemburg bis zuletzt fest, außerstande, sich Lenin gegenüber zur geringsten Konzession zu verstehen; und nach der russischen Revolution und der aktuellen Durchführung der Politik des Selbstbestimmungsrechts der Nationen fragt sie erneut in ihrer Arbeit über die **Russische Revolution** weshalb wohl die Bolschewiken mit solcher Hartnäckigkeit und starren Konsequenz an der Parole des Selbstbestimmungsrechtes festhielten, da dies doch „in krassem Widerspruch zu ihrem sonstigen Zentralismus der Politik wie auch der Handlung steht, die sie den sonstigen demokratischen Grundsätzen gegenüber eingenommen haben. ... Der Widerspruch, der hier klafft, ist umso unverständlicher, als es sich bei den demokratischen Formen des politischen Lebens in jedem Lande tatsächlich um höchst wertvolle, ja unentbehrliche Grundlagen der sozialistischen Politik handelt, während das famose ‚Selbstbestimmungsrecht‘ der Nationen nichts als kleinbürgerliche Phraseologie und Humbug ist.“

Rosa Luxemburg erklärt sich diese falsche Nationalitätenpolitik Lenins als eine „Art Opportunismus“, um „die vielen fremden Nationalitäten im Schoße des russischen Reiches an die Sache der Revolution zu fesseln“, ähnlich dem Opportunismus den Bauern gegenüber, „deren Landhunger durch die Parole der direkten Besitzergreifung des adligen Grund und Bodens befriedigt wurde und die dadurch an die Fahne der Revolution gefesselt werden sollten.“ In beiden Fällen ist ihrer Ansicht nach, „die Berechnung leider gänzlich fehlgeschlagen. Umgekehrt als die Bolschewiki es erwarteten, ... benutzte eine nach der anderen der (befreiten) ‚Nationen‘ die frisch geschenkte Freiheit dazu, sich als Todfeindin der russischen Revolution gegen sie mit dem deutschen Imperialismus zu verbinden und unter seinem Schutze die Fahne der Konterrevolution nach Rußland selbst zu tragen..... Freilich sind es nicht die ‚Nationen‘, die jene reaktionäre Politik betätigen,

sondern nur die bürgerlichen und kleinbürgerlichen Klassen. ... die das nationale Selbstbestimmungsrecht zu einem Werkzeug ihrer konterrevolutionären Klassenpolitik verkehrten. Aber ... darin liegt eben der utopisch-kleinbürgerliche Charakter dieser nationalistischen Phrase, daß sie in der rauhen Wirklichkeit der Klassengesellschaft ... sich einfach in ein Mittel der bürgerlichen Klassengesellschaft verwandelt.“ Daß die Bolschewiken die Frage der nationalen Bestrebungen Und Sondertendenzen mitten in den revolutionären Kampf warfen, hat nach Rosa Luxemburg „die größte Verwirrung in die Reihen des Sozialismus geworfen; ... die Bolschewiken haben die Ideologie geliefert, die den Feldzug der Konterrevolution maskiert hat, sie haben die Position der Bourgeoisie gestärkt und die der Proletarier geschwächt. Den Bolschewiken war es beschieden, mit der Phrase von der Selbstbestimmung der Nationen Wasser auf die Mühlen der Konterrevolution zu liefern und damit eine Ideologie nicht nur für die Erdrosselung der russischen Revolution selbst, sondern für die geplante konterrevolutionäre Liquidierung des ganzen Weltkrieges zu liefern.“ (**Die Russische Revolution**)

Weshalb verlegte sich Lenin, um mit Rosa Luxemburg erneut zu fragen, mit solcher Hartnäckigkeit auf die Parole der Selbstbestimmung der Nationen und die der Befreiung der unterdrückten Völker? Ohne Zweifel widerspricht diese Parole der Forderung nach der Weltrevolution, und wie Luxemburg war auch Lenin an der Auslösung der Weltrevolution interessiert, da er, wie alle Marxisten jener Zeit, nicht daran glaubte, daß Rußland, auf sich selbst beschränkt, sich revolutionär behaupten könnte. Mit Engels Ausspruch: „Wenn eine russische Revolution zugleich eine europäische proletarische Revolution hervorruft, dann kann das heutige russische Gemeineigentum zum Ausgangspunkt einer kommunistischen Entwicklung dienen“ im Einklang, war es für Lenin nicht nur klar, daß die Bolschewiken in Rußland die Macht zu erobern hätten, sondern auch, daß die russische- zur europäischen- und damit zur Weltrevolution werden müßte, sollte sie zum Sozialismus führen. Auf Grund der, durch den Weltkrieg gegebenen, objektiven Situation konnte sich Lenin so wenig wie Rosa Luxemburg vorstellen, daß Rußland sich gegen die kapitalistischen Mächte halten könnte, fände die Revolution nicht ihre Fortsetzung in Westeuropa. Es war für Luxemburg sehr unwahrscheinlich, daß „die Russen sich in diesem Hexensabbat werden halten können“, und dies nicht nur auf Grund ihrer Erfahrungen mit und ihres Mißtrauens gegen Leute, wie Lenin und Trotzki und deren albernen Phraseologie vom Selbstbestimmungsrecht der Nationen, ihrer Konzessionspolitik den Bauern gegenüber, usw., nicht nur wegen der imperialistischen Attacken gegen die russische Revolution und noch viel weniger aus einem Standpunkt heraus, den die Sozialdemokratie propagierte, der statistisch nachwies, daß die rückständige ökonomische Entwicklung Rußlands weder die Revolution rechtfertige noch den Sozialismus zuließe, sondern an erster Stelle, wie sie aus dem Gefängnis schrieb, „weil die Sozialdemokratie im hochentwickelten Westen aus hunds jämmerlichen Feiglingen besteht, und die Russen, ruhig zusehend, wird verbluten lassen.“ Sie ist für die bolschewistische Revolution, so sehr sie die Bolschewiken auch kritisiert vom Gesichtspunkt der weltrevolutionären Notwendigkeiten, und sie versucht, deren Rückzüge stets auf das Versagen des westeuropäischen Proletariats zurückzuführen. „Ja“, schreibt sie in einem Brief an Luise Kautsky, „natürlich machen es mir die Bolschewiken jetzt auch nicht recht in ihrem Friedensfanatismus (Brest Litowsk). Aber schließlich ... sie sind nicht schuld. Sie sind in einer Zwangslage, haben nur die Wahl zwischen zwei Tracht Prügeln und wählen die kleinere. Verantwortlich sind andere, daß aus der russischen Revolution der Teufel profitiert.“ Und in ihrer Arbeit **Die Russische Revolution** rechtfertigt sie die Bolschewiken erneut: „Mögen die deutschen Regierungssozialisten schreien, die Herrschaft der Bolschewiken sei ein Zerrbild der Diktatur des Proletariats. Wenn sie es war oder ist, so nur, weil sie eben ein Produkt der

Haltung des deutschen Proletariats war, die ein Zerrbild auf sozialistischen Klassenkampf war.“

Rosa Luxemburg starb zu früh, um zu sehen, daß die bolschewistische Politik, wenn sie auch die revolutionäre Bewegung zu befruchten aufhörte, doch imstande war, die Herrschaft der Bolschewiki im Rahmen des Staatskapitalismus zu sichern. „Bleibt die deutsche Revolution aus“, schrieb Liebknecht aus dem Gefängnis (**Nachlaß**) im Einklang mit Rosa Luxemburg, „so bleibt für die russische Revolution die Alternative: revolutionärer Untergang oder schimpfliches Schein- und Trugleben.“ Die Bolschewiken wählten das Letztere. „Es gibt in Rußland Kommunisten“, schrieb Eugen Varga 1921 in seinem Buch über **Die wirtschaftspolitischen Probleme der proletarischen Diktatur**, „die des langen Wartens auf die europäische Revolution überdrüssig geworden, sich endgültig auf eine Isoliertheit Rußlands einrichten wollen. Mit einem Rußland, welches die soziale Revolution der anderen Länder als eine ihm fremde Angelegenheit betrachten würde, ... würden die kapitalistischen Länder allerdings in friedlicher Nachbarschaft leben können. Eine solche Einkapselung des revolutionären Rußlands. ... würde den Gang der Weltrevolution verlangsamen.“

Die Nationalitätenpolitik Lenins hat die Herrschaft der Bolschewiki nicht aufgehoben. Wohl sind große Gebiete von Rußland abgetrennt verblieben und zu reaktionären Staaten geworden, aber fester denn je ist die Macht des bolschewistischen Staates. Scheinbar hat sich die leninistische Linie als für Rußland richtig herausgestellt, scheinbar waren Rosa Luxemburgs Warnungen unbegründet. Dies jedoch nur insoweit, als es sich um die machtvolle Position des bolschewistischen Staatsapparates handelt, auf keinen Fall jedoch vom Standpunkt der Weltrevolution aus gesehen, dem Standpunkt, der dem Streit zwischen Luxemburg und Lenin zugrunde lag. Wohl besteht das bolschewistische Rußland noch, aber nicht als das, als was es begann, nicht als Ausgangspunkt der Weltrevolution, sondern als ein gegen sie gerichtetes Bollwerk. Das Rußland, das Rosa Luxemburg und jeder Revolutionär mit ihr gefeiert hatte, ist vor die Hunde gegangen; was geblieben ist, ist ein Rußland, von dem Rosa Luxemburg in den **Spartakusbriefen** schon 1918 befürchten konnte: „Wie ein unheimliches Gespenst nähert sich ... ein Bündnis der Bolschewiki mit Deutschland. Eine Allianz der Bolschewiki mit dem deutschen Imperialismus wäre der furchtbarste moralische Schlag für den internationalen Sozialismus. ... Mit der grotesken „Paarung“ zwischen Lenin und Hindenburg wäre die moralische Lichtquelle im Osten verlöscht. ... Sozialistische Revolution. unter der Schirmvogtei des deutschen Imperialismus. ... das wäre das ungeheuerlichste, was wir noch erleben könnten. Und obendrein wäre es. ... reine Utopie. Jeder politische Untergang der Bolschewiki im ehrlichen Kampfe gegen die Übermacht und Ungunst der geschichtlichen Situation wäre diesem moralischen Untergang vorzuziehen.“ Ist die lange Freundschaft des leninistischen Rußland mit dem Hindenburg - Deutschland auch vorübergehend getrübt worden, zieht es die bolschewistische Diktatur heute vor, sich auf die französischen Bajonette im besonderen und den Völkerbund im allgemeinen zu stützen, so praktiziert sie heute doch offen, wofür sie im Prinzip schon immer eintrat und was Bucharin auf dem vierten Weltkongress der Komintern folgendermaßen klar ausdrückte: „Es gibt keinen prinzipiellen Unterschied zwischen einer Anleihe und einem militärischen Bündnis. Wir sind bereits so gewachsen, daß wir ein militärisches Bündnis mit einer anderen Bourgeoisie schließen können; um mittels dieses bürgerlichen Staates ein anderes Bürgertum niederzuschmettern. Bei dieser Form der Landesverteidigung, des militärischen Bündnisses mit bürgerlichen Staaten, ist es die Pflicht der Genossen eines Landes, diesem Block zum Siege zu verhelfen.“ In der grotesken Paarung zwischen Lenin und Hindenburg, den kapitalistischen- und den Interessen der bolschewistischen Machthaber, illustriert sich denn auch der Niedergang

der weltrevolutionären Welle, der heute noch nicht abgeschlossen ist. Die sich um Lenins Namen scharende Arbeiterbewegung ist ein Spielball kapitalistischer Politik, zu jeder revolutionären Handlung absolut unfähig. Lenins Taktik — die Ausnützung der nationalen Bewegungen zu weltrevolutionären Zwecken — hat sich geschichtlich als verfehlt erwiesen. Die Warnungen Rosa Luxemburgs waren berechtigter, als ihr dies jemals hätte recht sein können.

Die „befreiten“ Nationen bilden einen faschistischen Gürtel um Rußland. Die „befreite“ Türkei schlachtet, mit den ihr von Rußland gelieferten Waffen, die Kommunisten ab. Das in seinem nationalen Freiheitskampf von Rußland und der Dritten Internationale unterstützte China würgt seine Arbeiterbewegung nach dem Muster der Pariser Kommune ab. Abertausende von Arbeiterleichen bestätigen Rosa Luxemburgs Auffassung, daß die Phrase vom Selbstbestimmungsrecht der Nationen nichts als „kleinbürgerlicher Humbug“ ist. Wie sehr der „Kampf um die nationale Befreiung ein Kampf um die Demokratie ist,“ zeigen wohl die nationalistischen Abenteuer der Dritten Internationale in Deutschland auf, die mit zu den Voraussetzungen des faschistischen Sieges gehören. Man hat die Arbeiter selbst zu Faschisten erzogen, indem man zehn Jahre lang mit Hitler um den wirklichen Nationalismus konkurrierte. Und Litwinow feiert im Völkerbund den Sieg des Leninschen Gedankens der Selbstbestimmung der Völker anlässlich der Saar-Abstimmung.

Die Haltung Lenins zur nationalen Frage und dem mit ihr verbundenen Problem des Krieges ist neben ihrer durch den Leninschen Opportunismus bestimmten Inkonsequenz zugleich durchaus widerspruchsvoll. Während eines imperialistischen Krieges muß, nach Lenin, das Proletariat für die Niederlage des eigenen Landes sein. Ist sie erfolgt, dann muß die Arbeiterschaft wiederum ihre Bourgeoisie in ihrem Kampfe um die nationale Befreiung unterstützen. Und wenn dann die „unterjochte Nation“ mit Hilfe des Proletariats wieder zu einer gleichberechtigten Nation geworden ist, dann hat die Arbeiterschaft erneut die Landesverteidigung abzulehnen. So waren denn Lenin und die Bolschewiken 1914 -1918 in ihrer Stellung zu Deutschland gegen die Vaterlandsverteidigung. 1919 -23 waren sie für die Vaterlandsverteidigung und die nationale Befreiung Deutschlands. Heute, wo Deutschland, dank der Hilfe des Proletariats wieder zur imperialistischen Macht geworden ist, sind sie erneut gegen die Vaterlandsverteidigung in Deutschland — und für sie in Frankreich und den anderen im Moment mit Russland sympathisierenden Ländern. Und Morgen — wogegen oder wofür sie morgen sein werden, hängt von der Mächtokonstellation für den nächsten Weltkrieg ab, der Rußland als Verbündeten dieser oder jener Mächtigkeitsgruppe sehen wird. Daß dies nichts mit marxistischem Klassenkampf zu tun hat, das bemühte sich Rosa Luxemburg aufzuzeigen.

Lenin war ein praktischer Politiker. Wesentlich unterschied er sich von den Theoretikern der Zweiten Internationale nur als Taktiker. Was die Einen auf demokratischem Wege erreichen wollten, versuchte er auf revolutionärem Wege zu erringen; nicht mit dem Maul im Parlament, sondern mit Gewalt auf dem realen Felde des Klassenkampfes wollte er für die Arbeiter den Sozialismus erkämpfen. Mittels seiner Partei wollte er die Revolution für die Massen machen, indem die Partei die Massen für sich gewann. Die Macht mußte in die Hände der Bolschewiki kommen, damit die russischen Ausgebeuteten befreit werden konnten. Die Macht mußte in den Händen der Bolschewiki sein, um den Weltkapitalismus revolutionär zu überwinden. Die Aneignung der politischen Macht durch die Partei war Anfang und Ende der Leninschen Politik. Seine fälschlich als geschickt und flexibel gefeierte, in Wirklichkeit jedoch rein opportunistische Politik galt zuallererst der Eroberung der Macht für die bolschewistische Partei.

Das russische Bürgertum war beim Ausbruch der russischen Revolution außerstande, die übernommene Macht zu halten, da es außerstande war, die Agrarfrage revolutionär zu lösen. Dies blieb den Bolschewiken überlassen. „Wir haben wie niemand sonst die bürgerlich-demokratische Revolution bis zu Ende durchgeführt“, führte Lenin zum Vierten Jahrestag der Oktoberrevolution aus, und diese Revolution wurde mit Hilfe der Bauern durchgeführt. Die Bolschewiki hatten die Macht und balancierten die Gegensätze zwischen den Arbeitern und Bauern stets so aus, daß sie die Macht behalten konnten. Im Interesse dieser Machterhaltung wurde die Zick-Zack-Politik im russischen wie im internationalen Maßstabe durchgeführt, die aus der Geschichte der Dritten Internationale die Geschichte ihrer Krisen und ihres Unterganges machte. Die ersten Konzessionen an die Bauern genügten Luxemburg bereits, die notwendige Entwicklung Rußlands in groben Umrissen vorauszusehen; wenn nicht die Weltrevolution diesem „Sündenfall“ die rückwirkende Kraft nähme. „Die Parole, -sofortige Besitzergreifung und Aufteilung des Grund und Bodens durch die Bauern“, schrieb Rosa Luxemburg, „mußte geradezu nach der entgegengesetzten Richtung wirken. Sie ist nicht nur keine sozialistische Maßnahme, sondern sie schneidet den Weg zu einer solchen ab.“ Rosa Luxemburg wußte nicht (sie saß damals im Gefängnis), daß die Bauern das Land verteilten, noch ehe die Bolschewiken die Parole dazu ausgaben, und das Letztere nur rechtlich machten, was praktisch schon durchgeführt war. Die Spontanität der Bauernmassen war auch hier schneller als die Parole der „Träger des revolutionären Bewusstseins“, als das sich die Bolschewiken ansahen.

Die Bolschewiken wollten die bürgerliche Revolution jedoch konsequent zu Ende führen und dazu gehört auch die Umwandlung der Bauern in ländliche Lohnarbeiter, die Kapitalisierung der Landwirtschaft. Dieser Prozeß ist noch im vollen Gange und wird als Kollektivisierung in der Welt gefeiert; er ist nicht abgeschlossen und kann wohl nicht, ohne neue gesellschaftliche Erschütterungen, abgeschlossen werden. Scheinbar jedoch können die Leninisten gegen Luxemburg beweisen, daß sie im Unrecht war, als sie annahm, daß ohne Weltrevolution der Bolschewismus an der Bauernfrage zu Grunde gehen muß. Doch muß dieser Beweis zugleich aufzeigen, daß der Bolschewismus tatsächlich zum Sozialismus geführt hat. Was jedoch in Rußland besteht ist der Staatskapitalismus. Mag man ihn auch Sozialismus nennen, er bleibt doch lohnarbeitenausbeutender Staatskapitalismus und damit hat sich die Luxemburgische Befürchtung, wie sehr auch immer modifiziert, doch bestätigt.

Die Bauernbewegungen in den ersten Jahren der russischen Revolution zwangen den Bolschewiken, wollten sie an der Macht bleiben, einen Kurs auf, der die Weltrevolution behindern mußte und der in Rußland nichts weiter erlaubte, als einen Staatskapitalismus, der vom Proletariat revolutionär gestürzt werden muß, will es zum Sozialismus gelangen. An dieser Stelle interessiert uns jedoch nur, daß die Bolschewiken mit Hilfe der Bauernbewegung zur Macht kommen konnten. Und weiter, daß sie glaubten, daß es genüge, im Besitze der politischen und wirtschaftlichen Kommandohöhen zu sein, um, mit einer richtigen Politik, zum Sozialismus zu kommen. Was durch rückständige Zustände den Bolschewisten aufgezwungen war, die weitgehendste Zentralisation aller Gewalt und die Konzessionen an die Bauern, das erschien ihnen als ihre eigene, kluge, erfolgreiche Politik, die sie auch auf internationalem Boden anzuwenden gedachten. Lenin hatte die Bewegungsgesetze der russischen Revolution lange vor ihrem Ausbruch mit großer Deutlichkeit voraus gesehen und seine gesamte Theorie und Praxis war auf diesen russischen Zustand zugeschnitten. Deshalb sein überspitzter Zentralismus, seine bestimmte Auffassung von der Rolle der Partei, seine Akzeptierung der Hilferdingschen Sozialisierungsideen, und auch seine Stellung zur nationalen Frage. Konnte auch Rosa Luxemburg, als Kenner der russischen Zustände, die

Leninsche Politik sehr gut verstehen und den Grund dazu ausgezeichnet marxistisch analysieren, und konnte sie, solange die Bolschewiken tatsächlich als weltrevolutionäre Kraft auftraten, all dies als unvermeidlich in Kauf nehmen, so wandte sie sich doch mit aller Macht dagegen, daß man aus dieser speziellen russischen Situation ein Rezept zur Lösung der weltrevolutionären Aufgaben der Arbeiterschaft machen wollte. „Das Gefährliche beginnt dort“, sagt sie von der Leninschen Politik, „wo die Bolschewiken aus der Not eine Tugend machen, und ihre von diesen fatalen Bedingungen aufgezwungene Taktik nunmehr theoretisch in allen Stücken fixieren und dem internationalen Proletariat als das Muster der sozialistischen Taktik zur Nachahmung empfehlen wollen.“ (Die Russische Revolution)

Hatte das Bündnis zwischen Bauern und Arbeitern, wie Lenin erwartet hatte, den Bolschewiken tatsächlich die Macht in die Hände gespielt, so stellte er sich den Verlauf der Weltrevolution als einen ähnlichen Prozeß, wenn auch in größerem Maßstabe vor. Die unterdrückten Völker waren in erster Linie agrarische Nationen und die Kommunistische Internationale versuchte in ihrer Bauernpolitik tatsächlich, die agrarischen- mit den Arbeiterinteressen im Weltmaßstabe zusammenzufassen, um sie gegen das Kapital, dem russischen Muster folgend, zu stellen und es im Weltmaßstab zu besiegen. Die nationalen Freiheitsbewegungen in den Kolonien und die der nationalen Minderheiten in den kapitalistischen Ländern zu unterstützen, war ebenfalls wertvoll für die Bolschewiken, weil dadurch die imperialistische Intervention der kapitalistischen Länder in Rußland geschwächt wurde. Jedoch die Weltrevolution ließ sich nicht wie eine vergrößerte Kopie der russischen Revolution behandeln. Die Abenteuer der Kommunistischen Internationale in ihren Versuchen, aus sich eine Arbeiter- und Bauerninternationale zu machen, sind als Fehlschläge bekannt; sie förderten nicht, sie zersetzten die revolutionäre Bewegung gegen den Kapitalismus. Alles was dabei erreicht werden konnte, war die Sicherung der bolschewistischen Staatsmacht in Rußland durch die Gewinnung einer langen geschichtlichen Atempause, die zur Entwicklung eines russischen- und internationalen Zustandes führte, wie er sich uns heute präsentiert.

Der Zusammenbruch des Kapitals.

War Lenins Einstellung zur nationalen Frage einerseits von dem diesbezüglichen, nicht gänzlich überwundenen sozialdemokratischen Standpunkt der Vorkriegszeit bestimmt, und war sie ihm, andererseits, ein Mittel zur Errichtung und Festigung der bolschewistischen Herrschaft in Rußland und deren eventuellen Ausdehnung im Weltmaßstabe, so hatte sie für Rosa Luxemburg keine andere Bedeutung, als die einer falschen Politik, die sich bitter rächen würde.

Im Gegensatz zu Lenin, für den, durchaus im Einklang zu seiner Gesamteinstellung, die Organisation und die Eroberung der Macht für die Partei die notwendige Voraussetzung für den Sieg des Sozialismus war, bildete dieser Lenin bewegende Gedanke nicht den Ausgangspunkt der Anschauungen Rosa Luxemburgs. Ihr Augenmerk war auf die Klassennotwendigkeiten des Proletariats gerichtet. War weiterhin Lenins Theorie und Praxis hauptsächlich an die rückständigen russischen Verhältnisse gebunden, so ging Rosa Luxemburg stets von den kapitalistisch entwickelteren Ländern aus und war so außerstande, in der „geschichtlichen Mission“ der Arbeiterklasse ein Partei- und Führerproblem zu sehen. Mehr Bedeutung als dem Wachsen der Organisation und der Qualität der Führer maß sie den spontanen Massenbewegungen und der Eigeninitiative der Arbeiter in deren Kämpfen zu. So unterschied sie sich von Lenin grundsätzlich in der Bewertung des Spontanitätsmomentes in der Geschichte und damit auch der Frage der Rolle der Organisation im Klassenkampf. Bevor wir jedoch auf diese

Differenzen eingehen, sei es uns erlaubt, kurz, wie es hier leider nicht anders möglich, auf den Unterschied der Auffassungen Luxemburgs und Lenins zur Marxschen Akkumulationstheorie einzugehen, da diese Frage mit allen aufs engste verknüpft ist.

In ihrem Kampf gegen die Revisionisten hatte Rosa Luxemburg schon betont, daß die Arbeiterschaft auf Revolution, nicht auf Reform eingestellt werden muß, da der Kapitalismus unvermeidlich seinem Zusammenbruch entgegenreibt. Dem Revisionismus, der sich bemühte, dem Kapitalismus Ewigkeitsdauer zuzuschreiben, hielt sie entgegen, „daß mit der Annahme der ökonomischen Schrankenlosigkeit der kapitalistischen Akkumulation, dem Sozialismus der granitene Boden der objektiven historischen Notwendigkeit unter den Füßen verschwindet. Wir verfluchten uns dann in die Nebel der vormarxistischen Systeme und Schulen, die den Sozialismus aus bloßer Ungerechtigkeit und Schlechtigkeit der heutigen Welt und aus der bloßen revolutionären Entschlossenheit der arbeitenden Klasse ableiten wollen.“ (**Was die Epigonen aus der Marxschen Theorie gemacht haben – Antikritik.**) Ihr Hauptwerk **Die Akkumulation des Kapitals**, als ein Teil ihres Kampfes gegen den Reformismus gedacht, galt dem Nachweis einer objektiven Grenze der kapitalistischen Entfaltung, und war zugleich eine Kritik der Marxschen Akkumulationstheorie.

Marx hatte, ihrer Auffassung nach, „die Frage der Akkumulation des Gesamtkapitals nur gestellt, aber nicht mehr beantwortet.“ Sein **Kapital** erschien ihr als „unvollständig“, als „Torso“, es enthielt „Lücken“, die es auszufüllen galt. Marx hat den „Akkumulationsprozeß des Kapitals in einer Gesellschaft dargestellt, die lediglich aus Kapitalisten und Arbeitern besteht,“ er „hat in seinem System den Außenhandel übergangen“ und „ebenso notwendig wie zugleich unmöglich erscheint deshalb in seinem System die Realisierung des Mehrwerts außerhalb der beiden existierenden Gesellschaftsklassen.“ Die Akkumulation des Kapitals ist bei Marx „in einen fehlerhaften Zirkel geraten“; ja, sein Werk enthält „klaffende Widersprüche“, die sie zu überwinden sich anschickte.

Sie selbst begründete die Notwendigkeit des kapitalistischen Zusammenbruchs mit „dem dialektischen Widerspruch, daß die kapitalistische Akkumulation zu ihrer Bewegung nichtkapitalistischer Formen als ihrer Umgebung bedarf. ...und nur solange existieren kann, als sie dieses Milieu vorfindet.“ Sie suchte die Schwierigkeiten der Akkumulation in der Zirkulationssphäre, in der Absatzfrage und der der Mehrwertrealisierung, während bei Marx diese Schwierigkeiten bereits in der Produktionssphäre gegeben sind, da für ihn die Akkumulation eine Kapitalverwertungsfrage ist. Die Produktion von Mehrwert, nicht die Realisierung desselben, ist für ihn das wirkliche Problem. Für Rosa Luxemburg konnte ein Teil des Mehrwerts in einem wie von Marx dargestellten Kapitalismus nicht abgesetzt werden; dessen Verwandlung zu neuem Kapital war nur auf dem Wege des Außenhandels mit nichtkapitalistischen Ländern möglich. Sie formulierte dies in der **Akkumulation des Kapitals** folgendermaßen: „Der Akkumulationsprozeß hat die Bestrebung, überall an Stelle der Naturalwirtschaft die einfache Warenwirtschaft, an Stelle der einfachen Warenwirtschaft die kapitalistische Wirtschaft zu setzen, die Kapitalproduktion als die einzige und ausschließliche Produktionsweise in sämtlichen Ländern und Zweigen zur absoluten Herrschaft zu bringen. Das Endresultat einmal erreicht — was jedoch nur theoretische Konstruktion bleibt —, wird die Akkumulation zur Unmöglichkeit. Die Realisierung und Kapitalisierung des Mehrwerts verwandelt sich in eine unlösbare Aufgabe. ... Die Unmöglichkeit der Akkumulation bedeutet kapitalistisch die Unmöglichkeit der weiteren Entfaltung der Produktivkräfte und damit die objektive geschichtliche Notwendigkeit des Untergangs des Kapitalismus.“

Diese Gedankengänge Rosa Luxemburgs waren nicht neu, originell war nur die Begründung, die sie ihnen gab. Sie versuchte, deren Richtigkeit an dem Marxschen Reproduktionsschema im zweiten Band des **Kapital** zu beweisen. Nach Marx muß das Kapital akkumulieren. Ein bestimmtes Verhältnis muß zwischen den verschiedenen Produktionsgebieten vorhanden sein, damit die Kapitalisten die Produktionsmittel, die Arbeiter die Lebensmittel für die Reproduktion auf dem Markt vorfinden. Dieses Verhältnis, von den Menschen nicht kontrolliert, setzt sich auf dem Umweg über den Markt blind durch. Marx reduzierte es auf zwei zusammenfassende Produktionsabteilungen: die Produktion von Produktionsmitteln und die Produktion von Konsumtionsmitteln. Mit willkürlich gewählten Zahlen illustrierte er den Austausch zwischen beiden Abteilungen. Aufgrund dieser Marxschen Schemata verläuft die Akkumulation scheinbar ohne Störungen. Der Austausch zwischen beiden Abteilungen geht glatt vonstatten. „Nimmt man das Schema wörtlich“, sagt Rosa Luxemburg, „dann erweckt es den Anschein, als ob die kapitalistische Produktion ausschließlich ihren gesamten Mehrwert realisierte und den kapitalistischen Mehrwert für die eigenen Bedürfnisse verwendete. Ist die kapitalistische Produktion jedoch selbst ausschließlich Abnehmerin ihres Mehrprodukts, so ist für die Akkumulation keine Schranke zu finden. ... Unter den Marxschen Voraussetzungen läßt das Schema keine andere Deutung zu, als die schrankenlose Produktion um der Produktion willen.“ Aber das kann, sagt Rosa Luxemburg, doch nicht der „Zweck“ der Akkumulation sein; eine solche Produktion, wie das Schema suggeriert, ist „vom kapitalistischen Standpunkt aus völlig sinnlos.“ ... „Das Marxsche Schema der Akkumulation gibt auf die Frage: für wen die erweiterte Reproduktion eigentlich stattfindet, keine Antwort.“ ... „Wohl steigt mit der Akkumulation die Konsumtion der Arbeiter wie die der Kapitalisten, doch fällt die persönliche Konsumtion der Kapitalisten unter den Gesichtspunkt der einfachen Reproduktion; und für wen produzieren dann die Kapitalisten, wenn sie nicht den ganzen Mehrwert konsumieren, sondern freiwillig ‚entsagen‘, d.h. akkumulieren? Noch weniger kann die Erhaltung einer immer größeren Armee von Arbeitern der Zweck der ununterbrochenen Kapitalakkumulation sein, da die Konsumtion der Arbeiter kapitalistisch eine Folge der Akkumulation, doch niemals ihr Zweck und ihre Voraussetzung ist.... In dem Moment, wo das Marxsche Schema der erweiterten Reproduktion der Wirklichkeit entspräche, zeigte es das Ende der kapitalistischen Produktion an.“ Aber das reibungslose Austauschverhältnis zwischen den beiden großen Abteilungen der Produktion, deren Gleichgewicht innerhalb der Marxschen Schemata, ist nach Luxemburg gar nicht möglich.¹ „Die Annahme der wachsenden organischen Zusammensetzung des Kapitals würde zeigen, daß die Einhaltung der notwendigen quantitativen Proportionen ausgeschlossen ist; d.h. die Unmöglichkeit der Dauerakkumulation läßt sich rein quantitativ schematisch beweisen. Ein Austausch zwischen beiden Abteilungen ist nicht möglich, es bleibt ein unabsetzbarer Rest in der Abteilung der Konsumgüter, eine Überproduktion an unrealisierbarem Mehrwert, der erst in nichtkapitalistischen Ländern realisiert werden kann.“ (**Die Akkumulation des Kapitals**). Mit dieser Theorie erklärte Rosa Luxemburg auch die imperialistischen Notwendigkeiten der kapitalistischen Länder.

Im direkten Gegensatz zu dieser Theorie Rosa Luxemburgs steht die Auffassung Lenins, was aus allen seinen ökonomischen Schriften ersichtlich ist. In vollem Einklang mit Marx, suchte er die Widersprüche, die die historische Begrenztheit des Kapitals

¹ Organische Zusammensetzung des Kapitals = das Verhältnis zwischen dem in Produktionsmittel (konstantes Kapital) und dem in Löhnen (variables Kapital) investiertem Kapital. Ausdruck der wachsenden Produktivität der Arbeit im Kapitalismus ist das Wachsen der organischen Zusammensetzung des Kapitals, die schnellere Zunahme des konstanten gegenüber dem variablen Kapital.

andeuteten, nicht wie Rosa Luxemburg in der Zirkulations-, sondern in der Produktionssphäre. Kritiklos stellte Lenin sich voll und ganz auf den Boden der Marxschen ökonomischen Theorien, da sie sich nicht ergänzen ließen. In seinen eigenen theoretischen Arbeiten beschränkte er sich auf die Anwendung der Marxschen Lehren bei der Untersuchung der Entwicklung des Kapitalismus im allgemeinen und die des russischen im besonderen.

Schon in seinen Schriften gegen die Narodniki, die nicht an eine kapitalistische Entwicklung Rußlands glauben wollten, da die Entwicklung eines Außenmarktes die Hauptbedingung dafür wäre und dieser Außenmarkt für Rußland nicht vorhanden war, da es zu spät die kapitalistische Bühne betrat, hatte Lenin bereits viele seiner Argumente gegen Rosa Luxemburgs Auffassung vorweggenommen. Die Narodniki behaupteten, daß der innere kapitalistische Markt zur Entfaltung der kapitalistischen Wirtschaft nicht genüge, ja, daß er sich durch die mit dem Kapitalismus verbundene Verelendung der Massen dauernd vermindere. Ähnlich wie später Rosa Luxemburg bestritten auch sie, daß sich der kapitalistische Mehrwert ohne Außenmärkte realisieren ließe. Die Frage der Realisierung des Mehrwerts hat nach Lenin mit dieser Problemstellung jedoch nichts zu tun; die „Einbeziehung des Außenhandels verschiebt das Problem nur, aber es löst es nicht.“ Die Notwendigkeit des Außenmarktes für ein kapitalistisches Land erklärt sich für ihn, wie er ausführt, „überhaupt nicht aus den Gesetzen der Realisierung des gesellschaftlichen Produkts (und des Mehrwerts im besonderen), sondern dadurch, daß der Kapitalismus nur als Resultat einer weitentwickelten Warenzirkulation auftritt, die die Grenzen des Staates überschreitet.“ Der Absatz des Produkts auf dem äußeren Markt erklärt nichts, „sondern fordert selbst der Erklärung, d.h. das Auffinden seines Äquivalents.“ ... „Wenn man von den ‚Schwierigkeiten‘ der Realisierung spricht,“ sagt Lenin, „dann muß man auch erkennen, daß diese ‚Schwierigkeiten‘ nicht nur möglich, sondern auch unvermeidlich sind, und zwar hinsichtlich aller Teile des kapitalistischen Produkts, und nicht des Mehrwerts allein. Die Schwierigkeiten dieser Art, die von der unproportionellen Verteilung der verschiedenen Zweige der Produktion herrührten, entstehen ständig nicht nur bei der Realisierung des Mehrwerts, sondern auch bei der Realisierung des variablen und konstanten Kapitals; nicht nur bei der Realisierung des Produkts in Gestalt von Konsumtionsgütern, sondern auch in Gestalt von Produktionsmitteln.“

„Wie bekannt“, schreibt Lenin, (**Zur Charakteristik des ökonomischen Romantizismus**) „besteht das Gesetz der kapitalistischen Produktion darin, daß das konstante Kapital rascher wächst als das variable, d.h. ein immer größerer Teil sich neubildenden Kapitals wendet sich der Abteilung der gesellschaftlichen Produktion zu, die Produktionsmittel herstellt. Folglich muß diese Abteilung unbedingt rascher wachsen als diejenige, die Konsumtionsmittel herstellt. Folglich nehmen die Konsumtionsmittel in der Gesamtmasse der kapitalistischen Produktion immer weniger und weniger Raum ein. Und das entspricht vollkommen der geschichtlichen Mission des Kapitalismus und seiner spezifischen sozialen Struktur: die erste besteht nämlich in der Entwicklung der Produktivkräfte der Gesellschaft; die letztere schließt die Utilisierung derselben durch die Masse der Bevölkerung aus.“ Nichts ist für Lenin „sinnloser, als aus diesem Widerspruch zwischen Produktion und Konsumtion abzuleiten, daß Marx die Möglichkeiten, den Mehrwert in der kapitalistischen Gesellschaft zu realisieren, bestritten, die Krisen durch ungenügenden Konsum erklärt hätte.“ Er sagt in seinem Buch über die Entwicklung des russischen Kapitalismus an anderer Stelle: „Die verschiedenen Zweige der Industrie, die einander als „Markt“ dienen, entwickeln sich ungleichmäßig, überholen einander, und die entwickeltere Industrie sucht einen äußeren Markt. Dies bedeutet keineswegs die Unmöglichkeit, für die kapitalistische Nation, den Mehrwert zu realisieren ... Dies weist

nur auf die Unproportionalität in der Entwicklung der einzelnen Industrien hin. Bei einer anderen Verteilung des nationalen Kapitals könne die gleiche Produktenmenge im Inneren des Landes realisiert werden.“

Für Lenin hat Marx mit seinem Reproduktionsschema „den Prozeß der Realisierung des Produkts im allgemeinen und des Mehrwerts im besonderen vollständig aufgeklärt und die völlige Unrichtigkeit der Hereinziehung des äußeren Marktes in die Realisierungsfrage aufgedeckt.“ Die Krisenhaftigkeit des Kapitalismus und dessen Expansionstendenzen erklären sich für Lenin durch die Ungleichmäßigkeit der Entwicklung der einzelnen Industriezweige. Aus dem Monopolcharakter des Kapitalismus leitet er in seinem Buch über den Imperialismus die beständige koloniale Ausdehnung und die imperialistische Aufteilung der Welt ab. Durch den Kapitalexport und die Beherrschung der Rohstoffgebiete verschafft sich die Bourgeoisie der herrschenden kapitalistischen Länder riesige Extraprofite. Die imperialistische Expansion diene nicht so sehr der Realisierung des Mehrwerts, sondern der Steigerung der Profite.

Ohne Zweifel steht Lenins Auffassung der Marxschen näher als die Rosa Luxemburgs. Wohl hat letztere völlig richtig in der Marxschen Akkumulationstheorie das Zusammenbruchsgesetz des Kapitals erkannt; sie übersah jedoch die Marxsche Begründung dafür und produzierte ihre eigene Realisierungstheorie, die von Lenin mit Recht als unmarxistisch und falsch zurückgewiesen wurde. Es ist in diesem Zusammenhang jedoch interessant zu bemerken, daß Lenin in der seiner Marx-Biographie beigefügten Bibliographie auf die „Analyse der (Luxemburgischen) falschen Auslegung der Marxschen Theorie durch Otto Bauer“ in der **Neuen Zeit** verwies. Bauers Kritik an Rosa Luxemburgs Akkumulationstheorie war von letzterer in ihrer Antikritik jedoch mit Recht als eine „Blamage für den derzeitigen offiziellen Marxismus“ bezeichnet worden; denn Bauer wiederholte in seinen Angriffen nur die revisionistische Auffassung, daß dem Kapital keine objektiven Schranken gezogen sind. In seiner Auffassung „ist der Kapitalismus auch ohne Expansion denkbar Nicht an der mechanischen Unmöglichkeit, den Mehrwert zu realisieren,“ scheidet bei ihm der Kapitalismus, sondern „an der Empörung, zu der er die Volksmassen treibt.... Er wird gefällt werden, von der stets anschwellenden und durch den Mechanismus des kapitalistischen Produktionsprozesses selbst geschulten, vereinten und organisierten Arbeiterklasse.“

Bauer bemühte sich, mit einem von ihm modifizierten Reproduktionsschema, das viele der von Rosa Luxemburg beklagten Mängel der Marxschen Schemata nicht kannte, den Nachweis anzutreten, daß auch bei Annahme der wachsenden organischen Zusammensetzung des Kapitals ein reibungsloser Austausch zwischen den beiden Abteilungen im Schema der kapitalistischen Reproduktion möglich sei. Jedoch wies ihm Rosa Luxemburg nach, daß auch in seinem modifizierten Schema ein unabsetzbarer Rest in der Konsumtionsabteilung übrig bleibt, der, um realisiert zu werden, zur Eroberung neuer Märkte drängt. Darauf hatte Bauer nichts mehr zu sagen. Und trotzdem verwies Lenin auf ihn, als „den Ausleger der falschen Theorie Rosa Luxemburgs.“

Nicht nur, daß Bauers Argumentation Rosa Luxemburg überhaupt nicht traf, auch die von ihm, aus seinem Schema gezogenen Schlußfolgerungen der schrankenlosen Akkumulation, (unabhängig von der Frage des Austauschverhältnisses beider Abteilungen), konnten an diesem selben Schema als völlig falsch bewiesen werden. Henryk Grossmann wies nach, daß die Weiterführung des Bauerschen Schemas auf eine längere Periode hinaus, nicht die von Bauer abgeleitete reibungslose Entfaltung des Kapitalismus, sondern den Zusammenbruch der Kapitalverwertung ergab. Der Kampf gegen Rosa Luxemburgs Zusammenbruchstheorie hatte nur zu einer neuen

Zusammenbruchstheorie geführt. (Henryk Grossmann: **Das Akkumulations- und Zusammenbruchsgesetz des kapitalistischen Systems**).

Der Streit zwischen Luxemburg und Bauer, der Lenins Sympathien auf der Seite Bauers fand, war ein Streit um Nichts und es ist wiederum nicht uninteressant festzustellen, daß Lenin die Unsinnigkeit der ganzen Auseinandersetzung nicht bemerkte. Die Diskussion drehte sich um die Möglichkeit oder Unmöglichkeit eines reibungslosen Austauschverhältnisses zwischen den beiden Abteilungen des Marxschen Reproduktionsschemas, von der die volle Realisierung des Mehrwerts abhing. Das Schema war im Marxschen System nur als Hilfsmittel der gedanklichen Analyse gedacht, dem keine objektive Existenz zuzuschreiben war. In seiner überzeugenden Rekonstruktion des Aufbauplanes des Marxschen **Kapital**, sowie in anderen Arbeiten, hat Henryk Grossmann die wirkliche Bedeutung des Reproduktionsschemas aufgezeigt und damit die Diskussion um die Marxsche Akkumulationstheorie auf einen neuen, fruchtbaren Boden gestellt. Der ganzen, auf auf diesem Schema basierende Luxemburgischen Marx-Kritik, lag die Zumessung einer objektiven Existenz des Reproduktionsschemas zugrunde, „aber“, betont Grossmann, „das Schema für sich allein beansprucht nicht, ein Abbild der konkreten kapitalistischen Wirklichkeit zu sein. Es ist nur ein Glied im Marxschen Annäherungsverfahren, das, zusammen mit anderen vereinfachenden Annahmen, die dem Schema zu Grunde liegen, und den nachträglichen Modifikationen im Sinne einer progressiven Konkretisierung ein unzertrennliches Ganzes bilden. Dabei verliert jeder dieser drei Teile für sich allein, ohne die beiden anderen, für die Erkenntnis der Wahrheit jeden Sinn, und kann nur ein vorläufiges Erkenntnisstadium, die erste Etappe im Annäherungsverfahren an die konkrete Wirklichkeit bedeuten.“

Das Marxsche Schema beschäftigt sich mit dem Austausch von Werten, aber in Wirklichkeit werden die Waren nicht zu ihren Werten, sondern zu Produktionspreisen ausgetauscht. „In einem auf Werten aufgebauten Schema“, führt Grossmann in seiner Arbeit über „Die Wert- und Preis-Transformation“ aus, „müssen in jeder Abteilung des Schemas verschiedene Profitraten entstehen. Es besteht aber in der Wirklichkeit die Tendenz der Ausgleichung der Profitraten zur Durchschnittsprofitrate, was schon im Begriff des Produktionspreises eingeschlossen ist. Will man so Kritik oder Bejahung der Möglichkeit der Realisierung des Mehrwerts auf das Schema basieren, so müßte es zu allererst in ein Preisschema verwandelt werden.“ Selbst wäre Rosa Luxemburg der Nachweis gelungen, daß im Marxschen Schema der restlose Absatz der Waren nicht möglich ist, daß mit jedem Jahre ein wachsender Überschuß an Konsumtionsmitteln entstehen muß, was hätte sie dann bewiesen: „Lediglich den Umstand, daß der ‚unabsetzbare Rest‘ in der Konsumtionsabteilung innerhalb des Wertschemas entsteht, d.h. unter der Voraussetzung, daß die Waren zu ihren Werten ausgetauscht werden.“ Aber diese Voraussetzung besteht nicht für die Wirklichkeit. Das, der Luxemburgischen Analyse zugrunde liegende Wertschema, hat in den einzelnen Produktionszweigen verschiedene Profitraten, die nicht zur Durchschnittsprofitrate ausgeglichen werden, da ja im Schema von der Konkurrenz abgesehen wird. Was besagen dann die Schlußfolgerungen Luxemburgs für die Wirklichkeit, wenn sie von einem Schema abgeleitet werden, dem keine Wirklichkeitsgeltung zukommt? „Da infolge der Konkurrenz die Umwandlung der Werte in Produktionspreise und dadurch die Neuverteilung des Mehrwerts unter die einzelnen Industriezweige im Schema stattfindet, wodurch notwendigerweise auch eine Änderung der bisherigen Proportionalitätsverhältnisse der einzelnen Sphären des Schemas erfolgt, so ist es durchaus möglich und wahrscheinlich, daß ein ‚Konsumtionsrest‘ im Wertschema nachher im Produktionsschema verschwindet und umgekehrt, ein ursprüngliches Gleichgewicht des Wertschemas sich nachher im Produktionsschema in eine Disproportionalität

verwandelt.“ Die theoretische Verwirrung Rosa Luxemburgs illustriert sich am besten in der Tatsache, daß sie einerseits in der Durchschnittsprofitrate die leitende Macht sieht, „die tatsächlich jedes Privatkapital nur als Teil des gesellschaftlichen Gesamtkapitals behandelt, (in ihrer **Akkumulation des Kapitals**), ihm den Profit als einen ihm nach Größe zukommenden Teil des in der Gesellschaft herausgepreßten Gesamtmehrwerts ohne Rücksicht auf das von ihm tatsächlich erzielte Quantum zuweist“, und daß sie trotzdem die Frage prüft, ob ein restloser Austausch möglich ist; und das an einem Schema, das keine Durchschnittsprofitrate kennt. Berücksichtigt man den Durchschnittsprofit, so verliert das Disproportionalitätsargument Rosa Luxemburgs jeden Wert, da eine Abteilung über, die andere unter dem Wert verkauft und auf der Basis der Produktionspreise der unabsetzbare Mehrwertteil verschwinden kann.

Marx' Akkumulationsgesetz ist mit dem Fall der Profitrate identisch. Der Kompensation des Falles der Profitrate durch Wachstum der Profitmasse ist durch den dauernden Akkumulationszwang eine Grenze gesetzt. Nicht aus einem Zuviel des Mehrwerts, der sich nicht realisieren läßt, aus dem Mangel an Mehrwert geht bei Marx das Kapital zu Grunde. Rosa Luxemburg übersah die Folgen des Falles der Profitrate vollständig; aus welchem Grunde sie auch die vom Marxschen Standpunkt sinnlose Frage nach dem „Zweck“ der Akkumulation stellen mußte. „Man sagt“, schreibt sie in ihrer **Anti-Kritik**, „der Kapitalismus werde am Falle der Profitrate zugrunde gehen. ... Dieser Trost wird leider durch einen einzigen Satz von Marx in Dunst aufgelöst, nämlich durch den Hinweis, daß für große Kapitale der Fall der Profitrate durch Masse aufgewogen wird. Es hat also mit dem Untergang des Kapitalismus am Fall der Profitrate noch gute Wege, so etwa bis zum Erlöschen der Sonne.“ Sie übersah, daß diese wohl von Marx dargestellte Tatsache gleichzeitig nach Marx ebenfalls ihre Grenzen hat, und daß aus dem Fall der Profitrate, der Fall der Profitmasse wird, ja, daß ersteres den zuerst relativen und dann absoluten Fall der aktuellen Profitmasse, gemessen an den Akkumulationsnotwendigkeiten des Kapitals ausdrückt.

Wohl hat Lenin „es begrifflich gefunden“, wie er es in seiner Marx-Biographie ausdrückt, „daß die Profitrate eine Tendenz zum Sinken hat“ und er wies darauf hin, „daß Marx diese Tendenz und eine Reihe der sie verhüllenden bzw. ihr entgegenwirkenden Umstände analysiert hätte“, aber die ganze Bedeutung dieses Gesetzes im Marxschen System war ihm ebenfalls nicht klar, was einerseits seine Akzeptierung der Bauerschen Erwiderung auf Rosa Luxemburg, andererseits die Beschränkung seiner eigenen Krisenerklärung auf die disproportione Entwicklung der verschiedenen Industriezweige erklärt. Und zuletzt wohl auch seine widerspruchsvollen Auffassungen, die einmal an ein unabwendbares Ende des Kapitalismus glaubten, ein andermal betonten, daß es keine absolut ausweglosen Lagen für den Kapitalismus gäbe. In seinen Werken findet sich keine überzeugende ökonomische Begründung des Endes des Kapitalismus und doch zugleich die feste Überzeugung, daß das System unabwendbar seinem Untergang entgegengeht. Dies erklärt sich daraus, daß er wohl nicht mit Bauer und der Sozialdemokratie an die Möglichkeit der reformistischen Verwandlung des Kapitalismus zum Sozialismus glaubte, aber dennoch mit Bauer und der Sozialdemokratie annahm, daß die Umwälzung des Kapitalismus ausschließlich eine Frage der Entwicklung des revolutionären Bewußtseins sei, worunter beide nichts weiter verstanden, als daß die Revolution eine Frage der Organisation und ihrer Führung sei.

Zur Frage des Spontaneitätsmomentes und der Rolle der Organisation.

Wir sahen bisher, daß Rosa Luxemburg mit Recht betonte, daß für Marx das Akkumulationsgesetz zugleich das Zusammenbruchsgesetz des Kapitals war. Ihre Beweisführung war falsch, die Schlußfolgerung dennoch richtig. Wich sie von Marx in der Erklärung des Zusammenbruchsgesetzes vollständig ab, so erkannte sie doch die Existenz desselben. Lenins Argumente gegen die Luxemburgische Auffassung waren stichhaltig und, soweit wie sie gingen, mit Marx im Einklang, jedoch wich er der Frage, ob dem Kapital eine objektive Grenze gestellt sei, aus. Seine eigene Krisenlehre ist unzureichend und inkonsequent. Seine richtigere Theorie führte nicht zu wirklich revolutionären Schlußfolgerungen. Selbst Rosa Luxemburgs falsche Begründung blieb noch revolutionär. Denn darauf kommt es an: auf die Betonung und den Nachweis der Zusammenbruchsgesetzlichkeit des Kapitalismus.

Lenin, der Sozialdemokratie noch viel näher stehend als Rosa Luxemburg, sah den kapitalistischen Zusammenbruch mehr als einen bewußten politischen Akt, denn als ökonomische Notwendigkeit. Ob das nur begrifflich, in Wirklichkeit untrennbare ökonomische oder politische Moment in bezug auf die proletarische Revolution überwiegt, ist keine Frage der abstrakten Theorie, sondern der jeweiligen konkreten Situation, deren Analyse diese Frage zu beantworten hat. Lenin hatte vieles von den Hilferdingschen Spekulationen der Kapitalentwicklung, die nach letzterem zu einem sogenannten „Generalkartell“ tendierten, akzeptiert. Nicht nur, wie zuerst, von dem bürgerlichen Charakter der kommenden russischen Revolution ausgehend und sich so bewußt deren bürgerliche Erscheinungen und Notwendigkeiten anpassend, sondern später auch mit der Hilferdingschen Einstellung in bezug auf die kapitalistisch entwickelten Länder belastet, kam er zu seiner Überschätzung der „politischen Seite“ der proletarischen Revolution.

Es war nach Lenin falsch anzunehmen (und dies galt für die internationale Szene), daß wir uns im Zeitalter der reinen proletarischen Revolution befinden, ja, eine solche kann es nach Lenin niemals geben. Die wirkliche Revolution ist für ihn das dialektische Umschlagen der bürgerlichen in die proletarische Revolution. Die noch aktuell gebliebenen Forderungen der bürgerlichen Revolution können nur noch im Rahmen der proletarischen Revolution verwirklicht werden. Diese proletarische Revolution ist nur proletarisch in der Führung, sie umfaßt alle Unterdrückten, die zu Verbündeten des Proletariats werden müssen: die Bauern, der Mittelstand, die kolonialen Völker, unterdrückten Nationen, usw. Diese wirkliche Revolution findet im Zeitalter des Imperialismus statt, der, von der Monopolisierung der Wirtschaft entwickelt, für Lenin, ein „parasitärer“, ein „stagnierender“ Kapitalismus ist, „die letzte Stufe der kapitalistischen Entwicklung“, unmittelbar vor dem Ausbruch der sozialen Revolution. Der Imperialismus führt in Lenins Arbeit über ihn „knapp bis zur allseitigen Vergesellschaftung der Produktion, er schleppt sozusagen den Kapitalisten gegen dessen Willen und Bewußtsein, in eine gesellschaftliche Ordnung, die einen Übergang bietet von der vollkommenen Freiheit der Konkurrenz zur völligen Vergesellschaftung.“

Der Monopolkapitalismus hat nach Lenin die Produktion bereits sozialisierungsreif gemacht; es kommt nur noch darauf an, die Kontrolle über die Wirtschaft aus den Händen der Kapitalisten in die des Staates zu legen und dann auch die Distribution nach sozialistischen Grundsätzen zu regeln. Die ganze Frage des Sozialismus ist eine Frage der Eroberung der politischen Macht für die Partei, die dann den Sozialismus für die Arbeiter verwirklichen würde. Es bestanden zwischen der Sozialdemokratie und Lenin keine Differenzen, soweit es um den sozialistischen Aufbau und dessen Organisationsprobleme

ging. Es bestand nur ein Unterschied in der Frage, wie man zur Herrschaft über die Produktion kommen kann; auf parlamentarischem oder auf revolutionärem Wege. Jedoch der Besitz der politischen Macht, die Kontrolle über das komplette Monopol, waren in beider Auffassungen auch schon die Lösung des Problems der sozialistischen Wirtschaft. Deshalb scheut Lenin auch nicht vor dem Staatskapitalismus zurück, gegen dessen Gegner er auf dem XI. Parteitag der Bolschewiki sagt: „Der Staatskapitalismus ist jener Kapitalismus, den zu beschränken, dessen Grenzen festzustellen wir imstande sein werden; dieser Staatskapitalismus ist mit dem Staate verbunden, und der Staat das sind die Arbeiter, der vorgeschrittenste Teil der Arbeiter, die Avantgarde, das sind wir. Und es hängt schon von uns ab, wie dieser Staatskapitalismus sein wird.“² Hing bei Otto Bauer die proletarische Revolution allein von der Haltung der klassenbewußten, organisierten Arbeiterschaft ab, von ihrem politischen Willen, (was bei einem einzigen Blick auf die sozialdemokratischen Organisationen, die ihre Mitglieder völlig beherrschen, praktisch bedeutete, daß sie von Otto Bauer und Kumpanei abhing), so hängt hier bei Lenin das Schicksal des Staatskapitalismus von der Haltung der Partei ab, die wiederum von der der Bürokratie bestimmt ist, und die ganze Geschichte ist erneut die Geschichte des Edelmut, der Selbstlosigkeit und der Tapferkeit einer Gruppe von Menschen, die von den alleredelsten in diesen Tugenden ausgebildet werden.

Aber mit dieser Einstellung Lenins zum Staatskapitalismus, der für ihn willensmäßig und nicht von ökonomischen Gesetzen bestimmt ist, trotzdem die ökonomischen Gesetze des Staatskapitalismus prinzipiell nicht andere als die des Monopolkapitalismus sind, war Lenin sich nur selbst treu geblieben, denn letzten Endes hing auch die Revolution für ihn von der Qualität der Partei und ihrer Führung ab. In Übereinstimmung mit Kautsky, für den das für die Revolution unerlässlich notwendige revolutionäre Bewußtsein (das für Kautsky Ideologie und sonst nichts war), nur von außen an die Arbeiterschaft herangetragen werden konnte, da die Arbeiter außerstande waren, es aus sich selbst heraus zu entwickeln, behauptete auch Lenin, daß die Arbeiterschaft außerstande ist, mehr als ein gewerkschaftliches-sozialreformistisches Bewußtsein zu entwickeln; daß jedoch das revolutionäre Bewußtsein von den Intellektuellen an die Arbeiter herangetragen würde. Seine Schrift **Was tun?** dient nur dem Nachweis, daß die Arbeiter niemals ein politisches Bewußtsein in hinreichendem Maße entwickeln können was die Notwendigkeit der Partei und deren Führung durch die Intellektuellen zu erklären hat. Damit hatte der Sozialismus erneut aufgehört, das „Werk der Arbeiterklasse“ zu sein, als das Marx es sah; der Sozialismus hing nun von der revolutionären Ideologie der Bourgeoisie ab, und ohne Zweifel folgt der religiöse „Marxist“ J. Meddleton Murry heute nur Kautskys und Lenins Spuren, wenn für ihn, wie er kürzlich in einem Buch sagte, „konsequenterweise der ganze Sozialismus wesentlich eine Bewegung bekehrter Bourgeois ist.“

Sicher steht Lenin auf marxistischem Boden, wenn er behauptet, daß die Arbeiterschaft außerstande ist, ein „politisches Bewußtsein“ zu entwickeln. In seiner Polemik gegen Arnold Ruge, der den Mangel an politischem Bewußtsein so sehr beklagte und diesen Mangel nicht begriff, da das vorhandene Elend doch ein solches hätte entwickeln müssen, sagte Marx in seinen Randglossen zu Ruges Artikel **Der König von Preußen und die Sozialreform**, daß es falsch sei, anzunehmen, daß soziales Elend politisches Verständnis mit sich bringt, vielmehr sei das Umgekehrte der Fall, der gesellschaftliche Wohlstand erzeuge ein politisches Bewußtsein, da letzteres eine geistige

² Es ist lustig, sich diese Stufenreihe anzusehen: ... „der Staat, das sind die Arbeiter (erste Einschränkung), der vorgeschrittenste Teil (zweite Einschränkung), die Avantgarde (letzte Einschränkung), das sind wir; d.h., die Bolschewiken, die wiederum so abgestuft sind, daß Lenin zuletzt wie jener französische König zu sagen imstande wäre: „Der Staat - das bin ich!“

Qualität sei, die dem gegeben würde, dem es gut geht. Aber Lenin hat mit Marx nichts mehr zu tun, sondern sinkt zum bürgerlichen Revolutionär à la Ruge herab, wenn er sich eine proletarische Revolution ohne dieses Intellekt-Bewußtsein nicht vorstellen kann, wenn er die ganze Revolution zu einer Frage des bewußten Eingreifens der „Wissenden“, oder der Leninschen „Berufsrevolutionäre“ macht. Gegen diese „Ruge-Lenin“ sagte Marx: „Wo es politische Parteien gibt, findet jede den Grund eines jeden Übels darin, daß statt ihrer ihr Widerpart sich am Staatsruder befindet. Selbst die radikalen und revolutionären Politiker suchen den Grund des Übels nicht im Wesen des Staates, sondern in einer bestimmten Staatsform, an deren Stelle sie eine andere Staatsform setzen wollen.“ Ja, sagt er in glänzenden Ausführungen weiter, daß je mehr politisches Verständnis vorhanden ist, daß auch desto mehr das Proletariat sich in nutzlosen, irrationellen Kämpfen verschwendet, da das „politische Verständnis“ ihre viel richtigeren Klasseninstinkte verschleiert und sie blind gegen ihre wirklichen gesellschaftlichen Aufgaben macht. Wer, nach Marx, zu sehr auf die „politische Seele“ der Revolution hofft, der strebt nur einen Zustand an, der diesen „politischen Seelen“ entspricht, auf Kosten der Gesellschaft. Aber mehr als einen Wechsel der Herrschaft über die Produktionsmittel hatte Lenin auch nicht angestrebt, da ihm dies für den Sozialismus zu genügen schien. Deshalb auch seine Überbetonung des subjektiven, politischen Momentes, was ihm auch die Organisierung des Sozialismus zum politischen Akt werden ließ, während es wohl nach Marx ohne Revolution keinen Sozialismus gibt und diese Revolution der politische Akt des Proletariats ist, den das Proletariat jedoch nur insoweit benötigt, als es zu zerstören hat. Wo es jedoch beginnt, den Sozialismus zu formen, wo seine „wahre Seele“ zum Vorschein kommt, da wirft es die politische Hülle ab.

Die bürgerlichen Elemente in Lenins Gedankenwelt, die zuerst das kapitalistische Ende von bestimmten, nicht notwendig vorhandenen politischen Voraussetzungen abhängig machen, die sich weiterhin einbildeten, daß die wachsende Monopolisierung mit der Vergesellschaftung der Produktion identisch sei, die den ganzen Sozialismus von der Übernahme der Monopole durch den Staat und die Ersetzung einer alten durch eine neue Bürokratie abhängig machten, und für die die Revolution zu einem Wettstreit der Revolutionäre mit der Bourgeoisie um die Gefolgschaft der Massen herabsinkt; eine solche Einstellung mußte das revolutionäre Element der spontanen Massenbewegungen und deren Gewalt und Zielsicherheit verkleinern, um die eigene Rolle, die des zur Ideologie erstarrten sozialistischen Bewußtseins, entsprechend übertreiben zu können.

Wohl kann Lenin das Element der Spontaneität nicht leugnen, aber es ist für ihn „im Grunde nichts anderes, als die Keimform des Bewußtseins“, die dann in der Organisation zur Blüte heranreift und erst dann wirklich revolutionär, weil vollständig bewußt, ist. Für den sozialistischen Sieg genügt nicht das spontane Erwachen der Massen, ja, dieses „spontane Erwachen der Massen macht die Organisation nicht weniger, sondern mehr notwendig.“ Der Fehler der Spontaneitätsauffassung besteht nach Lenin darin, „daß sie die Rolle des Bewußtseins verkleinert und sich gegen eine starke Führung ausspricht, aber diese Führung sei für den sozialistischen Sieg unerläßlich.“ Die Schwächen der Organisation und ihrer Führung sind ihm die Schwächen der Arbeiterbewegung schlechthin. Der Kampf muß organisiert, die Organisation geplant werden; alles hängt von ihr und der richtigen Führung ab. Sie muß Einfluß auf die Massen haben, dieser Einfluß zählt mehr als die Massen. Es ist ihm gleichgültig, wo und wie die Massen organisiert sind, nach Räten oder Gewerkschaften. Hauptsache ist, daß sie von den Bolschewiken geleitet werden.

Ganz anders als Lenin sieht Rosa Luxemburg diese Dinge. Sie verwechselt das revolutionäre Bewußtsein nicht mit dem Intellektuellen-Bewußtsein der Leninschen Berufsrevolutionäre, sondern es ist für sie das aus dem Zwange der Notwendigkeit

erwachsene Tat-Bewußtsein der Massen selbst. Die Massen handeln für sie revolutionär, weil sie nicht anders handeln können und weil sie handeln müssen. Der Marxismus ist ihr nicht nur Ideologie, die sich in der Organisation kristallisiert, sondern das lebende kämpfende Proletariat, das den Marxismus aktualisiert, nicht weil es will, sondern weil es muß. Sind die Massen für Lenin nur das Material, mit dem bewußte Revolutionäre arbeiten, so wie dem Straßenbahnführer die Straßenbahn nur zum Fahren dient, so entspringen bei Rosa Luxemburg die bewußten Revolutionäre nicht nur aus der wachsenden Erkenntnis, sondern mehr noch aus der aktuell revolutionär handelnden Masse. Nicht nur, daß sie die Überbetonung der Rolle der Organisation und der Führung prinzipiell verwirft, sie beweist an der Erfahrung, daß, wie sie es in ihrer Broschüre über den **Massenstreik** so ausgezeichnet aussprach, es während einer revolutionären Erhebung enorm schwer ist auszurechnen und zu kalkulieren, welche Maßnahmen zu Explosionen führen und welche nicht. Kein bestimmendes Organ ist wirklich dazu imstande. Ein enges, mechanisch denkendes bürokratisches Gehirn mag außerstande sein, sich eine Aktion der Arbeiterschaft vorzustellen, die nicht ein Produkt der Organisation wäre, aber der Dialektiker, sagt Rosa Luxemburg, sieht, daß die Organisationen ein Produkt des Kampfes sind. An Hand der Beispiele der russischen Massenbewegungen von 1905 zeigt sie auf, daß die Erhebungen der Ausgebeuteten nicht von irgendwelchen vorherbestimmten Plänen abhingen, daß die Aktionen nicht im voraus organisiert waren und daß sie auch nicht von einer außenstehenden Gruppe kontrolliert werden konnten, da die Aufrufe der Parteien kaum mit der spontanen Bewegung der Massen Schritt halten konnten. Die Führer hatten nicht einmal Zeit, die Parolen herauszugeben oder sie überhaupt zu formulieren, die Massen waren schneller als jeder politische Wille. Und generalisierend sagt sie, daß auch in Deutschland aller Wahrscheinlichkeit nach nicht die bestorganisierten Arbeiter die größte revolutionäre Kapazität entwickeln werden, sondern die schlecht-organisierten, oder die völlig unorganisierten. „Revolutionen lassen sich nicht auf Kommando machen“, betont sie ausdrücklich. Dies ist gar nicht die Aufgabe der Partei. Pflicht ist es nur, jederzeit unerschrocken auszusprechen, was ist, d.h. den Massen klar und deutlich ihre Aufgaben im gegebenen geschichtlichen Moment vorzuhalten, und das politische Aktionsprogramm und die Losungen zu proklamieren, die sich aus der Situation ergeben. Die Sorge dafür, ob und wann die revolutionäre Massenbewegung sich daran knüpft, muß der Sozialismus getrost der Geschichte selbst überlassen.

Oft denunzierte man Rosa Luxemburgs Spontaneitätsauffassung, die man als „Katastrophenpolitik“ zu bezeichnen pflegte, als gegen die Organisation der Arbeiterbewegung selbst gerichtet. Sie fand es oft notwendig zu betonen, daß ihre Auffassung nicht „pour la désorganisation“ ist. „Die Sozialdemokraten“, schrieb sie, „sind die klare und klassenbewußte Vorhut des Proletariats. Sie warten nicht mit verschränkten Armen fatalistisch auf die revolutionäre Situation, für das, was bei jeder spontanen Bewegung vom Himmel fällt. Ganz im Gegenteil, nun und immer müssen sie versuchen, die Entwicklung der Dinge zu beschleunigen helfen.“ Diese Rolle der Organisation hält sie für möglich und deshalb für willkommen und selbstverständlich, während Lenin sie für absolut notwendig hält und von der Erfüllung dieser Notwendigkeit die ganze Revolution abhängig macht. Dieser Unterschied über die Bedeutung der Organisation für die Revolution enthält auch zwei verschiedene Auffassungen über Form und Inhalt der Organisation selbst. „Das einzige Organisationsprinzip für unsere Bewegung“, schreibt Lenin in seinem „Was tun?“ ist die strengste Konspiration, strengste Auswahl der Mitglieder³, Ausbildung von Berufsrevolutionären. Sobald diese Eigenschaften vorhanden sind, ist noch etwas mehr

³ Dieses „Prinzip“ wurde von Lenin und der 3. Internationale sehr bald fallen gelassen.

gesichert, als die „Demokratie“, nämlich, das volle kameradschaftliche Vertrauen unter den Revolutionären. Und dieses Mehr ist für uns unbedingt notwendig, denn bei uns ... kann gar keine Rede davon sein, es durch die demokratische Kontrolle zu ersetzen. Es ist ein großer Fehler, zu glauben, daß die Unmöglichkeit einer wirklichen demokratischen Kontrolle die Mitglieder der revolutionären Organisation unkontrollierbar macht. Sie haben keine Zeit, an puppenhafte Formen der Demokratie zu denken, aber ihre Verantwortlichkeit empfinden sie sehr lebhaft.“⁴

Mit organisatorischen Mitteln, die, solange sie demokratisch waren, Lenin nichts bedeuteten, will er, sobald sie zentralistisch sind, dem Opportunismus zuleibe gehen. Je mehr der Opportunismus sich ausbreitet, desto zentralistischer muß man nach Lenin werden. Mit der straffsten Disziplin und der völligen Unterordnung aller Aktivität unter die Anordnungen des Zentral-Komitees will er die Organisation in eine wirkliche Waffe verwandeln. Wohl verstand Rosa Luxemburg es ausgezeichnet, diesen „Nachtwächtergeist“ Lenins aus der besonderen Situation der russischen Intellektuellen abzuleiten, aber „es ist falsch“, schreibt sie gegen Lenin, „daß man die noch nicht gut funktionierende Majoritätsherrschaft der Arbeiter innerhalb ihrer Organisationen durch die absolute Herrschaft einer zentralen Autorität ersetzen will; wie es auch falsch ist anzunehmen, daß die fehlende Kontrolle der Arbeiter über die Handlungen und Unterlassungen der Parteiorgane wettgemacht werden könnte, durch die umgekehrte Sache, durch die Kontrolle eines Zentralkomitees über die Aktivität der Arbeiter.“ Und selbst sollte die Selbstführung der Arbeiter zu Fehlern und falschen Schritten führen, so ist Rosa Luxemburg doch bereit, dies mit in Kauf zu nehmen, da sie überzeugt ist, daß selbst „die Fehler, die von einer wirklich revolutionären Arbeiterbewegung gemacht werden, in historischer Perspektive unermesslich wertvoller und fruchtbarer sind, als die Unfehlbarkeit des allerbesten Zentralkomitees.“

Die hier aufgezeigten Differenzen zwischen Luxemburg und Lenin sind zum Teil schon mehr oder weniger von der Geschichte überholt worden. Viele Dinge, die diesen Streit bewegten, bewegen uns heute nicht mehr. Aber das wesentlichste Moment in ihren Debatten, ob die Revolution abhängt von der organisierten Arbeiterbewegung oder der spontanen Bewegung der Arbeiter, ist von aktuellster Bedeutung. Aber auch hier hat die Geschichte bereits zugunsten Rosa Luxemburgs entschieden. Der Leninismus ist unter dem Trümmerhaufen der Dritten Internationale begraben. Eine neue Arbeiterbewegung, die weder die sozialdemokratischen Reste kennt, die noch in Lenin und Luxemburg zu erkennen waren, noch gewillt ist, auf die Lehren der Vergangenheit zu verzichten, ist im Entstehen. Sich von den tödlichen traditionellen Einflüssen der alten Arbeiterbewegung zu trennen, ist zu ihrer ersten Voraussetzung geworden, und hier hilft Rosa Luxemburg genau so sehr, wie der Leninismus gehindert hat. Diese neue Bewegung der Arbeiter, mit ihrem von ihr nicht zu lösenden Kern bewußter Revolutionäre kann mit der Luxemburgischen revolutionären Theorie, trotz ihrer vielen Schwächen, mehr anfangen und aus ihr mehr Hoffnung schöpfen, als aus der gesamten Leistung der Leninschen Internationale. Und wie einst Rosa Luxemburg inmitten des Weltkrieges und des Zusammenbruchs der Zweiten Internationale, so können auch die heutigen Revolutionäre beim Zusammenbruch der gesamten alten Arbeiterbewegung doch ebenfalls sagen: „Wir sind nicht verloren und wir werden siegen, wenn wir zu lernen nicht verlernt haben.“

⁴ Der Idealismus Lenins wird auch in dieser seiner Formulierung sichtbar. Anstatt die Kontrolle durch deren Organisation innerhalb der Organisation wirklich und materiell zu sichern, ersetzt er sie durch „etwas besseres“, durch die Phrasen „kameradschaftliches Vertrauen“ und „Verantwortlichkeit empfinden“. Praktisch hieß dies jedoch: Kadavergehorsam, Befehle von oben, Gehorchten unten.

Luxemburg versus Lenin

(1935)

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Rosa Luxemburg as well as Lenin developed from the Social Democracy, in which both played important roles. Their work influenced not only the Russian, Polish and German labour movement, but was of worldwide significance. Both symbolised the movement opposed to the revisionism and reformism of the Second International. Their names are inseparably entwined with the re-organisation of the labour movement during and after the World War, and both were Marxists to whom theory was at the same time actual practice. Energetic human beings, they were – to use a favourite expression of Rosa Luxemburg’s – ‘candles that burned at both ends’.

Though Luxemburg and Lenin had set themselves the same task the revolutionary revival of the labour movement sunk in the swamps of reformism, and the overthrow of capitalist society on a world-wide scale – still in their striving toward this goal their ways diverged; and although they always retained respect for each other, they nevertheless remained at odds on decisive questions of revolutionary tactics and on many questions of revolutionary principle. It may be stated here in advance that on many essential points the conceptions of Luxemburg differ from those of Lenin as day from night, or – the same thing – as the problems of the bourgeois revolution from those of the proletariat. All attempts of inconsistent Leninists, from political considerations, to reconcile Lenin with Luxemburg now that both are dead and to erase the opposition between them, in order to derive advantage from both of them, is merely a silly falsification of history which serves no one but the falsifiers and them only temporarily.

The thing that united Luxemburg and Lenin was their common struggle against the reformism of pre-war time and the chauvinism of the Social Democracy during the war. But this struggle was at the same time accompanied by the dispute between the two regarding the road which leads to revolution; and since tactic is inseparable from principle, by a dispute regarding the content and form of the new labour movement. Even though it is well known that both were mortal enemies of revisionism, and for this reason their names are often mentioned in the same breath, on the other hand it is extremely difficult today to form a real picture of the differences between them. To be sure, the Third International has, in the course of the last decade, in connection with its inner political crises, frequently used and abused the name of Rosa Luxemburg, especially in its campaigns against what it refers to as ‘counter-revolutionary Luxemburgism’, but neither has Luxemburg’s work become better known thereby, nor have the differences which she had with Lenin been clarified. In general, it is regarded as better to let the past lie buried; and just as the German Social Democracy once refused – “for lack of money”¹ – to publish the works of Luxemburg, so also has the promise (through Clara Zetkin) of

¹ Cf. Letter of the editorial board of *Neue Zeit* to Rosa Luxemburg, Jan. 6, 1916.

the Third International² to publish those works been broken. Still, wherever competition arises against the Third International, Rosa Luxemburg comes into favour. Even the Social Democracy is often tasteless enough to speak lovingly and sorrowfully of the 'erring revolutionary' who is mourned rather as a victim of her "impetuous nature"³ than of the bestial brutality of the mercenaries of party-comrade Noske. And even where, after the experience with both Internationals, people profess to be concerned not only with building a new and really revolutionary movement but also at the same time want to profit by the lessons of the past, the concern with Luxemburg and Lenin goes no farther than the reduction of their oppositions to the dispute over the national question and even here almost exclusively to the tactical problems with reference to Polish independence. In this enterprise, pains are taken to make this opposition as mild as possible, to isolate it, and to close with the assertion, contradicting all the facts, that Lenin emerged victorious from this conflict.

The dispute between Luxemburg and Lenin on the national question cannot be dissociated from the other problems on which the two were at odds. This question is bound up in the closest manner with all others affecting the world revolution and is but a single illustration of the fundamental difference between Luxemburg and Lenin, or of the difference between jacobinical and the truly proletarian idea of the world revolution. If, like Max Shachtman⁴, one holds Luxemburg's conception to be confirmed as against the nationalistic adventures of the Stalin period of the Third International, it must also be regarded as justified in opposition to Lenin. However much the policy of the Third International may have changed since Lenin's death, on the national question it has remained truly Leninist. A Leninist must of necessity take a position opposed to Luxemburg; he is not only her theoretical opponent, but her mortal enemy. The Luxemburg position involves the destruction of Leninist Bolshevism, and therefore no one who appeals for authority to Lenin can at the same time lay claim to Rosa Luxemburg.

Opposition to Reformism

The development of world capitalism, the imperialistic expansion, the advancing monopolisation of economy and the super-profits with which it was bound up, made possible the transitory formation of an aristocracy within the labour movement, the enactment of social legislation and a general improvement of the workers' standard of living, and all this in turn led to the spread of revisionism and to the development of reformism in the labour movement. Revolutionary Marxism was rejected as opposed to the facts of capitalist development, and in its place the theory of the slow growth of socialism by way of democracy was accepted. With the growth of the legal labour movement, thus rendered possible, the allegiance of great numbers of the petty-bourgeoisie was secured, who soon took over the intellectual leadership of the movement and shared with the upstart workers in the material advantages of the salaried positions which it offered. Around the turn of the century, reformism had triumphed all along the line. The resistance to this development on the part of the so-called 'orthodox' Marxists, headed by Kautsky, was never more than a matter of phrases and even that was soon given up. Among the better known theoreticians of that time, Luxemburg and Lenin are to be mentioned particularly as carrying their struggle ruthlessly through to the end, not

² Cf. C. Zetkin: 'Rosa Luxemburg's Position on the Russian Revolution'. Published by the Communist International, 1922.

³ In innumerable articles in the social democratic press

⁴ Cf. Max Shachtman's article 'Lenin and Rosa Luxemburg' in *The New Internationalist*, March 1935.

only against established reformism but soon also against the ‘orthodox’ in the interest of a truly Marxist labour movement.

Of all the attacks on revisionism, one may venture to say that those of Rosa Luxemburg were the most powerful. In her polemic directed against Bernstein⁵ she pointed out once more, in opposition to the nonsense of pure legalism, that “the exploitation of the working class as an economic process cannot be abolished or softened through” legislation in the framework of bourgeois society.”⁶ Social reform, she insisted, “does not constitute an invasion into capitalist exploitation, but a regulating, an ordering of this exploitation in the interest of capitalist society itself.”⁶ Capital, says Rosa Luxemburg, is not heading for socialism, but collapse, and it is this collapse to which the workers must be adjusted – not to reform, but to revolution. This is not to say, however, that we have to renounce the questions of the present; revolutionary Marxism, too, fights to improve the workers’ situation within capitalist society. But, in contrast to revisionism, it is interested far more in how the fight is conducted than in the immediate objectives. To Marxism the matter of moment in the trade-union and political struggle is the development of the subjective factors of the working class revolution, the promotion of revolutionary class consciousness. The blunt setting of reform over against revolution is a false statement of the question; these oppositions must be given their proper place in the whole of the social process. We must avoid losing sight of the final goal, the proletarian revolution, through the struggle for everyday demands.⁶ In a similar manner, revisionism was attacked somewhat later by Lenin. To him also, reforms were only a by-product of the struggle directed to the conquest of political power. Both were at one in their struggle against the emasculation of the Marxist movement and took their stand on the platform of the revolutionary struggle for power. They came out for the first time in opposition to each other when Russian conditions before, during and after the revolution of 1905 made the revolutionary struggle for power a vital issue which had to be met in a concrete manner. Thus the conflict which flared up between Luxemburg and Lenin turned first on tactical problems, matters of organisation and the national question.

On the National Question

Lenin, strongly influenced by Kautsky, believed like him that movements for national independence were to be regarded as progressive because “the national State assures the best conditions for the development of capitalism.” In his polemic against Rosa Luxemburg he asserts that the demand for the right of self-determination of nations is revolutionary for the reason that “this demand is a democratic one which is not at all different from the other democratic demands.” Yes, “in the spirit of bourgeois nationalism of each oppressed nation,” he asserts, “there is contained a democratic protest against oppression, and we support this protest unreservedly.”⁷

Lenin’s attitude on the right of self-determination was, as may be seen from other of his works, like his attitude toward democracy,⁸ and one must know this attitude toward democracy in order to understand his attitude toward the national question and the right of self-determination of nations. In his theses on “The Socialist Revolution and the Right of Self-Determination of Nations” he states: “It would be utterly false to think that the

⁵ R. Luxemburg: *Social Reform or Revolution*. We refrain hereafter from giving more precise references for the quotations (volume, page, etc.) since we translate from the German or Russian text, and it is an easy matter to look them up, in so far as the works are available in English.

⁶ Cf. R. Luxemburg: *Social Reform or Revolution*.

⁷ Cf. Lenin: *On the Right of Self-Determination of Nations* (1916), in the Collected Works.

⁸ Cf. Lenin: *On the Caricature of Marxism and on Imperialistic Economism* (1916), in the Collected Works.

fight for democracy diverts the proletariat from the socialist revolution. To the contrary: just as victorious socialism which does not bring about complete democracy is impossible, so also the proletariat which fails to conduct an all-sided, consistent and revolutionary struggle for democracy cannot prepare itself for victory over the bourgeoisie.” Thus it becomes clear that to Lenin nationalist movements and wars were nothing other than movements and wars for democracy, in which the proletariat is obliged to participate, since to him the struggle for democracy was of course the necessary precondition of the struggle for socialism. “If the struggle for democracy is possible, war for democracy is also possible.”⁹ And to him, for that matter, “the words ‘defence of the fatherland’ in a truly national war, are by no means a form of deception”⁹, and in such a case Lenin favours defence. “In so far as the bourgeois of the oppressed nation is fighting against the oppressor,” he writes, “so far are we in all cases, more decisively than any others, in favour of it, because we are the undaunted and consistent enemies of all oppression.”¹⁰

To this position Lenin remained true to the end, and Leninism has been true to it down to this day – so long as it did not endanger Bolshevik rule itself. Only one slight change was undertaken. While to Lenin prior to the Russian Revolution national wars and movements for liberation were a part of the general democratic movement, after the revolution they became a part of the proletarian world-revolutionary process.

Lenin’s position, as here summarised, appeared to Rosa Luxemburg as thoroughly false. In her *Junius Pamphlet* which came out during the War, she states her own standpoint briefly as follows: “So long as capitalist States endure, particularly so long as imperialist world-politics determines and gives form to the inner and outer life of the States, the national right of self-determination has not the least thing in common with their practice either in war or in peace. ... In the present-day imperialistic milieu there can be no national wars of defence, and any socialist policy which fails to take account of this definite historical level and which in the midst of the world vortex lets itself be governed merely by the isolated viewpoints of a single country is doomed in advance.”

To this opinion Rosa Luxemburg held fast to the very end, unable to make the least concession in this respect to Lenin; and after the Russian Revolution when the policy of the national right of self-determination became practice she asks why is it that the Bolsheviks held so stubbornly and with such unwavering consistency to the slogan of the right of self-determination, since after all such a policy “stands in the most glaring contradiction to their outspoken centralism in other respects as well as to the conduct they have displayed with respect to the other democratic principles. ... The contradiction yawning here is the more puzzling for in the case of the democratic forms of political life we have to do with most valuable, indeed indispensable foundations of socialist policy, while the famous ‘right of self-determination of nations’ is nothing but empty petty-bourgeois phraseology and humbug.”¹¹

Rosa Luxemburg accounts for this false national policy of Lenin’s as a “variety of opportunism” calculated to “bind the many foreign nationalities present in the Russian Empire to the cause of the revolution”; like the opportunism with respect to the peasants, “whose land hunger was satisfied by the liberty to seize the estates of the nobility and who in this way were to be kept loyal to the revolution.”¹¹

“The calculation turned out, alas, to be quite unjustified. Contrary to what the Bolsheviks expected, one after another the (liberated) ‘nations’ took advantage of the freshly granted freedom to take a position of deadly enmity to the Russian Revolution,

⁹ *Ibid.*

¹⁰ Lenin: *On the Right of Self-Determination of Nations.*

¹¹ Cf. R. Luxemburg: *The Russian Revolution.*

combining against it with German Imperialism, under whose protection they carried the banner of counter-revolution to Russia itself ... of course it is not the 'nations' by whom that reactionary policy is carried on, but only the bourgeois and petty-bourgeois classes ... who have converted the national right of self-determination into an instrument of their counterrevolutionary class policy. But ... it is precisely here that we have the utopian and petty-bourgeois character of this nationalistic phrase, that in the raw reality of class society ... it simply becomes converted into a means of bourgeois class rule."¹²

This injection by the Bolsheviks of the question of national strivings and separatist tendencies into the midst of the revolutionary struggle was regarded by Rosa Luxemburg as having "thrown the greatest confusion into the ranks of socialism." She goes on to state: "The Bolsheviks have supplied the ideology which has masked the campaign of counter-revolution; they have strengthened the position of the bourgeoisie and weakened that of the proletariat ... With the phrase about the self-determination of nations the Bolsheviks furnished water for the mills of counter-revolution and thus furnished an ideology not only for the strangling of the Russian Revolution itself, but for the planned counter-revolutionary liquidation of the entire World War."¹²

Why did Lenin insist so stubbornly – we may enquire with Rosa Luxemburg once more – on the slogan of the self-determination of nations and that of the liberation of oppressed peoples? There is no doubt that this slogan stands in contradiction to the demand for the world revolution, and Lenin as well as Luxemburg was interested in the outbreak of the world revolution, since, like all Marxists of that time, he did not believe that Russia could hold out in the revolutionary struggle if thrown upon her own resources. He agreed with Engels that "if a Russian revolution gives rise at the same time to a European proletarian revolution, the present joint-ownership (*Gemeineigentum*) in Russia may serve as the starting point of a communist development." Hence it was not only clear to Lenin that the Bolsheviks in Russia had to seize the power, but also that the Russian revolution must be made a European and hence a world revolution if it was to lead to socialism. On the basis of the objective situation resulting from the World War, Lenin was no more able than Luxemburg to conceive that Russia could hold out against the capitalist powers if the revolution failed to spread into Western Europe. To Rosa Luxemburg it was very improbable that "the Russians will be able to hold out in this witches' sabbath"¹³ – a view which was based not merely on her experience with and her mistrust of people like Lenin and Trotsky who mouthed their silly phrases about the right of self-determination of nations, their policy of making concessions to the peasants, etc.; nor was it because of the imperialistic attacks against the Russian Revolution, nor did it flow from a standpoint propagated by the Social Democracy, which proved statistically that the backward economic development of Russia neither justified the revolution nor allowed for socialism. She believed this primarily because, as she wrote while in jail, "the Social Democracy in the highly developed West is made up of wretched cowards and will look calmly on while the Russians bleed."¹³ She was in favour of the Bolshevik revolution, however much she criticised the Bolsheviks from the viewpoint of the needs of the world revolution, and she sought constantly to trace their economic retreats back to the failure on the part of the proletariat of Western Europe to aid them. "Yes," she writes, "naturally I am not much pleased with the Bolsheviks even now in their peace fanaticism [Brest-Litovsk – P.M.] . But after all ... they are not to blame. They are in a jam, have only the choice between two evils and choose the lesser. Others are responsible for the fact that the Russian Revolution turns out to the devil's advantage."¹³ And again she

¹² *Ibid.*

¹³ R. Luxemburg in *Letters to Luise Kautsky*, November-December 1917.

writes: "The German government-socialists may shout that the rule of the Bolsheviks is a caricature of the dictatorship of the proletariat. If it was or is, then only for the reason that it is a product of the conduct of the German proletariat, conduct which was a caricature of socialist class struggle."¹⁴

Rosa Luxemburg died too early to see that the Bolshevik policy, even though it ceased to further the world-revolutionary movement, was yet capable of assuring the rule of the Bolsheviks in the framework of state capitalism. As Liebknecht, in harmony with Rosa Luxemburg, wrote from jail: "If the German revolution fails to take place, there remain for the Russian revolution the alternatives: to go down fighting or to present a mere wretched appearance of life."¹⁵

The Bolsheviks chose the latter. "There are communists in Russia," wrote Eugen Varga when he was still a Marxist, "who have grown tired of waiting so long for the European revolution and who want to adjust themselves definitely to Russian isolation. With a Russia which would regard the social revolution of the other countries as a matter with which it had no concern ... the capitalist countries would at any rate be able to live as peaceful neighbours ... Such a bottling up of revolutionary Russia ... would slow down the pace of the world revolution."¹⁶

The national policy of Lenin has not proved fatal to Bolshevik rule. It is true that large areas have remained separate from Russia and become reactionary States, but the power of the Bolshevik state is firmer than ever. Apparently the Leninist line has been confirmed, and apparently Rosa Luxemburg's warnings have turned out to be unjustified. But this belief is true only in so far as it relates to the powerful position of the Bolshevik state apparatus; it is by no means valid, however, from the standpoint of the world revolution, the standpoint at stake in the dispute between Luxemburg and Lenin. Bolshevik Russia still exists, to be sure; but not as what it was at the beginning, not as the starting point of the world revolution, but as a bulwark against it. The Russia which was hailed by Rosa Luxemburg, and every revolutionist along with her, has lost its original promise; what remains is a Russia about which Rosa Luxemburg as early as 1918 expressed the following fear: "Like a terrifying spectre there approaches ... an alliance of the Bolsheviks with Germany. A Bolshevik alliance with German imperialism would be the most frightful moral blow for international socialism ... With the grotesque 'mating' between Lenin and Hindenburg the moral source of light in the East would be extinguished ... Socialist revolution ... under the patronage of German imperialism... that would be the most monstrous thing that we could still experience. And furthermore, it would be ... pure utopia ... Any political downfall of the Bolsheviks in noble struggle against the superior force and unkindness of the historical situation would be preferable to this moral downfall."¹⁷

Though the long friendship of Leninist Russia with Hindenburg Germany has for the moment grown cool and the Bolshevik dictatorship today prefers to rest on French bayonets in particular and the League of Nations in general, it nevertheless practises openly today the thing for which it has always stood in principle and to which Bukharin at the Fourth World Congress of the Comintern gave clear expression in the following manner: "There is no difference of principle between a loan and a military alliance ... We are already big enough to conclude a military alliance with another bourgeoisie, in order by means of this bourgeois State to crush another bourgeoisie. This form of national

¹⁴ R. Luxemburg: *The Russian Revolution*.

¹⁵ K. Liebknecht: *Politische Aufzeichnungen aus dem Nachlass*, Berlin 1921.

¹⁶ E. Varga: *Die wirtschaftspolitischen Probleme der proletarischen Diktatur*, Hamburg 1921.

¹⁷ R. Luxemburg: *Spartacus*.

defence, of the military alliance with bourgeois States, makes it the duty of the comrades of one country to help this bloc to victory.”

In the grotesque mating between Lenin and Hindenburg, between capitalist interests and those of the Bolshevik rulers, is illustrated, for that matter, the decline of the world-revolutionary wave, a decline which has still not reached the bottom. The labour movement flocking around the name of Lenin is a football of capitalistic politics, absolutely incapable of any revolutionary action. Lenin's tactic – the utilisation of nationalist movements for world revolutionary purposes – has in historical perspective proved mistaken. The warnings of Rosa Luxemburg were more justified than she could ever have cared to believe.

The ‘liberated’ nations form a fascist ring around Russia. ‘Liberated’ Turkey shoots down the communists with arms supplied to her by Russia. China, supported in its national struggle for freedom by Russia and the Third International, throttles its labour movement in a manner reminiscent of the Paris Commune. Thousands and thousands of workers’ corpses are testimony of the correctness of Rosa Luxemburg's view that the phrase about the right of self-determination of nations is nothing but “petty-bourgeois humbug.” The extent to which the “struggle for national liberation is a struggle for democracy” is surely revealed by the nationalistic adventures of the Third International in Germany, adventures which contributed their share to the preconditions for the victory of fascism. Ten years of competition with Hitler for the title to real nationalism turned the workers themselves into fascists. And Litvinov celebrated in the League of Nations the victory of the Leninist idea of the self-determination of peoples on the occasion of the Saar plebiscite. Truly, in view of this development, one must indeed wonder at people like Max Shachtman who still today are capable of saying: “Despite the sharp criticism levelled by Rosa at the Bolsheviks for their national policy after the revolution, the latter was nevertheless confirmed by the results.”¹⁸

It must further be noted in this connection that Lenin's attitude on the national question was by no means a definitely consistent one, but always subordinated to the needs of the Bolsheviks. Moreover, it was thoroughly contradictory. Lenin writes: “Revolutionary actions in wartime against the government of one's own country indicate surely not only the desire for its defeat, but also the actual promotion of such a defeat.”¹⁹ On pursuing this thought we come to the following absurd contradiction. Since the warring countries are not equally affected by defeatism and at the same time by the proletarian revolution, this tactic facilitates the victory of that country which is least affected thereby and also the oppression of the vanquished country. During an imperialist war the proletariat must, according to Lenin, be for the defeat of its own country. If that defeat has come about, the workers must then turn around and support their bourgeoisie in its struggle for national liberation. And if then the ‘oppressed nation’ with the aid of the proletariat has again taken its place in the family of nations, the workers must once more cast aside national defence. A false interpretation of the Leninist thought? Just a moment: let us take a look at the actual practice. In 1914-18 Lenin and the Bolsheviks in their position on Germany were opposed to national defence. In 1919-23 they were for the national defence and for the national liberation of Germany. Today when, thanks to the aid of the proletariat, Germany has again become an imperialist power, they are once more opposed to national defence. And tomorrow – what they are for or against tomorrow depends on the constellations of power for the next world war, which will see Russia as the ally of this or that group. The defeatist tactic represented by Lenin during

¹⁸ Max Shachtman in *The New Internationalist*, March 1935.

¹⁹ Lenin and Zinoviev: *Gegen den Strom*, Hamburg, 1921. Articles of 1914-1916.

the late war stands in complete contradiction to the right of self-determination of nations and to national wars of liberation. It is a mere moving about in a circle; the proletariat plays the part of compensatory justice between the capitalist rivals. Rosa Luxemburg took pains to point out that this has nothing to do with Marxist class struggle.

Lenin was a practical politician. It was essentially only as a tactician that he distinguished himself from the theoreticians of the Second International. What they sought to attain along democratic ways, he attempted to win by revolutionary means. Not with speeches in parliament, but with force on the real field of the class struggle, he wanted to realise socialism for the workers. By means of his party, he wanted to make the revolution for the masses, in that the party won the masses to itself. The power had to come into the hands of the Bolsheviks, in order that the exploited of Russia might be liberated. The power had to be in the hands of the Bolsheviks in order that world capitalism might be overcome by revolution. The appropriation of political power through the party was the beginning and end of the Leninist policy – a policy which has often been acclaimed as clever and flexible, but in reality was purely opportunistic.

At the outbreak of the revolution, the Russian bourgeoisie was not in a position itself to take over and hold power, since it was not in a position to solve the agrarian problem. This was left to the Bolsheviks. “The democratic-bourgeois revolution has been carried through to the end by us as by no one else,” Lenin declared on the fourth anniversary of the October revolution, and this revolution was carried through with the aid of the peasantry. The Bolsheviks had power, and they constantly balanced the opposition between peasants and workers in such manner that power could be kept. In order to retain this power the familiar zig-zag policy was conducted both on a Russian and on an international scale; it was this policy which made the history of the Third International a history of its crises and of its downfall.

The very first concession to the peasants enabled Rosa Luxemburg to foresee in rough outline the necessary development of Bolshevik Russia, unless the reactive force of this ‘transgression’ were suppressed by the world revolution. “The proclamation for immediate seizure and distribution of land by the peasants,” she wrote, “had necessarily to work in the very opposite direction to that intended. It is not only not a socialist measure, but it bars the way to such.”²⁰ Rosa Luxemburg was not aware (being in jail at the time) that the peasants had divided up the land even before the Bolsheviks had authorised it, and that the latter merely legalised what was already practically in effect. The spontaneity of the peasant masses was quicker than the word of the ‘bearers of revolutionary consciousness’ as the Bolsheviks regarded themselves.

The Bolsheviks wanted, however, to carry the bourgeois revolution consistently to its end, and for this purpose there was required also the conversion of the peasants into country wage-workers: the capitalisation of agriculture. This process is still in full swing, and is celebrated throughout the world as collectivisation; it is by no means completed, nor can it be without giving rise to new revolutionary conflicts. Apparently, however, the Leninists can maintain that Luxemburg was wrong in assuming that without the world revolution Bolshevism had to capitulate on the peasant question. Still, such a contention involves proving also that Bolshevism has actually led to socialism. What exists in Russia, however, is not socialism but state capitalism. Even though it may be called socialism, it still remains state capitalism exploiting wage-labour, and hence the Luxemburg fear, however much modified, has after all been confirmed.

The peasant movements during the first years of the Russian Revolution forced the Bolsheviks, in order to remain in power, to accept a course which necessarily hindered

²⁰ R. Luxemburg: *The Russian Revolution*.

the world revolution and which in Russia itself permitted nothing more than a state capitalism which later on must be revolutionarily overthrown by the proletariat if it wants to arrive at socialism. At this point, however, we are interested merely in the fact that with the aid of the peasant movement the Bolsheviks were able to come to power, and, furthermore, that they believed it sufficient to be in possession of the political and economic command posts in order, with a correct policy, to arrive at socialism. The course that was forced upon the Bolsheviks by reason of backward conditions – the most thorough-going centralisation of all authority and the concessions to the peasants – appeared to them as their own shrewd and successful policy, which they sought to employ also on the international field.

The laws of motion of the Russian Revolution had been foreseen by Lenin with remarkable clarity long before its outbreak, and his whole theory and practice was cut to fit these Russian conditions. This is the explanation of his super-centralism, his definite conception of the role of the party, his acceptance of Hilferding's ideas of socialisation, and also his position on the national question. Even though Rosa Luxemburg, from her familiarity with Russian conditions, was very well able to understand the Leninist policy and to analyse the basis for it as no other Marxist could do, and though she was able, so long as the Bolsheviks actually appeared as a world-revolutionary force, to take all this as unavoidable into the bargain, she nevertheless came out with full force against the design to form from this special Russian situation a recipe for the solution of the revolutionary tasks of the workers throughout the world. "The danger begins," she says of the Leninist policy, "when the Bolsheviks make a virtue out of necessity and seek to establish this tactic, forced upon them by these fatal conditions, as something applicable for all time to come and to recommend it to the international proletariat as the model of socialist tactic to be universally imitated."²¹

Since the alliance between peasants and workers had conformed to Lenin's expectations in putting the power into the hands of the Bolsheviks, he conceived the course of the world revolution as a similar process, even though on a larger scale. The oppressed peoples were mainly agrarian nations, and in its peasant policy the Communist International as a matter of fact sought to combine agrarian and proletarian interests on a world scale in order to place them in opposition to capital, after the Russian manner, and to defeat it throughout the world. The national liberation movements in the colonies and those of the national minorities in the capitalist countries, were supported by the Bolsheviks, because in this way imperialist intervention of the capitalist countries in Russia was weakened.

However, the world revolution refused to be treated as an enlarged copy of the Russian. The adventures of the Communist International in its endeavours to make of itself a worker *and peasant* international are recognised as blunders; instead of furthering, they disintegrated the revolutionary movement against capitalism. All that could be attained in this way was the consolidation of Bolshevik state power in Russia through the winning of a long historical breathing spell which led to the development of a Russian and international situation such as confronts us still today.

While Lenin's position on the national question was on the one hand determined by the social-democratic standpoint of pre-war time, which he had not completely overcome, and on the other appeared to him as a means of setting up and consolidating Bolshevik mastery in Russia and its eventual extension on a world-wide scale, for Rosa Luxemburg it had no other meaning than that of a false policy which would be dearly paid for.

²¹ *Ibid.*

In contradistinction to Lenin, for whom, quite in keeping with his general position, organisation and the conquest of power for the party was the necessary presupposition for the victory of socialism, Rosa Luxemburg's glance was directed to the class needs of the proletariat. Furthermore, while Lenin's theory and practice were tied up mainly with the backward conditions of Russia, Rosa Luxemburg constantly took as her starting point the more highly developed capitalist countries and hence was incapable of seeing in the 'historical mission' of the working class a party-and-leadership problem. She laid more weight upon the spontaneous mass movements and the self-initiative of the workers than upon the growth of the organisation and the quality of the leaders. Thus she differed fundamentally from Lenin in her appraisal of the factor of spontaneity in history and hence also as regards the role of organisation in the class struggle. Before entering into these differences, however, we should like to contrast briefly the views of Luxemburg and Lenin on the Marxian theory of accumulation, since this question is very closely bound up with all the others.

The Collapse of Capitalism

In her campaign against the revisionists, Rosa Luxemburg had already emphasised that the labour movement must be prepared to face the question of revolution, not that of reform, since capitalism is inevitably heading toward collapse. In opposition to revisionism, which strove to impute to capitalism an endless duration, she maintained that "with the assumption that capitalist accumulation has no economic limit, socialism loses its granite foundation of objective historical necessity. We then take flight into the mist of pre-Marxist systems and schools which sought to deduce socialism from the mere injustice and badness of the present-day world and from the mere revolutionary determination of the working class."²²

Her principal literary work, conceived as part of her struggle against reformism, was designed to demonstrate an objective limit to capitalist development, and was at the same time a critique of the Marxian theory of accumulation.²³

In her opinion, Marx had merely raised the question of accumulation of the total capital, but left it unanswered. His *Capital* appeared to her 'incomplete', a 'torso'; it contained 'gaps' which were to be filled in. Marx had "represented the process of capital accumulation in a society consisting merely of capitalists and workers"; in his system he "passed over foreign trade" so that it is "just as necessary as at the same time it is impossible, in his system to realise surplus value outside the two existing social classes." In Marx, the accumulation of capital "has become involved in a vicious circle"; his work contains "glaring contradictions", which she set about to overcome.

She herself based the necessity of capitalist collapse on "the dialectical contradiction that capitalist accumulation requires for its movement to be surrounded by non-capitalist areas ... and can continue only so long as it is provided with such a milieu."²⁴

She looked for the difficulties of accumulation in the sphere of circulation, in the question of turnover and that of the realisation of surplus value, while to Marx these difficulties are already present in the sphere of production, since to him accumulation is a question of capital expansion (*Kapitalverwertung*). The production of surplus value, not its realisation, is to him the real problem. It appeared to Rosa Luxemburg, however, that a part of the surplus value could not be disposed of in a capitalism such as that represented

²² R. Luxemburg: *Anti-Critique*.

²³ R. Luxemburg: *The Accumulation of Capital*.

²⁴ *Ibid.*

by Marx; its conversion into new capital was possible only by way of foreign trade with non-capitalist countries. Here is the way she put the matter: “The process of accumulation tends everywhere to set in the place of natural economy simple commodity economy, in the place of simple commodity economy the capitalist economy, to bring capitalist production as the one and exclusive mode of production to absolute dominance in all countries and branches of industry. Once the final result is attained though this remains merely a theoretical construction – accumulation becomes an impossibility. The realisation and capitalisation of surplus value is transformed into an insoluble task ... The impossibility of accumulation means, capitalistically, the impossibility of further unfolding of the productive forces and thus the objective historical necessity of the decline of capitalism.”²⁵

These reflections of Rosa Luxemburg’s were not new; all that was original about them was the foundation she gave them. She attempted to demonstrate their correctness by reference to Marx’s scheme of reproduction in the second volume of *Capital*. According to Marx, capital must accumulate. A definite relation must exist between the different branches of production, in order that the capitalists may find on the market the means of production, the workers and the means of consumption for reproduction. This relation, which is not controlled by human beings, asserts itself blindly by way of the market. Marx reduced it to two comprehensive departments: the production of means of production, and the production of means of consumption. The exchange between the two departments he illustrated by arbitrarily chosen figures. On the basis of this Marxian schema, accumulation proceeds apparently without disturbances. The exchange between the two departments goes on smoothly. “If we take the schema literally,” says Rosa Luxemburg, “it would appear as if capitalist production exclusively realised its total surplus value and employed the capitalised surplus value for its own needs. If capitalist production, however, is itself exclusively the purchaser of its surplus product, no limit to accumulation is discoverable ... Under the Marxian presuppositions, the schema permits of no other interpretation than limitless production for the sake of production.”²⁶

But that, says Rosa Luxemburg, can after all not be the ‘purpose’ of accumulation. Such a production as that suggested by the schema is “from the capitalist standpoint quite senseless.” “The Marxian diagram of accumulation gives no answer to the question: for whom the expanded production really takes place ... To be sure, in the course of accumulation, the workers’ consumption mounts, as does that of the capitalists; still, the personal consumption of the capitalists comes under the heading of simple reproduction, and for whom do the capitalists produce when they do not consume the entire surplus value, but voluntarily practise abstinence, i.e. accumulate? ... Still less can the purpose of uninterrupted capital accumulation be the maintenance of an ever greater army of workers, since the consumption of the workers is capitalistically a consequence of accumulation, but never its purpose and its presupposition ... If the Marxian schema of expanded reproduction were to conform to reality, it would indicate the end of capitalist production.”²⁷

But the frictionless exchange relation between the two great departments of production, their equilibrium, is in the Marxian schema simply impossible, according to Rosa Luxemburg. “The assumption of a rising organic composition of capital would show that the maintenance of the necessary quantitative proportion is precluded; that is, the impossibility of long-continued accumulation is demonstrable schematically in purely quantitative terms. An exchange between the two departments is impossible, there

²⁵ *Ibid.*

²⁶ *Ibid.*

²⁷ *Ibid.*

remains an unsaleable surplus in the department of consumption goods, an over-production of surplus value which can be realised only in non-capitalist countries.”²⁸ With this theory Rosa Luxemburg explained also the imperialistic necessities of the capitalist countries.

This theory of Rosa Luxemburg’s stands in direct contradiction to Lenin’s view of the matter, as may be seen from all his works dealing with economics. In complete accord with Marx, he looked for the contradictions which pointed to the historical limitations of capitalism, not like Rosa Luxemburg in the sphere of circulation, but in that of production. Lenin took his stand uncritically and unreservedly on the Marxian economic theories, because he regarded them as incapable of being supplemented. In his own theoretical works he confined himself to employing the Marxian doctrines in investigating the development of capitalism in general and of Russian capitalism in particular. There is a special, though still untranslated, work of Lenin’s against Rosa Luxemburg’s theory of accumulation, but it merely repeats the viewpoint which he has set down in all his other works on the subject and which we have merely to become acquainted with here in order completely to grasp the full force of the contradiction between the two conceptions.

In his writings against the Narodniki, Lenin had already anticipated many of his arguments against Rosa Luxemburg’s conception. The Narodniki asserted that the domestic capitalist market was insufficient for the expansion of capitalist economy and moreover that it continually diminished with the accompanying impoverishment of the masses. Like Rosa Luxemburg later, they also could not grant that the capitalist surplus value could be realised without foreign markets. According to Lenin, however, the question of the realisation of surplus value has nothing to do with this problem; “the lugging in of foreign trade does not solve the problem, but merely shifts it.”²⁹

To him the necessity of the foreign market for a capitalist country is “not at all explained by the laws of the realisation of the social product (and of surplus value in particular), but by the fact that capitalism arises only as the result of a highly developed commodity circulation *which* goes beyond the boundaries of the State.”³⁰ The disposal of the product on the foreign market explains nothing, “but itself demands an explanation, that is, the finding of its equivalent ... When one speaks of the ‘difficulties’ of realisation,” says Lenin, “one must also realise that these ‘difficulties’ are not only possible but also unavoidable, and in fact with regard to all parts of the capitalist product and not to the surplus value alone. The difficulties of this sort, which originate in the unproportional distribution of the different branches of production, arise constantly not only in connection with the realisation of surplus value, but also in connection with the realisation of the variable and constant capital; not only in connection with the realisation of the product in the form of consumption goods, but also in the form of means of production.”³¹

“As we know,” writes Lenin in his *Characterisation of Economic Romanticism*, 1899, “the law of capitalist production consists in the fact that the constant capital increases faster than the variable; that is, an ever greater part of the newly formed capital flows to that department of social production which turns out means of production. Consequently, this department must unconditionally grow more rapidly than the one which turns out means of consumption. Consequently, the means of consumption come to occupy a less and less prominent part in the total mass of capitalist production. And that

²⁸ *Ibid.*

²⁹ Lenin: *The Development of Capitalism in Russia*, 1899.

³⁰ *Ibid.*

³¹ *Ibid.*

is in full harmony with the historical mission of capitalism and its specific social structure: the former consists, that is, in the development of the productive forces of society; the latter precludes the utilisation thereof by the mass of the population.”

Nothing is to Lenin “more senseless than to deduce from this contradiction between production and consumption that Marx had contested the possibilities of realising surplus value in capitalist society, or had explained crises as resulting from insufficient consumption ... The different branches of industry which serve each other as a ‘market’ do not develop uniformly, they overtake each other and the more developed industry seeks foreign markets. This circumstance does not by any means indicate that it is impossible for the capitalist nation to realise surplus value ... It merely points to the unproportionality in the development of the various industries. With a different distribution of the national capital, the same quantity of products could be realised within the country.”³²

So far as Lenin was concerned, Marx with his scheme of reproduction had “completely cleared up the process of the realisation of the product in general and of surplus value in particular, and revealed that there was no justification whatever for lugging the foreign market into the question.”³³ Capitalism’s susceptibility to crisis and its expansionist tendencies are explained for Lenin by the lack of uniformity in the development of the various branches of industry. It is from the monopolist character of capitalism that he derives the constant colonial expansion and the imperialistic partition of the world. By means of capital export and the control over sources of raw materials, the bourgeoisie of the leading capitalist countries derives enormous extra profits. The imperialist expansion, in his view, does not serve so much for the realisation of surplus value as for increasing the mass of profits.³⁴

There is no doubt that Lenin’s conception is much closer to the Marxian than is Rosa Luxemburg’s. It is true that the latter was quite correct in recognising in the Marxian theory of accumulation the law of collapse of capitalism; she overlooked, however, the Marxian basis for this view and produced her own theory of realisation, which Lenin correctly rejected as unmarxist and false. It is interesting to note in this connection, however, that in the bibliography appended to his biography of Marx, Lenin referred to the “analysis of the (Luxemburgian) false interpretation of the Marxist theory by Otto Bauer.”³⁵

Now Bauer’s critique³⁶ of Rosa Luxemburg’s theory of accumulation had rightly been denoted by the latter in her *Anti-Critique*, as a “disgrace for the official Marxism”; for Bauer repeated in his attacks nothing but the revisionist conception that capitalism is without objective limits. To his mind, “capitalism is conceivable even without expansion” ... It is “not on the mechanical impossibility of realising surplus value” that capitalism will go down, he says, but “on the indignation to which it drives the masses of the people ... It will receive its death blow from the constantly growing working class, schooled, united and organised through the mechanism of capitalist production itself.”³⁷

By means of a modified schema of reproduction which avoided many of the defects deplored by Rosa Luxemburg in that of Marx, Bauer endeavoured to furnish proof that even on the assumption of a rising organic composition of capital, a frictionless exchange between the two departments in the schema of capitalist reproduction was still

³² *Ibid.*

³³ *Ibid.*

³⁴ Cf. Lenin: *Imperialism as the Last Phase in the Development of Capitalism*, 1915.

³⁵ Lenin: *Bibliography of Marxism*, in the Collected Works.

³⁶ O. Bauer: *Die Akkumulation des Kapitals*, *Neue Zeit*, 1913.

³⁷ *Ibid.*

possible. Rosa Luxemburg demonstrated to him, however, that even in his modified schema an unsaleable surplus remains over in the department of consumption, and that in order to be realised it compels to the conquest of new markets. To this, Bauer had nothing more to say. And nevertheless Lenin referred to him as the “analyst of Rosa Luxemburg’s false theory.”

Not only did Bauer’s argument leave Rosa Luxemburg unscathed; there is also the fact that the conclusions which he drew from his schema, indicating unlimited accumulation (independently of the question of the exchange relation between the two departments), could be demonstrated with reference to this same schema as wholly unfounded. Henryk Grossman proved that if Bauer’s schema were expanded to cover a longer period of time, the result was not Bauer’s frictionless expansion of capitalism, but the collapse of capital expansion. The struggle against Rosa Luxemburg’s theory of collapse had led merely to a new one.³⁸

The dispute between Luxemburg and Bauer, which found Lenin’s sympathies on the side of the latter, was a dispute over nothing, and again it is not without interest to note that the senselessness of the whole discussion was not observed by Lenin. This discussion turned on the impossibility or possibility of a frictionless exchange relation between the two departments of the Marxian reproduction schema, on which depended the full realisation of surplus value. In the Marxian system, the schema was thought of merely as an aid to theoretical analysis and was not conceived as having any objective basis in reality. Henryk Grossman, in his convincing reconstruction of the plan of Marx’s *Capital*³⁹ as well as in other works, has revealed the real meaning of the reproduction schema, and thus set the discussion with reference to Marx’s theory of accumulation on a new and more fruitful basis. The entire criticism directed at Marx by Luxemburg on the basis of this schema was posited on the assumption that the reproduction schema had an objective basis.

But, says Grossman, “the schema, in itself, lays no claim to presenting a picture of concrete capitalist reality. It is only a link in the Marxian process of approximation, one which forms with other simplifying assumptions, on which the schema is grounded, and with the later modifications by which the matter is made progressively a more concrete inseparable whole. Thus any one of these three parts without the two others becomes completely meaningless for the recognition of the truth, and can have no further significance than a preliminary stage of knowledge, the first step in the process of approaching concrete.”⁴⁰ reality (*Annäherungsverfahren*).

The Marxian schema deals with the exchange values, but in reality the commodities are not exchanged at their values but at production prices. “In a reproduction schema built on values, different rates of profit must arise in each department of the schema. There is in reality, however, a tendency for the different rates of profit to be equalised to average rates, a circumstance which is already embraced in the concept of production prices. So that if one wants to take the schema as a basis for criticising or granting the possibility of realising surplus value, it would first have to be transformed into a price schema.”⁴¹

Even if Rosa Luxemburg had been successful in demonstrating that in the Marxian schema the full turnover of the commodities is impossible, that with each year an increasing superfluity of means of consumption must arise, what would she have proved? “Merely the circumstance that the ‘indisposable remainder’ in the consumption

³⁸ H. Grossman: *Das Akkumulations- und Zusammenbruchsgesetz des kapitalistischen Systems*.

³⁹ H. Grossman: *Die Aenderung des Aufbauplans des Marxschen Kapitals*.

⁴⁰ H. Grossman: *Die Wert-PreisTransformation bei Marx und das Krisenproblem*.

⁴¹ *Ibid.*

department arises within the schema of value, that is, on the presupposition that the commodities are exchanged at their values.”⁴² But this presupposition does not exist in reality. The schema of value on which Luxemburg’s analysis is based has different rates of profit in the various branches of production, and these rates are not equated to average rates, since the schema takes no account of competition. What do Luxemburg’s conclusions amount to then as regards reality, when they are derived from a schema having no objective validity?

“Since competition gives rise to the transformation of values into production prices and thereby the redistribution of the surplus value among the branches of industry (in the schema), whereby there necessarily occurs also a change in the previous proportionality relation of the spheres of the schema, it is quite possible and even probable that a ‘consumption balance’ in the value schema subsequently vanishes in the production-price schema and, inversely, an original equilibrium of the value schema is subsequently transformed in the production-price schema into a disproportionality.”⁴³

The theoretical confusion of Rosa Luxemburg is best illustrated in the fact that on the one hand she sees in the average rate of profit the governing factor which “actually treats each individual capital only as part of the total social capital,” accords it profit as a part of the surplus value to which it is entitled in accordance with its magnitude without “regard to the quantity which it has actually won,”⁴⁴ and that she nevertheless examines the question as to whether a complete exchange is possible; and that on the basis of a schema which knows no average rate of profit. If one takes into account this average rate of profit, Rosa Luxemburg’s disproportionality argument loses all value, since one department sells above and the other under value and on the basis of the production price the undisposable part of the surplus value may vanish.

Marx’s law of accumulation is identical with that of the fall of the rate of profit. The fall of the rate of profit can be compensated by the growth of the mass of profit for only a limited time, due to the continuous compulsion to accumulation. It is not from an excess of surplus value incapable of being realised that capitalism goes under according to Marx, but from lack of surplus value. Rosa Luxemburg completely overlooked the consequences of the fall of the rate of profit; and for this reason, she also had to raise the question, meaningless from the Marxian standpoint, as to the ‘purpose’ of accumulation.

“It is said,” she writes, “that capitalism will go under because of the fall of the rate of profit ... This comfort is unfortunately quite dissipated by a single sentence from Marx, namely, the statement that for large capitals the fall of the rate of profit is counterbalanced by mass of profit. The decline of capitalism from the fall of the rate of profit is therefore still a good way off, somewhat like the time required for the sun’s extinction.”⁴⁵ She failed to see that while Marx had, to be sure, set forth such a fact, he had also at the same time suggested its limit, and that the fall of the rate of profit results in the fall of the mass of profit; in fact, that the former gives expression to what is at first the relative, and then the absolute fall of the actual mass of profit, in relation to capital’s needs for accumulation.

It is true that Lenin had found it inconceivable that “the rate of profit has a tendency to sink,”⁴⁶ and he referred to the fact that “Marx had analysed this tendency and a number of circumstances by which it was concealed or which operated to counteract

⁴² *Ibid.*

⁴³ *Ibid.*

⁴⁴ R. Luxemburg: *The Accumulation of Capital*.

⁴⁵ R. Luxemburg: *Anti-Critique*.

⁴⁶ Lenin: *Karl Marx*, in the Collected Works.

it.”⁴⁷ But the full importance of this law in the Marxian system he too failed to grasp clearly; a fact which explains, on the one hand, his acceptance of Bauer’s rejoinder to Rosa Luxemburg, and on the other the restriction of his own explanation of crisis to the disproportional development of the various spheres of production. And, for that matter, it may explain also his contradictory conceptions, by which at one time he believed in an unavoidable end of capitalism, and at another time emphasised that there were absolutely no situations from which capitalism could not find a way out. There is not to be found in his works any convincing economic argument for the end of capitalism, and yet at the same time he has the firmest conviction that the system is unavoidably heading toward its fall. This may be explained by the fact that while he did not believe with Bauer and the Social Democracy in the possibility of the reformist transformation of capitalism to socialism, he nevertheless assumed with them that the overthrow of capitalism was exclusively a question of the development of the revolutionary consciousness of the working class or, more precisely stated, a question of organisation and its leadership.

Spontaneity and the Role of Organisation

We have previously seen that Rosa Luxemburg correctly emphasised that for Marx the law of accumulation was at the same time the law of collapse of capitalism. Her reasoning was false; the conclusions nevertheless were correct. Though in her explanation of the law of collapse she diverged completely from Marx, she yet recognised the existence of that law. Lenin’s arguments against the Luxemburgian conception were sound, and, so far as they went, completely in harmony with Marx; nevertheless, he evaded the question as to whether capitalism is faced with an objective limit. His own doctrine of crisis is inadequate and inconsistent. His theory, while more correct, did not lead to truly revolutionary conclusions. Rosa Luxemburg’s argument, even though false, still remained revolutionary. For the question is one of emphasising and demonstrating capitalism’s tendency to collapse.

Lenin, who still stood much nearer than Rosa Luxemburg to the Social Democracy, saw the collapse of capitalism more as a conscious political act than as an economic necessity. He failed to see that the question of whether the economic or the political factor predominates with reference to the proletarian revolution is not one of abstract theory but of the concrete situation of the moment. The two factors are in reality inseparable in other than a purely conceptual sense. Lenin had accepted much of Hilferding’s speculations regarding capitalist development, which according to the latter tended toward a so-called ‘general cartel’.⁴⁸ That is to say, it was not only that, as at first, he had to set out from the bourgeois character of the coming Russian revolution and thus consciously adapted himself to its bourgeois manifestations and necessities, but he was also later burdened with the Hilferdingian attitude in relation to the more highly developed capitalist countries, and thus arrived at his over-estimation of the ‘political side’ of the proletarian revolution.

According to Lenin, it was also false to assume (and this held for the *international* scene) that we are living in the age of the pure proletarian revolution; in fact, to him such a revolution can never be. The *true* revolution is for him the dialectical conversion of the bourgeois revolution into the proletarian. The demands of the bourgeois revolution which are still on the order of the day can henceforth be actualised only within the framework of the proletarian revolution; but this proletarian revolution is proletarian only in the

⁴⁷ *Ibid.*

⁴⁸ R. Hilferding: *Das FinanzKapital*.

leadership; it embraces *all the oppressed* who must become the allies of the proletariat: the peasants, the middle classes, the colonial peoples, oppressed nations, etc. This genuine revolution takes place in the age of imperialism, which, developed by the monopolisation of economy, is for Lenin a ‘parasitical’, a ‘stagnating’ capitalism, ‘the last stage of capitalist development’ immediately before the outbreak of the social revolution.⁴⁹ Imperialism leads, in Lenin’s conception, “very near to complete socialisation of production; it drags, as it were, the capitalist against his will and without his being aware of the fact, into a social order which offers a transition from complete freedom of competition to complete socialisation.”⁵⁰

Monopoly capitalism has, according to Lenin, already made production ripe for socialisation; the only remaining question is to take the control over economy out of the hands of the capitalists and put it in the hands of the State, and then also to regulate distribution according to socialist principles. The whole question of socialism is one of the conquest of political power for the proletarian party, which would then actualise socialism for the workers. Between Lenin and the Social Democracy there were no differences so far as concerned socialist construction and its organisational problems. The only difference had reference to the manner in which control over production was to be acquired: by parliamentary or by revolutionary means. The possession of political power, the control over the complete monopoly, were in both conceptions a sufficient solution of the problem of socialist economy: For this reason also Lenin is not alarmed at the prospect of state capitalism, against the opponents of which he says at the Eleventh Party Congress of the Bolsheviks: “State capitalism is that form of capitalism which we shall be in a position to restrict, to establish its limits; this capitalism is bound up with the State, and the State – that is the workers, the most advanced part of the workers, the vanguard, is us. And it is we on whom the nature of this state capitalism will depend.”

While for Otto Bauer the proletarian revolution depended alone on the attitude of the class-conscious, organised workers, on the political will (which from a single glance at the social-democratic organisation, by which its members were completely dominated, practically meant that it depended on Otto Bauer & Company), so here for Lenin the fate of the state capitalism depends on the attitude of the party, which in turn is determined by the bureaucracy, and the whole of history is again the history of the magnanimity, the selflessness and the gallantry of a group of people who are trained in these virtues by the most supremely virtuous.

But with this position of Lenin’s on state capitalism, which for him is determined in accordance with will and not by economic laws, in spite of the fact that the laws of state capitalism are no other than those of monopoly capitalism, Lenin had only remained true to himself, for to him in the last analysis the revolution also depended on the quality of the party and of its leadership. In harmony with Kautsky, for whom the revolutionary consciousness, indispensably necessary to the revolution (a consciousness which for Kautsky was ideology and nothing else) could only be brought to the workers from the outside, since the workers were incapable of developing it out of themselves, Lenin also asserted that “the working class, exclusively by its own efforts, is able to develop only trade-union consciousness; that is, it may realise the necessity for combining in unions, to fight against the employers and to strive to compel the government to pass necessary labour legislation, etc. The social doctrine, however, has proceeded from the philosophical, historical and economic theories which originated with educated representatives of the owning classes, the intellectuals.”⁵¹ A political consciousness, the

⁴⁹ Lenin: *Address to the First Congress of the Soviets 1917*

⁵⁰ Lenin: *Imperialism*.

⁵¹ Lenin: *What is to be Done?*

necessary presupposition of the socialist victory, the workers, according to Lenin, were incapable of developing. Thus socialism had again ceased to be the ‘work of the working class’, as Marx viewed it; socialism now depended on the revolutionary ideology of the bourgeoisie; and no doubt the religious ‘Marxist’ J. Middleton Murry is today merely following in the traces of Kautsky and Lenin when he comes to the logical conclusion that the whole of socialism is nothing more than “substantially a movement of converted bourgeois.”⁵²

Certainly, Lenin stands on Marxist ground when he asserts that the workers are incapable of developing a political consciousness. In his polemic against Arnold Ruge, who so sadly deplored the lack of political consciousness, and was puzzled by this lack because after all such consciousness ought to have been developed by the impoverishment existing at the time, Marx said: “It is false to say that social distress creates political understanding. The truth is rather the reverse: social well-being creates political understanding. Political understanding is an intellectual quality and is given to him who already has, who lives in clover.”⁵³

But Lenin has no further connection with Marx, and sinks to the level of the bourgeois revolutionist *à la* Ruge, when he cannot conceive of a proletarian revolution without this intellect-consciousness, when he makes the revolution a matter of the conscious intervention of the ‘knowing ones’, or of the professional revolutionists. Against this Ruge-Lenin conception, Marx said: “The more cultivated and general the political understanding of a people, the more does the proletariat ... dissipate its energies in irrational, useless and brutally suppressed revolts. Because the proletariat thinks along political lines, it perceives the cause of all evils in the wills of men and all remedies to lie in force and the overthrow of a *particular form of the State ... Political* understanding conceals from it the roots of social distress; distorts its insight into its real aims, deceives its social instinct.”⁵⁴

To Ruge’s assertion (and Lenin’s position) that a revolution without the ‘political soul’ is impossible, Marx answers: “A revolution of political souls organises a ruling clique in society, in accordance with the limited and doubly-cleft nature of these souls, at the cost of society.”⁵⁵ But Lenin had never aimed at more than a change of mastery over the means of production, since this seemed to him to suffice for socialism. Hence also his over-emphasis on the subjective, political factor – a circumstance by which he was led to view the organisational work of socialism as a political act. According to Marx there is indeed no socialism without revolution, and this revolution is the political act of the proletariat. But the proletariat “requires this political act only insofar as it has need of the process of destruction and dissolution. Where the organising activity begins, where its proper aim, its soul emerges, there socialism casts away the political hull.”⁵⁶

The bourgeois elements in Lenin’s thought, which in the first place make the end of capitalism dependent on certain political presuppositions which are not necessarily present; which, furthermore, fancied that increasing monopolisation was identical with the socialisation of production (a thing which today it is obvious to anyone is not the case), which made the whole matter of socialism dependent on the taking over of the monopolies by the State and the replacing of an old by a new bureaucracy, and for which the revolution was reduced to a contest between the revolutionists and the bourgeoisie for winning the masses: such a position had necessarily to minimise the revolutionary

⁵² *Marxism* – a symposium, London 1935.

⁵³ K. Marx: *On the King of Prussia and Social Reform*.

⁵⁴ *Ibid.*

⁵⁵ *Ibid.*

⁵⁶ K. Marx: *Selected Essays*.

element of the spontaneous mass movement and its power and clarity of goal in order to be able to magnify correspondingly the individual role and that of socialist consciousness which has become congealed to an ideology.

Lenin cannot, to be sure, deny the element of spontaneity, but for him it is “essentially nothing other than the germinal form of consciousness,”⁵⁷ which is brought to completion in the organisation and only then is truly revolutionary because completely conscious. The spontaneous awakening of the masses does not satisfy him; it does not suffice for socialist victory. “The fact that the masses are spontaneously entering the movement,” he writes, “does not make the organisation of this struggle less necessary. On the contrary, it makes it more necessary.”⁵⁸

The mistake inherent in the spontaneity theory, he says, is that “it belittles the role of the conscious element” and that it “refuses strong individual leadership,” which for Lenin is “essential to class success.” The weaknesses of organisation are to him the weaknesses of the labour movement itself. The struggle must be organised, the organisation planned; all depends on that and the correct leadership. This latter must have influence over the masses, and this influence counts more than the masses. Where and how the masses are organised, whether in soviets or in trade unions, is, to him, a matter of indifference. The important thing is that they be led by the Bolsheviks.

Rosa Luxemburg sees these matters in a quite different light. She does not confuse revolutionary consciousness with the intellect-consciousness of the Leninist professional revolutionists, but for her it is the act – consciousness of the masses themselves, growing from the constraint of necessity. The masses act revolutionarily because they cannot act otherwise, and because they must act. Marxism to her is not only ideology which crystallises in the organisation, but the living and struggling proletariat which actualises Marxism not because it wants to, but because it cannot do otherwise. While for Lenin the masses are only the material which the conscious revolutionists work, just as to the streetcar motorman the streetcar serves only for travelling, in Rosa Luxemburg’s writings the conscious revolutionists spring not only from growing insight but more still from the mass in its actual revolutionary activity. It is not only that she rejects on principle the over-emphasis on the role of organisation and leadership; she demonstrates from experience that “during the revolution it is extremely difficult for any directing organ of the proletarian movement to foresee and calculate which occasions and factors can lead to explosions and which cannot ... The rigid, mechanical, bureaucratic conception,” she says, “cannot conceive of the struggle save as the product of organisation at a certain stage of its strength. On the contrary, the living, dialectical explanation makes the organisation arise as a product of the struggle.”⁵⁹

With reference to the Russian mass-strike movement of 1905 she says: “There was no predetermined plan, no organised action, because the appeals of the parties could scarcely keep in pace with the spontaneous rising of the masses; the leaders had scarcely time to formulate the watchwords of the on-rushing crowd.” And generalising, she continues: “If the situation should lead to mass strikes in Germany, it will almost certainly not be the best organised workers who will develop the greatest capacity for action, but the worst organised or totally unorganised.”⁶⁰

“Revolutions,” she expressly emphasises, “cannot be made at command. Nor is this at all the task of the party. Our duty is only at all times to speak out plainly without fear or trembling; that is, to hold clearly before the masses their tasks in the given historical

⁵⁷ Lenin: *On Trade Unions*, in the Collected Works.

⁵⁸ Lenin: *What is to be Done?*

⁵⁹ R. Luxemburg: *The Mass Strike*.

⁶⁰ *Ibid.*

moment, and to proclaim the political programme of action and the slogans which result from the situation. The concern with whether and when the revolutionary mass movement takes up with them must be left confidently to history itself. Even though socialism may at first appear as a voice crying in the wilderness, it yet provides for itself a moral and political position the fruits of which it later, when the hour of historical fulfillment strikes, garners with compound interest.”⁶¹

Rosa Luxemburg’s spontaneity conception has often been denounced, the usual thing being to denominate it as a ‘catastrophe policy’ as directed against the organisation of the labour movement itself. She frequently found it necessary to emphasise that her conception was not “pour la des organisation.”⁶² “The Social Democrats,” she wrote, “are the most enlightened, most class-conscious vanguard of the proletariat. They cannot and dare not wait in a fatalistic fashion, with folded arms, for the advent of the revolutionary situation; wait for that which, in every spontaneous movement, falls from the clouds. On the contrary, they must now, as always, hasten the development of things and endeavour to accelerate events.”⁶³

This role of the organisation she regards as possible and therefore welcome and a matter of course, while Lenin regards it as absolutely necessary and makes the whole revolution dependent on the fulfillment of this necessity. This difference regarding the significance of organisation for the revolution involves also two different conceptions regarding form and content of the organisation itself. According to Lenin, “the only serious principle of organisation for our movement is the most absolute secrecy, the strictest selection of members,⁶⁴ the forming of professional revolutionists. Once these qualities are present, something more still is assured than ‘democracy’, namely, complete comradely confidence among the revolutionists. And this ‘more’ is for us unconditionally necessary, for with us ... there can be no question of replacing it by democratic control. It is a great mistake to believe that the impossibility of a real democratic control makes the members of the revolutionary organisation uncontrollable. They have no time to think of puppet-like forms of democracy, but they feel their responsibility very keenly.”⁶⁵

By means of the rules of organisation (which, so long as they were democratic, meant nothing) Lenin wanted to “forge a more or less sharp weapon against opportunism. The deeper the source of opportunism lies, the sharper must be this weapon.”⁶⁶ This weapon was ‘centralism’, the strictest discipline in the party, the complete subordination of all activity to the instructions of the central committee. Of course, Rosa Luxemburg was admirably capable of tracing this “nightwatchman spirit”⁶⁷ of Lenin’s to the special situation of the Russian intellectuals; but “it is false to think,” (she writes against Lenin) “that the still impracticable majority rule of the workers within their party-organisation may be replaced by a sole-mastery on the part of the central authority of the party, and that the lacking public control on the part of the working masses over the acts and omissions of the party organs would be just as well replaced by the inverted control of a central committee over the activity of the revolutionary workers.”⁶⁷ And even though the

⁶¹ R. Luxemburg: *Spartacus*.

⁶² R. Luxemburg: *Brief an Kautsky*, 1905.

⁶³ R. Luxemburg: *The Mass Strike*.

⁶⁴ This ‘principle’ was dropped by Lenin whenever such a course appeared opportune. Thus he once threw away the 50,000 revolutionary workers of the German Communist Labour Party (K.A.P.D.) in order not to be deprived of the five million votes of the reformist Independent Socialist Party (U.S.P.D.) of Germany.

⁶⁵ Lenin: *What is to be Done?* Lenin’s idealism comes to light in this formulation as well. Instead of actually and materially assuring control through organising that control within the organisation, he replaces it by ‘something better’, by the phrases ‘comradely confidence’ and ‘feeling of responsibility’. Practically, however, this meant: mechanical obedience, order from above, conformity below.

⁶⁶ Lenin: *One Step Forward, Two Steps Backward*, 1904.

⁶⁷ R. Luxemburg: *Organisational Questions of the Russian Social Democracy*, *Neue Zeit* 1905.

self-leadership of the workers should lead to blunders and false steps, Rosa Luxemburg is nevertheless ready to take all this into the bargain, for she is convinced that “even mistakes which a truly revolutionary labour movement commits are, in historical perspective, immeasurably more fruitful and valuable than the infallibility of the very best ‘central committee’.”⁶⁷

The differences between Luxemburg and Lenin which we have here pointed out have in part already been more or less surpassed by history. Many of the things which gave substance to this dispute are of no moment today. Nevertheless, the essential factor in their debates, whether the revolution depends on the organised labour movement or on the spontaneous movement of the workers, is of the most pressing significance. But here also history has already decided in favour of Rosa Luxemburg. Leninism is buried under the ruins of the Third International. A new labour movement which has no concern with the social-democratic remains which were still recognisable in Lenin and Luxemburg, nor yet has any intention of renouncing the lessons of the past, is arising. To separate itself from the deadly traditional influences of the old labour movement has become its first prerequisite, and here Rosa Luxemburg is as great an aid as Leninism has been a hindrance. This new movement of the workers with its inseparable nucleus of conscious revolutionists can do more with Luxemburg’s revolutionary theory, in spite of its many weaknesses, and derive from it more hope, than from the total accomplishment of the Leninist International. And as Rosa Luxemburg once said, in the midst of the World War and collapse of the Second International, so the present-day revolutionists can say in view of the collapse of the Third International: “But we are not lost, and we shall conquer if we have not unlearned how to learn.”

What will I do when America goes to War?

(A Symposium)

Source: *Modern Monthly*, Vol. IX. No.5. September, 1935, pp. 267f

Transcribed: by Thomas Schmidt;

The Questions

1. What will you do when America goes to war?
2. Will your decision be altered if Soviet Russia is an ally of the United States in a war with Japan?
3. Would a prospective victory by Hitler over most of Europe move you to urge United States participation in opposition to Germany to prevent such a catastrophe?

1.

Personally, I take neither pleasure nor interest in going into any war whatever; still, to declare oneself against war seems to me silly and useless. One has to set material forces against it, not mere attitudes, and anyone who fails to take part in shaping those forces is also not against war, however much he may protest that he is. The question itself

suggests the idea that one is supposed to come out for peace and against war, but I am opposed to capitalist peace just as much as to capitalist war. Nor do I have any choice between the two situations; I can only contribute to putting an end to a system which has to assure its existence on the tendency to alternate between war and peace. In order to be opposed to capitalist war, one must be opposed to capitalism, since the wars as well as the crisis belong among this system's conditions of existence. And so it goes without saying that I shall not in any case help to defend a system which I find thoroughly repulsive and by which my life is spoiled.

If America goes to war, that means under the present conditions that the chronic world crisis is to be further sharpened in a world war, in which the crisis seeks its solution. It is today senseless to look for the causes of war in the policy and the necessities of particular nations; the world war is the affair of world capitalism. In view of such a situation, the will and the design of the individual sink to ridiculous insignificance, and whether this person or that comes out for or against war becomes almost a matter of indifference. As things stand, today, -and this holds just for today, -there is little ground for assuming that the next war will be prevented through action of the working class. It is much more probable that we shall have to wait for the next world war to produce a new world-revolutionary situation, and so it is very difficult for a revolutionist not to hope for the war's acceleration. But he cannot come out in favor of war any more than in favor of peace; he has simply nothing to do with this world, but shapes for himself his *new* world.

The mass of workers is reactionary out of necessity, as it also grows revolutionary out of necessity. The individual, in his attitude toward war, has to consider not only himself but also the mass phenomena. What he *wants* to do does not exhaust the question; what he *can* do is of greater importance. The working class will probably today go to war for Capital just as it also works for Capital, and both for the same reasons. If this situation fails to change, then the revolutionary war-rejector will remain a voice in the wilderness and can only wait for the turn of events. His attitude toward the war situation is then practically only that of living through the non-revolutionary period. It is nonsense to hold as an axiom for all time that one must get into the war in order to be able some time to direct the weapons against his own bourgeoisie, just as it is also false to insist on refusal of military service under all conditions. The revolutionist cannot, in a time which presents no possibilities of action, have any interest in getting out of life. A dead man has ceased to be anything whatever, hence also to be a revolutionist. If staying away from the war involves greater danger to one's life than does taking part in the thing, the choice is not difficult, for it is just as stupid to die for an idea *and nothing else* as to die for capitalism. If refusal of military service is possible, only an idiot could, in my opinion, let himself be persuaded that one should take part in the war in order to convert it. It is not until the war machine ceases to function accurately and the masses rise up out of themselves that the revolutionizing possibility is present; but then it is certainly also a matter of indifference as to where the revolutionist happens to be. If by reason of the unfavorable situation, refusal to serve is of *no* real importance, then it is senseless to expose oneself. If it has a revolutionary significance, then one must exercise it, even though a war were favorable to the objective presuppositions for changing society, since one can never side in any capitalistic affray. There is *no* absolute and universally valid answer to the question here proposed. In the different concrete situations, the practical class struggle is likely to answer the question differently. And yet war sets no special task either for the individual or for the class: the historical task of the workers merely presses for its solution, which remains the same in war as in peace.

2.

From the standpoint of the proletariat, it is today no longer permissible to reject certain wars and accept others. The enemy is world capitalism, so that even a Russo-American alliance against Japan would present the workers with no new tasks. State-capitalist Russia is interested in and bound up with the maintenance of world capitalism. As a support of imperialist capitalism, Russia herself must be regarded as an imperialist power. The Russian workers have the same tasks as the German or the American: the overthrow of world capitalism, hence also the overthrow of Russian state capitalism. Support of the Russian alliance policy amounts to promoting the next world war.

3.

Anyone who were to answer the third question with Yes would be nothing more than an ordinary war monger. Germany cannot be differentiated from the other capitalist countries. Everywhere the same capitalism rules, differing only in degrees of development and unessential particulars. Anyone who chooses between Hitler, Stalin and Roosevelt has by that very circumstance declared that he takes up for a capitalism which he finds agreeable and thereby also announced his willingness to participate in the next war.

The Barricades Must Be Torn Down. Moscow-Fascism in Spain

(1937)

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First Published: in *International Communist Correspondence*, Chicago, no. 7-8, August 1937;

Transcribed: by [Andy Blunden](#), for marxists.org 2003;

Proofed: and corrected by Geoff Traugh, July 2005.

On May 7, 1937, the CNT-FAI of Barcelona broadcast the following order: “The barricades must be torn down! The hours of crisis have passed. Calm must be established. But rumors are circulating throughout the city, contradicting the reports of a return to normality such as we are now issuing. The barricades are a contributing factor to this confusion. We don’t need the barricades now that fighting has stopped, The barricades serve no purpose now, and their continued existence might give the impression that we wish to return to the previous state of affairs – and that is not true, Comrades, let us cooperate for the reestablishment of a completely normal civil life. Everything that hinders such a return must disappear.”

And then began the *normal life*, that is, the terror of the Moscow-Fascists. Murder and imprisonment of revolutionary workers. The disarming of the revolutionary forces, the silencing of their papers, their radio stations, the elimination of all positions they had previously attained. Counter-Revolution triumphed in Catalonia, where, as we were so often assured by the anarchist leaders and these of the POUM they were already on the March towards socialism. The counter-revolutionary forces of the People’s Front were

welcomed by the anarchist leaders. The victims were supposed to hail their butchers. "When an attempt was made to find a solution and reestablish order in Barcelona," we read in a CNT bulletin, "the CNT and FAI were the *first* to offer their collaboration; they were the *first* to put forward the demand to stop the shooting and try to pacify Barcelona. When the Central government took over public order, the CNT was among the *first to put at the disposal of the representative of public order all the forces under its control*. When the Central government decided to send *armed force to Barcelona, in order to control the political forces which would not obey the public authorities, the CNT was once more the one to order all the districts to facilitate the passage of these forces, that they might reach Barcelona and establish order*".

Yes, the CNT has done the utmost to help to carry the Valencia Counter-revolution into Barcelona. The imprisoned workers may thank their anarchist leaders for their confinement, which ends before the firing sounds of the Moscow-Fascists. The dead workers are removed together with their barricades; they were silenced so that their leaders might continue to talk. What excitement on the part of the neo-Bolsheviks: "Moscow has murdered revolutionary workers," they shout. For the first time in its history, the Third International is shooting from the other side of the barricades. Before this time it had only betrayed the cause, but now openly fighting against communism." And what did these angry shouters expect from state capitalist Russia and its Foreign Legion? Help for the Spanish workers? Capitalism in all forms has only one answer for workers opposed to exploitation: murder. A united front with the socialists or with the party-"communists," is a united front with capitalism, which can only be a united front for capitalism. Where is no use in scolding Moscow, there is no sense in criticizing the socialists: both must be fought to the end. But now, the revolutionary workers must recognize that also the anarchist leaders, that also the "apparatchiks" of the CNT and FAI oppose the interests of the workers, belong to the enemy camp. United with capitalism they had to serve capitalism; and where phrases were powerless, betrayal became the order of the day. Tomorrow they may be shooting against rebelling workers just as the "communist" butchers of the "Karl Marx Barracks" shoot today. The counter-revolution extends all the way from Franco to Santillan.

Once more, and so often before, the disappointed revolutionary workers denounce their cowardly leadership, and then they look around for new and better leaders, for improved organization. The "Friends of Durrutti" split away from the corrupted leaders of the CNT and FAI in order to restore original anarchism, to safeguard the ideal, to maintain the revolutionary tradition. They have learned a few things, but they have not learned enough. The workers of the POUM are deeply disappointed in Gorkin, Nin and Company. These Leninists were not leninistic enough, and the party members look around for better Lenins. They have learned, but so little. The tradition of the past hangs like a stone around their neck. A change of men and a revival of the organization is not enough. A communist revolution is not made by leaders and organizations; it is made by the workers, by the *class*. Once more the workers are hoping for changes in the "People's Front", which might after all bring about a revolutionary turn. Caballero, discarded by Moscow, might come back on the shoulders of the UGT-members, who have learned and seen the light. Moscow, disappointed in not finding the proper help from the democratic nations, might become radical again. All this is non-sense! The forces of the "People's Front," Caballero and Moscow, are unable, even if they wanted, to defeat capitalism in Spain. Capitalistic forces can not have socialistic policies. The People's Front is not a lesser evil for the workers. It is only another form of capitalist dictatorship in addition to Fascism. The struggle must be against capitalism.

The present attitude of the CNT is not new. A few months ago the Catalan president Companys said that the CNT "has not thought of impairing the democratic regime in Spain, but stands for legality and order." Like all other anti-fascist organizations in Spain, the CNT, notwithstanding its radical phraseology, has restricted its struggle to the war against Franco. The program of collectivization, partly realized as a war necessity, did not impair capitalist principles or capitalism as such. Insofar as the CNT has spoken of a final goal, it suggested some modified form of state capitalism, in which the trade union bureaucracy and its philosophical anarchist friends would have the power. But even this goal was only for the distant future. Not one real step in this direction was undertaken, for one real step towards even a state capitalist system would have meant the end of the People's Front, would have meant barricades in Catalonia and a civil war within the civil war. The contradiction between its 'theory' and its 'practice' was explained by the anarchists in the manner of all fakers, that "theory is one thing and practice another," that the second is never so harmonious as the first. The CNT realized that it had no real plan for the reconstruction of society; it realized further, that it did not have the masses of Spain behind itself, but only a part of the workers in one part of the country, it realized its weakness, national as well as international, and its radical phrases were only designed to conceal the utter weakness of the movement in the conditions created by the civil war.

There are many possible excuses for the position the anarchists have taken, but there is none for their program of falsification which beclouded the whole labor movement and worked to the advance of the Moscow-Fascists. Trying to make believe that socialism was on the march in Catalonia and that this was possible without a break with the People's Front Government meant the strengthening of the People's Front forces till they were able to dictate also to the Spanish anarchist workers. Anarchism in Spain accepted one form of fascism, disguised as a democratic movement to help to crush Franco-Fascism. It is not true, as the anarchist today try to make their followers believe that there was no other alternative, and hence that all criticism directed against the CNT is unjustified. The anarchists could have tried, after July 19, 1936, to establish worker's power in Catalonia, they could also have tried to crush the Government forces in Barcelona in May 1937. They could have marched against both the Franco-Fascists and the Moscow-Fascists. Most probably they would have been defeated; possibly Franco would have won and smashed the anarchists as well as his competitors of the "People's Front." Open capitalist intervention might have set in at once. But there was also another possibility, though much less likely. The French workers might have gone farther than to a mere stay-in strike; open intervention might have led to a war in which all the powers would have been involved. The struggle would have at once have turned on clear issues, between Capitalism and Communism. Whatever might have happened, one thing is sure: the chaotic condition of world capitalism would have been made still more chaotic. Without catastrophes no change of society is possible. Any real attack on the capitalist system might have hastened reaction, but reaction will set in anyhow, even if somewhat delayed. This delay will cost more workers' lives than would any premature attempt to crush the system of exploitation. But a real attack on capitalism might have created a condition more favorable to international action on the part of the working class, or it might have brought about a situation which would have sharpened all capitalist contradictions and so hastened historical development toward the breakdown of capitalism. In the beginning is the deed. But the CNT, we are told, felt so much responsibility for the lives of the workers. It wanted to avoid unnecessary bloodshed. What cynicism! More than a million people, have already died in the Civil War. If one has to die anyway, he might as well die for a worthy cause.

The struggle against the whole of capitalism – that struggle which the CNT wanted to avoid – cannot be avoided. The workers' revolution must be radical from the very outset, or it will be lost. There was required the complete expropriation of the possessing classes, the elimination of all power other than that of the armed workers, and the struggle against all elements opposing such a course. Not doing this, the May days of Barcelona, and the elimination of the revolutionary elements in Spain were inevitable. The CNT never approached the question of revolution from the viewpoint of the working class, but has always been concerned first of all with the organization. It was acting for the workers and with the aid of the workers, but was not interested in the self-initiative and action of the workers independent of organizational interests. What counted here was not the revolution but the CNT. And from the point of view of the interests of the CNT the anarchists had to distinguish between Fascism and Capitalism, between War and Peace. From this point of view, it was forced to participate in capitalist-nationalist policies and it had to tell the workers to cooperate with one enemy in order to crush another, in order later to be crushed by the first. The radical phrases of the anarchists were not to be followed; they only served as an instrument in the control of the workers by the apparatus of the CNT, "without the CNT," they wrote proudly, "anti-fascist Spain cannot be governed." They wanted to participate in governing the workers and ordering them around. They only asked for their proper share of the spoils, for they recognized that they could not very well have the whole for themselves. Like the 'Bolsheviks', they identified their own organizational needs with the needs and interests of the working class. What they decided was good, there was no need for the workers to think and decide for themselves, as this would only hinder the struggle and create confusion; the workers simply had to follow their savers. Not a single attempt to organize and consolidate real working class power. The CNT spoke anarchistically and acted bolshevistically, that is, capitalistically. In order to rule, or participate in the rule, it had to oppose all self-initiative on the part of the workers and so it had to stand for legality and order and government.

But there were more organizations in the field, and there is no identity of interests among those organizations. Each one is struggling against all others for supremacy, for the sole rule over the workers. The sharing of power by a number of organizations does not do away with the struggle between them. At times all organizations are forced to cooperate, but this is only a postponement of the final reckoning. One group must control. At the same time that the anarchists were proceeding from "one success to the other," their position was continuously being undermined and weakened. The CNT's assertion that it would not dictate to other organizations, or work against them, was in reality only a plea not to be attacked by others – a recognition of its own weakness. Being engaged in capitalist policy with its allies of the People's Front, it left the broad masses with the possibility of choosing their favorite from among the bourgeois elements. The one who offered the most had the best chance. Moscow-fascism came into vogue even in Catalonia. For the masses saw in the support of Moscow the strength necessary for doing away with Franco and the war, Moscow and its People Front government meant international capitalist support. Moscow gained in influence, for the broad masses of Spain were still in favor of the continuation of the exploitation society. And they were strengthened in this attitude by the fact that the anarchists did nothing to clarify the situation, that is, to show that help from Moscow meant nothing more than the fight for a capitalism which pleases a few imperialist powers, even though it may disappoint others.

The anarchists became propagandists for the Moscow brand of fascism, the servants of those capitalist interests which oppose the present Franco plans in Spain. The revolution became a play ground of imperialist rivals. The masses had to die without

knowing for whom or for what. The whole affair ceased to be the affair of the workers. And now it has also ceased to be the affair of the CNT. The war may be ended at any time by a compromise agreement between the imperialist powers. It may be ended with a defeat or with a success of Franco. Franco may drop Italy and Germany and turn to England and France. Or the former countries may cease to pay further attention to Franco. The situation in Spain might be decisively altered by the war brewing in the Far East. There is still a number of possibilities in addition to the most likely one, that is, victory for Franco-Fascism. But whatever happens, unless the workers throw up new barricades against the Loyalists also, unless the workers really attack capitalism, than whatever may be the outcome of the struggle in Spain it will have no real meaning to the working class, which will still be exploited and suppressed. A change in the military situation in Spain might force Moscow-Fascism once more to don the revolutionary garb. But from the viewpoint of the interests of the Spanish workers, as well as of the workers of the world, there is no difference between Franco-Fascism and Moscow-Fascism, however much difference there may be between Franco and Moscow. The barricades, if again erected, should not be torn down. The revolutionary watchword for Spain is: Down with the Fascists and also down with the Loyalists. However futile, in view of the present world situation, might be the attempt to fight for communism, still this is the only course for workers to adopt. "Better the sense of futility than the morbid energy that expends itself on false roads. We will preserve our sense of truth, of reason at all cost, even at the cost of futility."

Was the Bolshevik Revolution a Failure?

(A Symposium)

Source: *The Modern Quarterly*, Fall 1938, pp. 16-20.

Transcribed: by Thomas Schmidt

Proofed: by Jonas Holmgren

The Questions

1. Did the Bolshevik Revolution achieve its proletarian objectives?
2. Is the dictatorship of the proletariat consonant with Party Dictatorship?
3. Can a proletarian State arise on the basis of the wage system, managed by a Party-State? What constitutes the abolition of capitalism?
4. Does Lenin's thesis that in the imperialist epoch the proletariat alone can lead a revolution to complete the "Bourgeois task" claim validity in view of the course pursued by Cardenas in Mexico, Kemal Pacha in Turkey, etc.?
5. Viewed in retrospect, did the seizure of power by the Bolsheviks retard the World Proletarian Revolution?

I.

I deny the assumption of the first question that the Bolshevik Revolution had proletarian aims. The proletarian character of the Russian Revolution is only apparent. It

is true that the revolutionary workers were striving for a vaguely conceived sort of socialism, but in every bourgeois revolution in which workers participated, proletarian objectives were evident.

The ideas and slogans connected with proletarian objectives, and even actual struggles and forms of organization peculiar to the independent proletarian class movement, are not enough to give the Russian Revolution a proletarian character. Certainly many workers believed that the Bolshevik Revolution would end in socialism, however, the illusions of the workers cannot replace the necessary action to attain proletarian objectives. Socialism as a slogan, as an ideal, still fits perfectly in an otherwise bourgeois revolution and society. Proletarian objectives, first of all, must incorporate the abolition of the proletarian class through the abolition of all class relations.

The Bolshevik Revolution, however, aspired to the development of modern industry and of a modern proletariat, a fact which comes clearly to light in the bolshevistic concept of "socialism," which still contains wage labor and capital production, and secures those relations through the division of society into rulers and ruled. That the Russian Revolution first of all was a peasant revolution cannot be denied; that these peasants, striving for land and property, had no proletarian objectives is obvious. In so far as the Bolshevik Revolution found support by the peasants and in turn supported them, no proletarian objectives were involved. For this reason the Bolsheviks regarded their early peasant policy as an unavoidable concession to the backwardness of Russian conditions. The later collectivization drive in agriculture illustrates how earnestly the Bolsheviks agreed with Western Socialism that the distribution of land to the peasants is no socialistic goal. However, the collectivization of agriculture, and the transformation of independent peasants into wage workers, is still no proletarian objective, but a bourgeois desire of long standing and has little chance of being realized without radical and risky changes in the socio-economic set up.

So far the making of wage workers was always considered the task of capitalism; by making this task their own, the Bolsheviks fulfilled capitalistic objectives. It is true that within the whole revolutionary situation in Russia there were also forces which fought for outspoken proletarian objectives. They were achieved, here and there, through the expropriation of factories and other forms of property by the Soviets. They were lost again as soon as the Bolshevik State arose which supplanted the power of the Soviets with that of the Bolshevik Party.

It is often asked how it is possible that power won by the workers by way of revolution may be lost again without a counter-revolution. The latter here is conceived as a return of the old authorities, but counter-revolutionary actions are not confined to old authorities; new officials can engage in them just as well, or even better. The counter-revolution against the state-capitalistic intent of the Russian Revolution was defeated by the Russian masses following the directives of the Bolsheviks. The counter-revolution against the proletarian objectives expressed within this revolution was triumphant with the success of Bolshevism, which transformed private property into state property, and continued the exploitation of the workers on state-capitalistic terms.

Not without opposition and struggle were the Soviets reduced to a mere instrument of the Bolsheviks' rule over the whole of society. Groups of workers in Western Europe as well as in Russia recognized quite early the real character of the Bolshevik Revolution. Others, arising in opposition to the Stalin machines believe even today that the latter is a perversion of Bolshevism, and that the original Leninism intended something else than what exists in Russia. This, however, is not true. The Russia of today represents the essential aspirations of the early Bolsheviks before and after the October Revolution. That

the Bolsheviks carried through a bourgeois revolution of which the bourgeoisie was no longer capable, was stated many times by Lenin himself. The fact that this revolution, essentially bourgeois in its tasks, made use of a Marxian terminology, gave rise to the illusion that its socialistic trends were strong enough to alter fundamentally its original character. However, all that happened was that the Bolsheviks were not only forced or willing to fulfill the functions of the bourgeoisie, but by this process they became the new ruling and exploiting class.

II.

The dictatorship of the party cannot be consonant with the dictatorship of the proletariat. Either the proletariat rules or is ruled. The party is only a small group in society; it is not the entire proletariat; it rules as a minority and is an expression of the conditions of exploitation. By the very conditions that make it necessary, it is impelled to rule in its own interests—that is, reproduce continually the conditions of the dictatorship over the proletariat—until the proletariat finally ends the rule of all minorities by destroying the bases of exploitation, which are wage labor and the state.

III.

The state always and invariably represents domination over the proletariat. It is the unmistakable badge of the exploiting society. A “socialism” that is realized by the state always includes the continuation of class relations, inequalities of income, money and market laws, and other forms of modern exploitation. Like any other contradiction in terms, a “proletarian state” is quite inconceivable. It is possible to conceive, however, the temporary and direct execution of state functions by the armed proletariat—the actual revolution to the end of securing the development of socialism, or the association of free and equal producers and consumers.

IV.

The Bolshevik Revolution was not led by the proletariat but by the middle class. The bourgeoisie of that country was extremely weak, and the intelligentsia and all the “progressive” forces struggling against reaction could obtain support neither from them nor from the already reactionary bourgeoisie of western Europe. Only in the workers’ movement could it find a usable revolutionary ideology, and only with the workers’ help, together with the agricultural revolutionary necessities, could the intelligentsia hope to change Russia into a modern state.

In Turkey and Mexico, as well, it is not the proletariat who leads, but the middle-class, who make use of the proletariat for their own ends. Important layers of the middle class, no longer able to secure or elevate their economic positions within the old-style capitalism, try to secure their further existence as non-workers by political means, by elevating themselves into ruling positions, to continue to participate in the exploitation of labor—naturally in the “interest of labor.”

The state has always played an important part in the development of capitalism. Its role increased in importance with the relative stagnation in capital expansion. A whole revolution was necessary for Russia to secure by political means what it could reach no longer by economic warfare: the complete centralization of all possible power in the hands of the dictatorial state, as the necessary prerequisite for a swift development of

modern industry in Russia, to save the country from becoming a colony of one or more of the imperialistic nations, and to end the misery resulting from the backwardness of the country. The Bolshevik policy, aspiring to a state capitalist system, was best suited to save Russia from semi-colonial conditions, and to elevate it as a power among the other world powers. Imperialism as a hindrance to the development of the backward countries brought forth the modern nationalistic movements to end imperialistic oppression.

To build today successfully a modern state capable of maintaining its independence, the slow process in which private property expands is useless; instead, the highest concentration of all capital resources is needed which necessitates a radical onslaught on those interests defending the backward state of affairs. In order to bring results, the struggle for national liberation had to take on revolutionary forms. This necessity determines the developmental trends in other countries like Turkey and Mexico, also in countries trying a come-back as an imperialistic force, like Germany.

Other countries did not go as far as Russia in this concentration process with political means, for reasons of different internal and external conditions. It was, for instance, relatively easier for Russia, to challenge the imperialistic nations than it is for Turkey or Mexico. However, state capitalism expresses an economic weakness within the countries employing it, as well as an existing weakness of world capitalism, which loses control over the backward countries, as this control can no longer be secured economically. Economic warfare no longer suffices; political warfare, the open brutal slaughter, becomes the only possibility for coping with the economic stagnation which strangles the capitalistic world. Under such conditions the power of the state increases continuously. The real rulers of society are no longer recognizable by their private money bags, but by their position within the state apparatus.

Russian state capitalism has become the example for other nations as indicated in the rise of fascism and the growth of governmental control in all countries. However, this trend is no sign of "progress," as many people believe. It does not correspond to a "higher stage" of capitalism, but indicates the decline of world capitalism. The trend toward bolshevization and fascization is only the political expression of the stagnation and decline of the capitalist system; it is barbarism.

V.

The world-revolutionary propaganda of the Bolsheviks in the first year of the revolution is often taken as an assurance of the proletarian character of Bolshevism. However, this "internationalism" at no time aspired to more than to secure the Bolshevik Revolution, to help the Bolshevik Party to remain in power.

As soon as the Bolsheviks recognized that the proletariat was too weak to establish state capitalistic systems favorable to Russia in other countries, and also that the bourgeoisie was no longer willing to risk anything in a struggle against state capitalist Russia, that is, about 1920, the Bolsheviks ceased to support revolutionary movements in other countries and instead prepared for a peaceful side by side existence with the other capitalistic systems. No more than Stalin today, were Lenin and Trotsky interested in helping the world revolution to reach proletarian objectives. The decline of the revolutionary movement in the world, and the consolidation of the power of capital now also served the needs of Bolshevik Russia.

Still, it cannot be said that the Bolshevik Revolution retarded the world revolution. If attempts toward the latter failed, this failure was quite independent of the Bolshevik policies, or the policies of any other minority group for that matter, and was due only to the still enormous power and vitality of world capitalism. The Bolsheviks can be blamed

only, if at all, for hindering the proletariat from drawing the necessary lessons on its first great defeat after the last war, and for destroying the first attempts to create a real revolutionary labor movement in conformity with the necessities of today.

The Masses & The Vanguard

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Economic and political changes proceed with bewildering rapidity since the close of the world war. The old conceptions in the labour movement have become faulty and inadequate and the working class organizations present a scene of indecision and confusion.

In view of the changing economic and political situation it seems that thorough reappraisal of the task of the working class becomes necessary in order to find the forms of struggle and organization most needful and effective.

The relation of “the party,” “organization” or “vanguard” to the masses plays a large part in contemporary working class discussion. That the importance and indispensability of the vanguard or party is overemphasized in working class circles is not surprising, since the whole history and tradition of the movement tends in that direction.

The labour movement today is the fruit of economic and political developments that found first expression in the Chartist movement in England (1838-1848), the subsequent development of trade unions from the fifties onward, and in the Lasallean movement in Germany in the sixties. Corresponding to the degree of capitalist development trade unions and political parties developed in the other countries of Europe and America.

The overthrow of feudalism and the needs of capitalist industry in themselves necessitated the marshaling of the proletariat and the granting of certain democratic privileges by the capitalists. The latter had been reorganizing society in line with their needs. The political structure of feudalism was replaced by capitalist parliamentarianism. The capitalist state, the instrument for administering the joint affairs of the capitalist class, was established and adjusted to the needs of the new class.

The bothersome proletariat whose assistance against the feudal forces had been necessary now had to be reckoned with. Once called into action it could not be entirely eliminated as a political factor. But it could be coordinated. And this was done – partly consciously with cunning and partly by the very dynamics of capitalist economy – as the working class adjusted itself and submitted to the new order. It organized unions whose limited objectives (better wages and conditions) could be realized in an expanding capitalist economy. It played the game of capitalist politics within the capitalist state (the practices and forms of which were determined primarily by capitalist needs) and within these limitations, achieved apparent successes.

But thereby the proletariat adopted capitalist forms of organization and capitalist ideologies. The parties of the workers, like those of the capitalists became limited

corporations, the elemental needs of the class were subordinated to political expediency. Revolutionary objectives were displaced by horse-trading and manipulations for political positions. The party became all-important, its immediate objectives superseded those of the class. Where revolutionary situations set into motion the class, whose tendency is to fight for the realization of the revolutionary objective, the parties of the workers “represented” the working class and were themselves “represented” by parliamentarians whose very position in parliament constituted resignation to their status as bargainers within a capitalist order whose supremacy was no longer challenged.

The general coordination of workers’ organizations to capitalism saw the adoption of the same specialization in union and party activities that challenged the hierarchy of industries. Managers, superintendent and foremen saw their counterparts in presidents, organizers and secretaries of labour organizations. Boards of directors, executive committees, etc. The mass of organized workers like the mass of wage slaves in industry left the work of direction and control to their betters.

This emasculation of workers’ initiatives proceeded rapidly as capitalism extended its sway. Until the world war put an end to further peaceful and “orderly” capitalist expansion.

The risings in Russia, Hungary and Germany found a resurgence of mass action and initiative. The social necessities compelled action by the masses. But the traditions of the old labour movement in Western Europe and the economic backwardness of Eastern Europe frustrated fulfillment of labour’s historic mission. Western Europe saw the masses defeated and the rise of fascism *à la* Mussolini and Hitler, while Russia’s backward economy developed the “communism” in which the differentiation between class and vanguard, the specialization of functions and the regimentation of labour reached its highest point.

The leadership principle, the idea of the vanguard that must assume responsibility for the proletarian revolution is based on the pre-war conception of the labour movement, is unsound. The tasks of the revolutionary and the communist reorganization of society cannot be realized without the widest and fullest action of the masses themselves. Theirs is the task and the solution thereof.

The decline of capitalist economy, the progressive paralysis, the instability, the mass unemployment, the wage cuts and intensive pauperization of the workers – all of these compel action, in spite of fascism *à la* Hitler or the disguised fascism of the AF of L.

The old organizations are either destroyed or voluntarily reduced to impotence. Real action now is possible only outside the old organizations. In Italy, Germany and Russia the White and Red fascisms have already destroyed all old organizations and placed the workers directly before the problem of finding the new forms of struggle. In England, France and America the old organizations still maintain a degree of illusion among workers, but their successive surrender to the forces of reaction is undermining them rapidly.

The principles of independent struggle, solidarity and communism are being forced upon them in the actual class struggle. With this powerful trend toward mass consolidation and mass action the theory of regrouping and realigning the militant organizations seems to be outdated. True regroupment is essential, but it cannot be a mere merger of the existing organizations. In the new conditions a revision of fighting forms is necessary. “First clarity – then unity.” Even small groups recognizing and urging the principles of independent mass movement are far more significant than large groups that deprecate the power of the masses.

There are groups that perceive the defects and weaknesses of parties. They often furnish sound criticism of the popular front combination and the unions. But their criticism is limited. They lack a comprehensive understanding of the new society. The tasks of the proletariat are not completed with seizure of the means of production and the abolition of private property. The questions of social reorganization must be put and answered. Shall state socialism be rejected? What shall be the basis of a society without wage slavery? What shall determine the economic relations between factories? What shall determine the relations between producers and their total product?

These questions and their answers are essential for an understanding of the forms of struggle and organization today. Here the conflict between the leadership principle and the principle of independent mass action becomes apparent. For a thorough understanding of these questions leads to the realization that the widest, all-embracing, direct activity of the proletariat as a class is necessary to realize communism.

Of first importance is the abolition of the wage system. The will and good wishes of men are not potent enough to retain this system after revolution (as in Russia) without eventually surrendering to the dynamics engendered by it. It is not enough to seize the means of production and abolish private property. It is necessary to abolish the basic condition of modern exploitation, wage slavery, and that act brings on the succeeding measures of reorganization that would never be invoked without the first step. Groups that do not put these questions, no matter how sound their criticism otherwise, lack the most important elements in the formation of sound revolutionary policy. The abolition of the wages system must be carefully investigated in its relation to politics and economics. We will here take up some of the political implications.

First is the question of the seizure of power by the workers. The principle of the masses (not party or vanguard) retaining power must be emphasized. Communism cannot be introduced or realized by a party. Only the proletariat as a whole can do that. Communism means that the workers have taken their destiny into their own hands; that they have abolished wages; that they have, with the suppression of the bureaucratic apparatus, combined the legislative and executive powers. The unity of the workers lies not in the sacrosanct merger of parties or trade unions, but in the similarity of their needs and in the expression of needs in mass action. All the problems of the workers must therefore be viewed in relation to the developing self-action of the masses.

To say that the non-combative spirit of the political parties is due to the malice or reformism of the leaders is wrong. The political parties are impotent. They will do nothing, because they can do nothing. Because of its economic weakness, capitalism has organized for suppression and terror and is at present politically very strong, for it is forced to exert all its effort to maintain itself. The accumulation of capital, enormous throughout the world, has shrunk the yield of profit – a fact which, in the external policies, manifests itself through the contradictions between nations; and in internal policies, through “devaluation” and the attendant partial expropriation of the middle class and the lowering of the subsistence level of the workers; and in general by the centralization of the power of big capital units in the hands of the state. Against this centralized power little movements can do nothing.

The masses alone can combat it, for only they can destroy the power of the state and become a political force. For that reason the fight based on the craft organizations becomes objectively obsolete, and the large mass movements, unrestricted by the limitations of such organizations, must necessarily replace them.

Such is the new situation facing workers. But from it springs an actual weakness. Since the old method of struggle by means of elections and limited trade union activity has become quite futile, a new method, it is true, has instinctively developed, but that

method has not yet been conscientiously, and therefore not effectively, applied. Where their parties and unions are impotent, the masses already begin to express their militancy through wildcat strikes. In America, England, France, Belgium, Holland, Spain, Poland – wildcat strikes develop, and through them the masses present ample proof that their old organizations are no longer fit for struggle. The wildcat strikes are not, however, disorganized, as the name implies. They are denounced as such by union bureaucrats, because they are strikes formed outside the official organizations. The strikers themselves organize the strike, for it is an old truth that only as an organized mass can workers struggle and conquer. They form picket lines, provide for the repulsion of strike-breakers, organize strike relief, create relations with other factories. – In a word, they themselves assume the leadership of their own strike, and they organize it on a factory basis.

It is in these very movements that the strikers find their unity of struggle. It is then that they take their destiny into their own hands and unite “the legislative and executive power” by eliminating unions and parties, as illustrated by several strikes in Belgium and Holland.

But independent class action is still weak. That the strikers, instead of continuing their independent action toward widening their movement, call upon the unions to join them, is an indication that under existing conditions their movement cannot grow larger, and for that reason cannot yet become a political force capable of fighting concentrated capital. But it is a beginning.

Occasionally though, the independent struggle takes a big leap forward, as with the Asturian miners’ strikes in 1934, the Belgium miners in 1935, the strikes in France, Belgium and America in 1936, and the Catalonian revolution in 1936. These outbreaks are evidence that a new social force is surging among the workers, is finding workers’ leadership, is subjecting social institutions to the masses, and is already on the march.

Strikes are no longer mere interruptions in profit-making or simple economic disturbances. The independent strike derives its significance from the action of workers as an organized class. With a system of factory committees and workers’ councils extending over wide areas the proletariat creates the organs which regulate production, distribution, and all the other functions of social life. In other words, the civil administrative apparatus is deprived of all power, and the proletarian dictatorship establishes itself. Thus, class organization in the very struggle for power is at the same time organization, control, and management of the productive forces of the entire society. It is the basis of the association of free and equal producers, and consumers. This, then, is the danger that the independent class movement presents to the capitalist society. Wildcat strikes, though apparently of little importance whether on a small or large scale, are embryonic communism. A small wildcat strike, directed as it is by workers and in the interest of workers, illustrates on a small scale the character of the future proletarian power.

A regrouping of militants must be actuated by the knowledge that the conditions of struggle make it necessary to unite the “legislative and executive powers” in the hands of the factory workers. They must not compromise on this position: All power to the committees of action and the workers’ councils. This is the class front. This is the road to communism. To render workers conscious of the unity of organizational forms of struggle, of class dictatorship, and of the economic frame of communism, with its abolition of wages – is the task of the militants.

The militants who call themselves the “Vanguard” have today the same weakness that characterizes the masses at present. They still believe that the unions or the one or the other party must direct the class struggle, though with revolutionary methods. But if it be true that decisive struggles are nearing, it is not enough to state that the labour leaders are traitors. It is necessary, especially for today, to formulate a plan for the formation of the

class front and the forms of its organizations. To this end the control of parties and unions must be unconditionally fought. This is the crucial point in the struggle for power.

Council Communism

(1939)

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There can be no doubt that those social forces generally known as the ‘labour movement’ which rose during the last hundred years and, quantitatively, reached their widest expansion shortly before and after the world war, are now definitely on the decline. Though this situation is either happily or reluctantly acknowledged by people concerned with labour questions, realistic explanations of this phenomenon are scarce. Where the labour movement was destroyed by outside forces there remains the problem of how it was eliminated despite the apparent strength that it had acquired in its long period of development. Where it disintegrated of its own accord there remains the question why a new labour movement did not appear, since the social conditions that produce such movements still exist.

I

Most of the explanations offered fail to convince, because they are offered solely with the purpose of serving the specific, immediate interests of the partisans involved in labour problems, not to mention their limitations in theoretical and empirical knowledge. But worse than a false or inadequate position on the question of responsibility for the present impasse of the labour movement is the resulting inability to formulate courses leading to new *independent* working class action. There is no dearth of proposals as to how to revive the labour movement; however, the serious investigator cannot help noticing that all such proposals for a ‘new beginning’ are in reality but the restatement and rediscovery of ideas and forms of activity developed with much greater clarity and consistency during the beginnings of the modern labour movement. In refuting the idea of successful application of these rediscovered and – in comparison with later developments – radical principles, it must be considered not only that these principles must be inadequate, since they were necessarily bound to a quite different stage of development of capitalist society, but that they no longer fit, and can no longer be made to fit, a labour movement which has based its philosophy, forms of organisation and activities for too long a time, and with too much success, on aspirations quite contrary to the content of these earlier principles.

A revival of the old labour movement is not to be expected; that workers’ movement which may be considered new will have to destroy the very features of the old labour movement that were considered its strength. It must avoid its successes, and it cannot aspire merely to a ‘better-than-before’ organisational expression; it must understand all the implications of the present stage of capitalistic development and

organise accordingly; it must base its forms of action not on traditional ideas, but on the given possibilities and necessities. To return to the ideals of the past, under the present general social conditions, would only mean an earlier death for the labour movement. Not merely the cowardice of the masters of labour organisations and the labour bureaucracy attached to them brought about the many defeats suffered in recent conflicts with the ruling classes, and determined the outcome of the 'general' strike in France, but, more so, a clear or instinctive recognition that the present labour movement cannot operate against capitalistic needs, can in one way or another only serve specific and historically determined capitalistic interests.

Disregarding those organisations and officials who from the beginning conceived their function to be no more than their participation in the distribution of the wealth created by the workers, either by open racketeering or by organising the labour market, this much is obvious: today the leaders of labour as well as the workers themselves are more or less conscious of their inability to operate against capitalism, and the cynicism displayed by so many labour leaders in such practical policies as are still possible, i.e. to 'sell out', may be regarded also as the most realistic attitude, derived from a full recognition of a changed situation. The sense of futility predominant in the labour movement of today cannot be dispelled by a more lavish use of radical phraseology, nor by a complete subordination to the ruling classes, as is attempted in many countries where labour leaders clamour for 'national planning' and a solution of the social problem within the present conditions of production. On such a basis of action, the old labour movement cannot help copying from the vague proposals of fascistic movements, and as imitators they will have even less success than the originators. Fascism, and the abolition of the present labour movement connected therewith, cannot be arrested with fascistic methods and the adoption of fascistic goals by the labour movement itself.

II

Though often attempted, it is impossible to explain the present miserable status of the labour movement as the result of the many 'betrayals' at the hands of 'renegades', or to the 'lack of insight' into the real needs of the working class on the part of its leaders. Nor is it possible to blame specific forms of organisations, or certain philosophical trends, for the many defeats that have occurred. Nor is it possible to explain the decline of the movement by attributing it to 'national characteristics' or 'psychological peculiarities'. The decline of the labour movement is a general decline; all organisations, regardless of their specific forms and attitudes, are thereby affected; and no country and no people have been able to escape this downward trend. No country, watching the destruction of the labour movement in other lands, has been able 'to draw lessons from their defeats'; no organisation, seeing others collapse, was able 'to learn to avoid this fate'. The emasculation of all workers' power in Russia in 1920 was easily copied in Turkey, in Italy, in China, in Germany, in Austria, in Czechoslovakia, in Spain, and now in France, and soon in England. It is true that in each country, because of peculiarities of economic and social development, the destruction of labour organisations *capable of functioning as such* varied from case to case; however, none can deny that in all these countries the *independence* of the labour movement was abolished. What still exists there under the name of labour organisation has nothing in common with the labour movement that developed historically, or that, in the more backward countries, was in the process of development, and that was founded to maintain an insuperable opposition to a society divided into powerless workers and exploiters controlling all the economic and the consequent political power. *What still exists there in the form of parties, trade and*

industrial unions, labour fronts and other organisations is so completely integrated within the existing societal form that it is unable to function other than as an instrument of that society.

It is, furthermore, not possible to blame the most important theoretical expression thus far developed in the labour movement – Marxism – for the many shortcomings of the labour movement and for its present destruction. That labour movement which is now passing had very little to do with Marxism. Such a criticism of Marxism can arise only from a lack of all knowledge as to its contents. Nor was Marxism misunderstood; it was *rejected* by both the labour movement and its critics, and was never taken for what it is: “an undogmatic guide for scientific research and revolutionary action”¹ In both cases, by those who adopted it as a meaningless phrase and by those who fought even this meaningless phrase, it was utilised rather as an instrument to conceal a practice which, on the one hand, confirmed the scientific soundness of Marxian social science, and, on the other hand, was strongly opposed to the corresponding and disturbing reality.

Although developed under the influence of Marxism this declining labour movement now has completely repudiated its revolutionary beginnings, even where its adherence has been merely nominal, and operates on entirely bourgeois grounds. As soon as this fact is recognised, there is no need to look for the reasons of the decline of the labour movement in some vaguely constructed and actually disregarded philosophy; instead, this decline becomes a quite obvious parallel to the decline of capitalism. Bound to an expanding capitalism, totally integrated into the whole of the social fabric, *the old labour movement can only stagnate with stagnating capitalism and decline with declining capitalism.* It cannot divorce itself from capitalist society, unless it breaks completely with its own past, which is possible only by breaking up the old organisations, as far as they still exist. This possibility, however, is precluded because of the vested interests developed in those organisations. A rebirth of the labour movement is conceivable only as a rebellion of the masses against ‘their’ organisations. Just as the relations of production, to speak in Marxian terms, prevent the further unfolding of the productive forces of society, and are responsible for the present capitalistic decline, so the labour organisations of today prevent the full unfolding of the new proletarian class forces and their attempts at new actions serving the class interests of the workers. These conflicting tendencies between working class interests and the predominant labour organisations were most clearly revealed in Europe, where the capitalist expansion process was arrested and the economic contraction was felt more severely, resulting in fascist forms of control over the population. But in America as well, where the forces of capitalist economy have been less exhausted than in Europe, the old labour leaders are joined by those of the newer, apparently more progressive, labour organisations in supporting a struggling capitalist class to maintain its system even after its social and historical basis has vanished.

III

It is a paradox only to the superficial observer that the decline of the European labour movement was accompanied by a new spurt in labour organisations in the United States. This situation indicates only the tremendous strength and reserve that capitalism in America still possesses. However, it is also an expression of weakness in American capitalism as compared with that of the more centralised capitalism of European

¹ See *Karl Marx* by Karl Korsch. A re-statement of the most important principles and contents of Marx’s social science. (New York, John Wiley, 1938.)

countries. Being both an advantage and a disadvantage, the present American labour situation illustrates merely the attempts to utilise the advantage to help eliminate the disadvantage. The centralisation of all possible economic and political powers in the hands of the State (which, due to the declining economy is impelled to participate in larger internal and external struggles) is still opposed in the United States by powerfully individualistic capitalistic interests rightly fearing they will be victimised by this very process. So arises another paradox, that it is precisely the persisting strength of private capital, capable of counteracting state-capitalist trends and of fighting against the organisation of labour, that is largely responsible for the continued existence of these labour organisations. For the indirect but very forceful support the labour movement has found in those governmental policies which are directed against anarchic, individual, capitalistic procedures in an effort to safeguard the present society, will inevitably serve only the State. The State will then have made profitable use of the labour organisation, not the organisation of the State. The more government fosters the interests of labour, the more labour interests disappear, the more these labour organisations make themselves superfluous. The rise in the American labour movement experienced recently is but a veiled symptom of its decline. As was indicated in the first CIO convention held recently, the organised workers are completely subordinated to the most efficient and centralised union leadership. From this complete emasculation of workers' initiative within their own organisation to the complete subordination of the whole organisation to the State is only a step. Not only capital, as Marx said, is its own grave digger, but also the labour organisations, where they are not destroyed from without, destroy themselves. They destroy themselves in the very attempt to become powerful forces within the capitalist system. They adopt the methods necessary under capitalistic conditions to grow in importance, and thereby in turn continuously strengthen those forces which will eventually 'take them over'. There is, therefore, no chance to profit from their efforts, for, in the last analysis, the real powers in society decide what shall remain and what shall be eliminated.

Nor is there any hope that, in recognition of the services given to the exploitative society, the labour organisers and their followers will find their proper reward in a completely state-controlled economic system; for all social changes in the present antagonistic society occur by way of struggle. A harmonising of interests between two different kinds of bureaucracies is possible only in exceptional cases, as in the case of war breaking out before the totalitarian system is completed; otherwise the taking over of the old labour movement by the state system leaves the old leaders in the streets, or brings them to the concentration camps, as was so aptly demonstrated in Germany. Nor could the recognition that such a future is probable cause labour leaders to avoid preparing it, as there is given to the present non-revolutionary labour movement no possibility but to pave the way toward it. The only alternative, revolutionary activity, would exclude all those aspects of labour activity which are hailed as the painfully won victories of a long struggle, and would mean the sacrifice of all those values and activities which today make it worth while to work in labour organisations, and which induce workers to enter them.

If the recent development of so-called 'economically' organised labour in America is itself an indication of the general decline of the labour movement of the world, and is tellingly illustrated by John L. Lewis's recent declaration that his organisation stands ready "to support a war of defence against Germany," or, in other words, that he and his organisation are ready to fight for the interests of American capitalism, there is not even the necessity of proving the decline of the old labour movement in the United States' political field. Since specific historical and social factors excluded the growth of a political labour movement of any consequence in America, an American political labour

movement cannot decline, since it does not exist. With the exception of a number of spontaneous movements that disappeared as quickly as they arose, what hitherto was experienced in the form of a political labour movement in this country was of no significance. The total absence of class consciousness in the 'economic' movements here is so well recognised that it is superfluous to mention this fact again. With the exception of the Industrial Workers of the World (I.W.W.), the labour organisations in recent history were always considered as complementary to capitalism – as one of its assets. The objective observer must admit that all the organised and unorganised working masses are still under the sway of capitalism, because there developed with expanding capitalism not a labour movement, but a capitalist movement of labourers.

IV

From the negative position developed here it can easily be seen that the future activity of the working class cannot be denoted as a 'new beginning', but merely as a beginning. The century of class fight behind us "developed invaluable theoretical knowledge; it found gallant revolutionary words in defiance of the capitalist claim of being a final social system; it awakened the workers from the hopelessness of misery. But its actual fight was within the confines of capitalism; it was action through the medium of leaders and sought only to place easy masters in the place of hard ones."² The previous history of the labour movement must be regarded only as a prelude to future action. Although there can be no doubt that this prelude has already forecast some of the implications of the coming struggle, nevertheless, it remained only an introduction, not a summary, of what is to follow.

The European labour movement disappeared with so little struggle because its organisation had no forward perspective; they knew or felt that there was no room for them in a socialistic system, and their fear that the class society would disappear was no less than that of other privileged groups. Capable of functioning only under capitalistic conditions, they contemplated with disfavour the end of capitalism; a choice between two ways of dying has never enlivened anyone. The fact that such labour organisations can function only in capitalism explains also their rather curious concepts as to what would constitute a socialist society. Their 'socialism' was and is a 'socialism' that resembled capitalism; they are 'progressive' capitalists rather than socialists. All their theories, from that of the 'Marxian' revisionist, Bernstein, to those of a 'market socialism' in vogue today are only methods of achieving acquiescence in capitalism.

Therefore it is not surprising that such a clearly discernible state-capitalist system as exists in Russia is generally accepted by them as a completed socialistic system, or as a transitory stage to socialism. Criticism directed against the Russian system considers only the lack of democracy, or an alleged malice or stupidity of its bureaucracy, and concerns itself little or not at all with the fact that *the relations of production now existing in Russia do not essentially differ from those of other capitalistic countries*, or the fact that the Russian workers have no voice whatever in the productive and social affairs of their country, but are subjected politically and economically to exploitative conditions and individuals like the workers of any other nation. Though the large majority of the Russian workers no longer face individual entrepreneurs in their struggle for existence and better living conditions, their present authorities show that even the old aspiration of the labour movement, the replacement of hard masters with benevolent ones, has not been fulfilled there.

² J. Harper, "General Remarks on the Question of Organisation", *Living Marxism*, November, 1938, p 153.

They show also that the disappearance of the individual capitalist alone does not end the capitalist form of exploitation. His transformation into a state official, or his replacement by state officers, still leaves intact the system of exploitation which is peculiar to capitalism. The separation of the workers from the means of production and, with this, class rule, are continued in Russia, with the addition of a highly centralised, single-minded exploitative apparatus that now makes more difficult the struggle of the workers for their objectives, so that Russia reveals itself only as a modified capitalistic development expressed in a new terminology. Attempts at a greater national sufficiency, forced upon Russia, as it has been forced upon all other capitalistic countries, is now celebrated as 'the building up of socialism in one country'. The disruption of world economy, which explains and allows the forced development of state capitalism in Russia, is now described as 'a side-by-side existence of two fundamentally different social systems'. However, the optimism of the labour movement seems to increase with each defeat it suffers. The greater progress class differentiation makes in Russia, the more the new ruling class succeeds in suppressing opposition to an increasing and highly celebrated exploitation, the more Russia participates in the capitalist world economy and becomes an imperialistic power among the others, the more socialism is deemed to be fully realised in that country. Just as the labour movement has been able to see socialism marching in capitalist accumulation, it celebrates, now the march toward barbarism as so many steps toward the new society.

However divided the old labour movement may be by disagreements on various topics, on the question of socialism it stands united. Hilferding's abstract 'General-Cartel', Lenin's admiration for the German war socialism and the German postal service, Kautsky's eternalisation of the value-price-money economy (desiring to do consciously what in capitalism is performed by blind market laws), Trotsky's war communism equipped with supply and demand features, and Stalin's institutional economics – all these concepts have at their base the continuation of the existing conditions of production. As a matter of fact, they are mere reflections of what is actually going on in capitalist society. Indeed, such 'socialism' is discussed today by famous bourgeois economists like Pigou, Hayek, Robbins, Keynes, to mention only a few, and has created a considerable literature to which the socialists now turn for their material. Furthermore, bourgeois economists from Marshall to Mitchell, from the neo-classicists to the modern institutionalists, have concerned themselves with the question of how to bring order into the disorderly capitalist system, the trend of their thought paralleling the trend of an ever greater intrusion of the State into competitive society, a process resulting in 'New Deals', 'National-Socialism', and 'Bolshevism', the *various names for the different degrees and variations of the centralisation and concentration process of the capitalist system.*

V

It has recently become almost a fad to describe the inconsistencies of the labour movement as a tragic contradiction between means and ends. However, such an inconsistency does not exist. Socialism has not been the desired 'end' of the old labour movement; it was merely a term employed to hide an entirely different objective, which was political power within a society based on rulers and ruled for a share in the created surplus value. This was the end that determined the means.

The means-and-ends problem is that of ideology and reality based on class relations in society. However, the problem is artificial because it cannot be solved without dissolving the class relations. It is also meaningless, as it exists only in thought; no such contradiction exists in actuality. The actions of classes and groups may be

explained at any time on the basis of the productive relations existing in society. When actions do not correspond to proclaimed ends, it is only because *those ends* really are not fought for, these apparent ends, instead, reflect a dissatisfaction unable to turn to action, or a desire to conceal the *real ends*. No class really can act incorrectly, i.e., act in any way at variance with determinant social forces, though it has unlimited possibilities to think incorrectly. Within capitalism's social production each class depends upon the other; their antagonism is their identity of interests; and so long as this society exists, there can be no choice of action. Only by breaking through the confines of this society is it possible to co-ordinate means and ends deliberately, to establish true unity of theory and practice.

In capitalist society there is only an apparent contradiction between means and ends, the disparity being only a weapon to serve an actual practice not at all out of harmony with the desires involved. One need only to discover the actual end behind the ideological end to smooth out the apparent inconsistency. To use a practical example: if one believes that trade unions are interested in strikes as a method of minimalising profits and increasing wages, as they contend, he will be surprised to discover that when trade unions were apparently most powerful and when the need to increase wages was the greatest, trade unions were more reluctant than ever to use the strike medium in the interest of their goal. The unions turned to means less appropriate to the end aspired to, such as arbitration and governmental regulations. The fact is that wage increase under all conditions is no longer the end of trade unions; they are no longer what they were at their start; their true end is now the maintenance of the organisational apparatus under all conditions; the new means are those tactics most appropriate to this goal. But to disclose their changed character would be to alienate the workers from the organisation. Thus, the mere ideological end becomes a weapon for securing the real end, becomes only an instrument in a quite realistic and well-integrated activity.

Nevertheless, the ends-and-means problem excited the old labour movement considerably and explains in part why the real character of that movement was recognised so slowly and why illusions flourished as to the possibilities of reforming it. The most important attempt to revolutionise the old labour movement was made when the Russian revolution of 1905 had interrupted the everyday business in which the labour movement was then engaged and the question of an actual social change came to the fore again. But even here, in its apparent opposition, the old labour movement revealed its innate capitalistic character. Lenin's serious attempts to solve the problem of power led him straight back into the camp of the bourgeois revolutionists. This resulted not only from the backward Russian conditions, but also from the theoretical development of Western socialism, which had only further emphasised the bourgeois character it had inherited from earlier revolutions. The capitalist nature of the labour movement also appeared in its economic theory, which, following the trend in bourgeois economics, viewed the problems of society more and more as a question of distribution, as a market problem. Even the revolutionary onslaught of Rosa Luxemburg in her *Akkumulation des Kapitals* against the 'revisionists' was still an argument on the level established by her antagonists. She, too, deduced the limitations of the capitalist society *mainly* from its inability, because of limited markets, to realise the surplus value. Not the sphere of production, but the sphere of circulation seemed of predominant importance, determining the life and death of capitalism.

However, from the pre-war *left* (which included Luxemburg, Liebknecht, Pannekoek and Gorter), coupled with the actual struggles of workers in mass strikes in the East as well as the West, there arose a movement during the war which continued for a few years as a truly anti-capitalistic trend and found its organisational expression in various anti-parliamentarian and anti-trade union groups in a number of countries. In its

beginnings and despite all its inconsistencies, this movement was from the outset strictly opposed to the whole of capitalism, as well as to the whole of the labour movement that was a part of the system. Recognising that the assumption of power by a party meant only a change of exploiters, it proclaimed that society must be controlled *directly* by the workers themselves. The old slogans of abolition of the classes, abolition of the wage system, abolition of capital production, ceased to be slogans and became the immediate ends of the new organisations. Not a new ruling group in society, willing to act 'for the workers' and, with this power, able to act against them, was their aim, but the direct control by the workers over the means of production through an organisation of production securing this control. These groups³ refused to distinguish between the different parties and trade unions, but saw in them remains of a past stage of struggles within the capitalist society. They were no longer interested in bringing new life to the old organisations, but in making known the need for organisations not only of entirely different character – *class organisation* capable of changing society, but capable also of organising the new society in such manner as to make exploitation impossible.

What remains of this movement, as far as it found permanent organisational expression, exists today under the name of Groups of Council Communists. They consider themselves Marxist and with that, internationalists. Recognising that all problems of today are international problems, they refuse to think in nationalistic terms, contending that all special national considerations serve only capitalistic competitive needs. In their own interests the workers must develop the forces of production further, a condition which presupposes a consequent internationalism. However, this position does not overlook national peculiarities and therefore does not lead to attempts to pursue identical policies in different countries. Each national group must base its activities on an understanding of its surroundings, without interference from any other group, though the exchange of experiences is expected to lead to co-ordinated activities wherever possible. These groups are Marxist because there has not as yet developed a social science superior to that originated by Marx, and because the Marxian principles of scientific research still are the most realistic and allow incorporation of new experiences growing out of continuing capitalistic development. Marxism is not conceived as a closed system, but as the present state of a growing social science capable of serving as a theory of the practical class struggle of the workers.

So far the main functions of these organisations consisted of critique. However, this critique is no longer directed against the capitalism that existed at the time of Marx. It includes a critique of that transformation of capitalism which appears under the name of 'socialism'. Critique and propaganda are the only practical activities possible today, and their apparent fruitlessness only reflects an apparent non-revolutionary situation. The decline of the old labour movement, involving the difficulty and even impossibility of bringing forth a new one, is a lamentable prospect only for the old labour movement; it is neither hailed nor bewailed by the Groups of Council Communists, but simply recognised

³ 'Left', or workers' communist organisations, trace their earliest beginnings to the left opposition developing in the Socialist and Communist parties before, during and shortly after the war. Their concepts of direct workers' control assumed real significance with the coming of 'soviets' in the Russian Revolution, the shop stewards in England during the war, and the workers' factory delegates in Germany during the war, and the workers' and soldiers' councils after the war. These groups were expelled from the Communist International in 1920. Lenin's pamphlet, *Left Wing Communism An Infantile Disorder* (1920), was written to destroy the influence of these groups in western Europe. These groups considered the Bolshevik policies counter-revolutionary as regards the class interests of the international working class, and it was defeated by this counter-revolution which combined with the reformist movement and the capitalist class proper to destroy the first beginnings of a radical movement directed against all forms of capitalism. What still remains of this movement today are small groups in America, Germany, Holland, France and Belgium unable to do more than propaganda work influencing extremely small groups of workers.

as a fact. The latter recognise also that the disappearance of the organised labour movement changes nothing of the social class structure; that the class struggle must continue, and will be forced to operate on the basis of given possibilities. "A class in which the revolutionary interests of society are concentrated, so soon as it has risen up, finds directly in its own situation the content and the material of its revolutionary activity: foes to be laid low; measures (dictated by the needs of the struggle) to be taken; the consequences of its own deeds to drive it on. It makes no theoretical inquiries into its own task."⁴ Even a fascist society cannot end class struggles – the fascist workers will be forced to change the relations of production. However, there is actually no such thing as a fascist society just as there is no such thing as a democratic society. Both are only different stages of the same society, neither higher nor lower, but simply different, as a result of shifts of class forces within the capitalist society which have their basis in a number of economic contradictions.

The Groups of Council Communists recognise also that no real social change is possible under present conditions unless the anti-capitalistic forces grow stronger than the pro-capitalist forces, and that it is impossible to *organise* anti-capitalistic forces of such a strength within capitalistic relations. From the analysis of present-day society and from a study of previous class struggles it concludes that spontaneous actions of dissatisfied masses will, in the process of their rebellion, create their own organisations, and that these organisations, arising out of the social conditions, alone can end the present social arrangement. The question of organisation as discussed today is regarded as a superfluous question, as the enterprises, public works, relief stations, armies in the coming war, are sufficient organisations to allow for mass action-organisations which cannot be eliminated regardless of what character capitalist society may assume.

As an organisational frame for the new society is proposed a council organisation based on industry and the productive process, and the adoption of the social average labour time as a measurement for production, reproduction and distribution in so far as measurements are necessary to secure economic equality despite the existing division of labour. This society, it is believed, will be able to plan its production according to the needs and the enjoyment desired by the people.

The Groups further realise, as already stated, that *such a society can function only with the direct participation of the workers in all decisions necessary*; its concept of socialism is unrealisable on the basis of a separation between workers and organisers. The Groups do not claim to be acting *for the workers*, but consider themselves as those members of the working class who have, for one reason or another, recognised evolutionary trends towards capitalism's downfall, and who attempt to co-ordinate the present activities of the workers to that end. They know that they are no more than propaganda groups, able only to suggest necessary courses of action, but unable to perform them in the 'interest of the class'. This the class has to do itself. The present functions of the Groups, though related to the perspectives of the future, attempt to base themselves entirely on the present needs of the workers. On all occasions, they try to foster self-initiative and self-action of the workers. The Groups participate wherever possible in any action of the working population, not proposing a separate programme, but adopting the programme of those workers and endeavouring to increase the direct participation of those workers, in all decisions. They demonstrate in word and deed that the labour movement must foster its own interests exclusively; that society as a whole cannot truly exist until classes are abolished; that the workers, considering nothing but their specific, most immediate interests, must and do attack all the other classes and

⁴ Karl Marx, *The Class Struggles in France, 1848-50*.

interests of the exploitative society; that they can do no wrong as long as they do what helps them economically and socially; that this is possible only as long as they do this themselves; that they must begin to solve their affairs today and so prepare themselves to solve the even more urgent problems of the morrow.

Karl Kautsky: From Marx to Hitler

(1939)

Source: *Anti-Bolshevik Communism*. Paul Mattick, published by Merlin Press, 1978;
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In the fall of 1938, Karl Kautsky died in Amsterdam at the age of 84 years. He was considered the most important theoretician of the Marxist labour movement after the death of its founders, and it may well be said that he was its most representative member. In him were very clearly incorporated both the revolutionary and the reactionary aspects of that movement. But whereas Friedrich Engels could say at Marx's grave that his friend "was first of all a revolutionist," it would be difficult to say the same at the grave of his best-known pupil. "As a theoretician and politician, he will always remain an object of criticism," wrote Friedrich Adler in memory of Kautsky, "but his character lies open, his whole life he remained true to the highest majesty, his own conscience."^[1]

Kautsky's conscience was formed during the rise of the German Social Democracy. He was born in Austria, the son of a stage painter of the Imperial Theatre in Vienna. As early as 1875, though not as yet a Marxist, he contributed to German and Austrian labour papers. He became a member of the German Social Democratic Party in 1880, and "only now," he said of himself, "began my development towards a consistent methodical Marxism."^[2] He was inspired, like so many others, by Engels' *Anti-Dühring* and was helped in his orientation by Eduard Bernstein, who was then the secretary to the 'millionaire' socialist Hoechberg. His first works were published with Hoechberg's help and he found recognition in the labour movement through his editorship of a number of socialist publications. In 1883 he founded the magazine *Neue Zeit*, which under his direction became the most important theoretical organ of the German Social Democracy.

Kautsky's literary and scientific work is impressive not only because of the scope of his interests but also because of its volume. Even a selected bibliography of his writings would fill many pages, In this work comes to light all that seemed and all that was of importance to the socialist movement during the last 60 years. It reveals Kautsky was first of all a teacher, and that, because he looked upon society from a schoolmaster's perspective, he was well suited to his role as the leading spirit of a movement which aimed at educating workers and capitalists alike. Because he was an educator concerned with the 'theoretical side' of Marxism, he could appear more revolutionary that was consistent with the movement he served. He appeared an 'orthodox' Marxist who tried to safeguard the Marxian inheritance as a treasurer who desires to preserve the funds of his organisation. However, what was 'revolutionary' in Kautsky's teaching appeared revolutionary only in contrast to the general pre-war capitalist ideology. In contrast to the revolutionary theories established by Marx and Engels, it was a reversion to more primitive forms of thinking and to a lesser apperception of the implications of bourgeois

society. Thus, though he guarded the treasure-chest of Marxism, he had not beheld all it contained.

In 1862, in a letter to Kugelmann, Marx expressed the hope that his non-popular works attempting to revolutionise economic science would in due time find adequate popularisation, a feat that should be easy after the scientific basis had been laid. "My life work became clear to me in 1883," wrote Kautsky; "it was to be designated to the propagandising and popularisation, and, as far as I am able to, the continuation of the scientific results of Marx's thinking and research."^[3] However, not even he, the greatest populariser of Marx, has fulfilled Marx's hope; his simplifications turned out to be new mystifications unable to comprehend the true character of capitalist society. Nevertheless, even in their watered form, Marx's theories remained superior to all the social and economic bourgeois theories and Kautsky's writings gave strength and joy to hundreds of thousands of class conscious workers. He gave expression to their own thoughts and in a language nearer to them than that of the more independent thinker Marx. Though the latter demonstrated more than once his great gift for cogency and clarity, he was not schoolmaster enough to sacrifice to propaganda the enjoyment of his intellectual caprice.

When we said that Kautsky represented also what was 'reactionary' in the old labour movement, we are using that term in a highly specific sense. The reactionary elements in Kautsky and in the old labour movement were objectively conditioned, and only by a long period of exposure to an inimical reality was developed that subjective readiness to turn defenders of the capitalist society. In *Capital* Marx pointed out that "a rise in the price of labour, as a consequence of accumulation of capital, only means, in fact, that the length and weight of the golden chain the wage-worker has already forged for himself, allow of a relaxation of the tension of it."^[4] The possibility, under conditions of a progressive capital formation, of improving labour conditions and of raising the price of labour transformed the workers' struggle into a force for capitalist expansion. Like capitalist competition, the workers' struggle served as an incentive for further capital accumulation; it accentuated capitalist 'progress'. All gains of the workers were compensated for by an increasing exploitation, which in turn permitted a still more rapid capital expansion.

Even the class struggle of the workers could serve the needs not of the individual capitalists but of capital. The victories of the workers turned always against the victors. The more the workers gained, the richer capital became. The gap between wages and profits became wider with each increase of the 'workers' share'. The apparently increasing strength of labour was in reality the continuous weakening of its position in relation to that of capital. The 'successes' of the workers, hailed by Eduard Bernstein as a new era of capitalism, could, in this sphere of social action, end only in the eventual defeat of the working class, as soon as capital changed from expansion to stagnation. In the destruction of the old labour movement, the sight of which Kautsky was not spared, became manifest the thousands of defeats suffered during the upswing period of capitalism, and though these defeats were celebrated as victories of gradualism, they were in reality only the gradualism of the workers' defeat in a field of action where the advantage is always with the bourgeoisie. Nevertheless, Bernstein's revisionism, based on the acceptance of appearance for reality and suggested by bourgeois empiricism, though at first denounced by Kautsky, provided the basis for the latter's own success. For without the non-revolutionary practice of the old labour movement, whose theories were formed by Bernstein, Kautsky would not have found a movement and a material basis on which to rise as an important Marxian theoretician.

This objective situation, which, as we have seen, transformed the successes of the labour movement into just so many steps toward its destruction, created a non-

revolutionary ideology which was more in harmony with the apparent reality, and which was later denounced as social-reformism, opportunism, social-chauvinism, and outright betrayal. However, this 'betrayal' did not very much bother those who were betrayed. Instead, the majority of the organised workers approved of the change of attitude in the socialist movement, since it conformed to their own aspirations developed in an ascending capitalism. The masses were as little revolutionary as their leaders, and both were satisfied with their *participation* in capitalist progress. Not only were they organising for a greater share of the social product, but also for a greater voice in the political sphere. They learned to think in terms of bourgeois democracy; they began to speak of themselves as consumers; they wanted to take part in all that was good of culture and civilisation. Franz Mehring's *History of the German Social Democracy* typically ends in a chapter on 'Art and the Proletariat'. Science for the workers, literature for the workers, schools for the workers, participation in all the institutions of capitalist society — this and nothing more was the real desire of the movement. Instead of demanding the end of capitalistic science, it asked for labour scientists; instead of abolishing capitalistic law, it trained labour lawyers; in the increasing number of labour historians, poets, economists, journalists, doctors and dentists, as well as parliamentarians and trade-union bureaucrats, it saw the socialisation of society, which therewith became increasingly its own society. That which one can increasingly share in one will soon find defensible. Consciously and unconsciously the old labour movement saw in the capitalist expansion process its own road to greater welfare and recognition. The more capital flourished, the better were the working conditions. Satisfied with action within the framework of capitalism, the workers' organisations became concerned with capitalism's profitability. The competitive national capitalistic rivalries were only verbally opposed. Although the movement was at first striving only for a 'better fatherland', and was later willing to defend what had already been gained, it soon reached the point where it was ready to defend the fatherland 'as it is'.

The tolerance that Marx's 'followers' displayed towards the bourgeois society was not one-sided. The bourgeoisie itself had in its very struggle against the working class learned to 'understand the social question'. Its interpretation of social phenomena became increasingly more materialistic; and soon there was an overlapping of ideologies in both fields of thought, a condition increasing still further the 'harmony' based on the actual disharmony of class frictions within a rising capitalism. However, the 'Marxists' were more eager than the bourgeoisie to 'learn from the enemy'. The revisionist tendencies had developed long before the death of Engels. The latter, and Marx himself, had wavered and displayed moments in which they were carried away by the apparent success of their movement. But what with them was only a temporary modification of their essentially consistent thinking became 'belief' and 'science' for that movement which learned to see progress in larger trade-union treasures and greater election votes.

After 1910 the German social democracy found itself divided into three essential groups. There were the reformists, openly favouring German imperialism; there was the 'left', distinguished by such names as Luxemburg, Liebknecht, Mehring and Pannekoek; and there was the 'centre', trying to follow traditional paths, that is, only in theory, as in practice the whole of the German social democracy could do only what was possible, i.e. what Bernstein wanted them to do. To oppose Bernstein could mean only to oppose the whole of the social democratic practice. The 'left' began to function as such only at the moment it began to attack social democracy as a part of capitalist society. The differences between the two opposing factions could not be solved ideationally; they were solved when the Noske terror murdered the Spartacus group in 1919.

With the outbreak of the war, the 'left' found itself in the capitalist prisons, and the 'right' on the General Staff of the Kaiser. The 'centre', led by Kautsky, simply dispensed with all problems of the socialist movement by declaring that neither the social democracy nor its International could function during periods of war, as both were essentially instruments of peace. "This position," Rosa Luxemburg wrote, "is the position of an eunuch. After Kautsky has supplemented the *Communist Manifesto* it now reads: Proletarians of all countries unite during peace times, during times of war, cut your throats."^[5]

The war and its aftermath destroyed the legend of Kautsky's Marxist orthodoxy'. Even his most enthusiastic pupil, Lenin, had to turn away from the master. In October 1914 he had to admit that as far as Kautsky was concerned, Rosa Luxemburg had been right. In a letter to Shlyapnikow^[6], he wrote, "She saw long ago that Kautsky, the servile theoretician, was cringing to the majority of the Party, to Opportunism. There is nothing in the world at present more harmful and dangerous for the ideological independence of the proletariat than this filthy, smug and disgusting hypocrisy of Kautsky. He wants to hush everything up and smear everything over and by sophistry and pseudo-learned rhetoric lull the awakened consciences of the workers."

What distinguished Kautsky from the general run of intellectuals who flocked to the labour movement as soon as it became more respectable and who were only too eager to foster the trend of class collaboration, was a greater love for theory, a love which refused to compare theory with actuality, like the love of a mother who prevents her child from learning the 'facts of life' too early. Only as a theoretician could Kautsky remain a revolutionist; only too willingly he left the practical affairs of the movement to others. However, he fooled himself. In the role of a mere 'theoretician', he ceased to be a revolutionary theoretician, or rather he could not become a revolutionist. As soon as the scene for a real battle between capitalism and socialism after the war had been laid, his theories collapsed because they had already been divorced in practice from the movement they were supposed to represent.

Though Kautsky was opposed to the unnecessarily enthusiastic chauvinism of his party, though he hesitated to enjoy the war as Ebert, Scheidemann and Hindenburg did, though he was not in favour of an *unconditional* granting of war credits, nevertheless, up to his very end, he was forced to destroy with his own hands the legend of his Marxian orthodoxy that he had earned for himself in 30 years of writing. He who in 1902^[7] had pronounced that we have entered a period of proletarian struggles for state power, declared such attempts to be sheer insanity when workers took him seriously. He who had fought so valiantly against the ministerialism of Millerand and Jaurès in France, championed 20 years later the coalition policy of the German social-democracy with the arguments of his former opponents. He who concerned himself as early as 1909 with 'The Way to Power', dreamed after the war of a capitalist 'ultra-imperialism' as a way to world peace, and spent the remainder of his life re-interpreting his past to justify his class collaboration ideology. "In the course of its class struggle," he wrote in his last work, "the proletariat becomes more and more the vanguard for the reconstruction of humanity, in which in always greater measure also non-proletarian layers of society become interested. This is no betrayal of the class struggle idea. I had this position already before there was bolshevism, as, for instance, in 1903 in my article on 'Class — Special and Common Interests' in the *Neue Zeit*, where I came to the conclusion that the proletarian class struggle does not recognise class solidarity but only the solidarity of mankind."^[8]

Indeed, it is not possible to regard Kautsky as a 'renegade'. Only a total misunderstanding of the theory and practice of the social democratic movement and of Kautsky's activity could lead to such a view. Kautsky aspired to being a good servant of

Marxism; in fact, to please Engels and Marx seemed to be his life profession. He referred to the latter always in the typical social-democratic and philistine manner as the ‘great master’, the ‘Olympian’, the ‘Thunder God’, etc. He felt extremely honoured because Marx “did not receive him in the same cold way in which Goethe received his young colleague Heine.”^[9] He must have sworn to himself not to disappoint Engels when the latter began to regard him and Bernstein as ‘trustworthy representatives of Marxian theory’, and during most of his life he was the most ardent defender of ‘the word’. He is most honest when he complains to Engels^[10] “that nearly all the intellectuals in the party ... cry for colonies, for national thought, for a resurrection of the Teutonic antiquity, for confidence in the government, for having the power of ‘justice’ replace the class struggle, and express a decided aversion for the materialistic interpretation of history — Marxian dogma, as they call it.” He wanted to argue against them, to uphold against them what had been established by his idols. A good schoolmaster, he was also an excellent pupil.

Engels understood this early ‘degeneration’ of the movement only too well. In answering Kautsky’s complaints, he stated,^[11] “that the development of capitalism proved itself to be stronger than the revolutionary counter-pressure. A new upsurge against capitalism would need a violent shock, such as the loss by England of its domination of the world market, or a sudden revolutionary opportunity in France.” But neither the one nor the other event occurred. The socialists no longer waited for revolution. Bernstein waited instead for Engels’ death, to avoid disappointing the man to whom he owed most — before proclaiming that “the goal meant nothing and the movement everything.” It is true that Engels himself had strengthened the forces of reformism during the latter part of his life. However, what in his case could be taken only as the weakening of the individual in his stand against the world, was taken by his epigones as the source of their strength. Time and again Marx and Engels returned to the uncompromising attitude of the *Communist Manifesto* and *Capital* as, for instance, in the *Critique of the Gotha Programme*, which was delayed in its publication in order not to disturb the compromisers in the movement. Its publication was possible only after a struggle with the party bureaucracy, which circumstance led Engels to remark that, It is in fact a brilliant thought to have German socialist science present, after its emancipation from the Bismarckian socialist laws, its own socialist laws, formulated by the officials of the Social Democratic Party.^[12]

Kautsky defended an already emasculated Marxism. The radical, revolutionary, anti-capitalist Marxism had been defeated by capitalist development. At the Congress of the Workers’ International in 1872 in The Hague, Marx himself had declared: “Some day the workers must conquer political supremacy, in order to establish the new organisation of labour ... Of course, I must not be supposed to imply that the means to this end will be the same everywhere ... and we do not deny that there are certain countries, such as the United States and England in which the workers may hope to secure their ends by peaceful means.” This statement allowed even the revisionists to declare themselves Marxists, and the only argument Kautsky could muster against them, as, for instance, during the Social Democratic Party congress in Stuttgart in 1898, was the denial that the democratisation and socialisation process claimed by the revisionists as in progress in England and America, also held good for Germany. He repeated Marx’s position as regards the eventuality of a more peaceful transformation of society in some countries, and added to this remark only that he, too, “wishes nothing else but to obtain socialism without a catastrophe.” However, he doubted such a possibility.

It is understandable that on the basis of such thinking it was only consistent for Kautsky to assume after the war that with the now possible more rapid development of democratic institutions in Germany and Russia, the more peaceful way to socialism could

be realised also in these countries. The peaceful way seemed to him the surer way, as it would better serve that 'solidarity of mankind' that he wished to develop. The socialist intellectuals wished to return the decency with which the bourgeoisie had learned to treat them. After all, we are all gentlemen! The orderly petty-bourgeois life of the intelligentsia, secured by a powerful socialist movement, had led them to emphasise the ethical and cultural aspects of things. Kautsky hated the methods of bolshevism with no less intensity than did the white guardists, though in contrast to the latter, he was in full agreement with the goal of bolshevism. Behind the aspect of the proletarian revolution the leaders of the socialist movement correctly saw a chaos in which their own position would become no less jeopardised than that of the bourgeoisie proper. Their hatred of 'disorder' was a defence of their own material, social and intellectual position. Socialism was to be developed not illegally, but legally, for under such conditions, existing organisations and leaders would continue to dominate the movement. And their successful interruption of the impending proletarian revolution demonstrated that not only did the 'gains' of the workers in the economic sphere turn against the workers themselves, but that their 'success' in the political field also turned out to be weapons against their emancipation. The strongest bulwark against a radical solution of the social question was the social democracy, in whose growth the workers had learned to measure their growing power.

Nothing shows the revolutionary character of Marx's theories more clearly than the difficulty to maintain them during non-revolutionary times. There was a grain of truth in Kautsky's statement that the socialist movement cannot function during times of war, as times of war temporarily create non-revolutionary situations. The revolutionist becomes isolated, and registers temporary defeat. He must wait till the situation changes, till the subjective readiness to participate in war is broken by the objective impossibility to serve this subjective readiness. A revolutionist cannot help standing 'outside the world' from time to time. To believe that a revolutionary practice, expressed in independent actions of the workers, is always possible means to fall victim to democratic illusions. But it is more difficult to stand 'outside this world', for no one can know when situations change, and no one wishes to be left out when changes do occur. Consistency exists only in theory. It cannot be said that Marx's theories were inconsistent; it can, however, be said, that Marx was not consistent, i.e. that he, too, had to pay deference to a changing reality and, in non-revolutionary times, in order to function at all, had to function in a non-revolutionary manner. His theories were limited to the essentials of the class struggle between bourgeoisie and proletariat, but his practice was continuous, dealing with problems 'as they came up', problems which could not always be solved with essential principles. Unwilling to retire during the upswing period of capitalism, Marxism could not escape functioning in a manner contrary to a theory resulting from the recognition of a real and always present revolutionary class struggle. The theory of the everpresent class struggle has no more justification than the bourgeois concept of progress. There is no automatism keeping things rolling uphill; instead, there is combat with changing fortunes; there is the deathlock of the struggle and the utter defeat. Mere numbers of workers opposed to the powerful capitalist state at times when history still favours capitalism do not represent the giant on whose back the capitalist parasites rest, but rather the bull who has to move in the directions his nose-stick forces him to go. During the non-revolutionary period of the ascending capitalism, revolutionary Marxism could exist only as ideology, serving an entirely different practice. In this latter form it was again limited by actual occurrences. As a mere ideology it had to cease existing as soon as great social upheavals demanded a change from an indirect to a direct class collaboration ideology for capitalistic purposes.

Marx developed his theories during revolutionary times. The most advanced of the bourgeois revolutionists, he was the closest to the proletariat. The defeat of the bourgeoisie as revolutionists, their success within the counter-revolution, convinced Marx that the modern revolutionary class can be only the working class, and he developed the socioeconomic theory of their revolution. Like many of his contemporaries, he underestimated the strength and flexibility of capitalism, and expected too soon the end of bourgeois society. Two alternatives opened themselves to him: he could either stand outside the actual development, restricting himself to inapplicable radical thinking, or participate under the given conditions in the actual struggles, and reserve the revolutionary theories for 'better times'. This latter alternative was rationalised into the 'proper balance of theory and practice', and the defeat or success of proletarian activities became therewith the result of 'right' or 'wrong' tactics once more; the question of the proper organisation and of correct leadership. It was not so much Marx's earlier connection with the bourgeois revolution that led to the further development of the Jacobinic aspect of the labour movement called by his name, but the non-revolutionary practice of this movement, because of the non-revolutionary times.

The Marxism of Kautsky, then, was a Marxism in the form of a mere ideology, and it was therewith fated to return in the course of time into idealistic channels. Kautsky's 'orthodoxy' was in truth the artificial preservation of ideas opposed to an actual practice, and was therewith forced into retreat, as reality is always stronger than ideology. A real Marxian 'orthodoxy' could be possible only with a return of real revolutionary situations, and then such 'orthodoxy' would concern itself not with 'the word', but with the principle of the class struggle between bourgeoisie and proletariat applied to new and changed situations. The retreat of theory before practice can be followed with utmost clarity in Kautsky's writings.

The many books and articles written by Kautsky deal with almost all social problems, in addition to specific questions concerning the labour movement. However, his writings can be classified into Economy, History and Philosophy. In the field of political economy, not much can be said about his contribution. He was the populariser of the first volume of Marx's *Capital* and the editor of Marx's "Theories of Surplus Value", published during the years from 1904 to 1910. His popularisations of Marx's economic theories do not distinguish themselves from the generally accepted interpretation of economic phenomena in the socialist movement — the revisionists included. As a matter of fact, parts of his famous book "The Economic Doctrines of Karl Marx" were written by Eduard Bernstein. In the heated discussion waged at the turn of the century concerning the meaning of Marx's theories in the second and third volume of *Capital*, Kautsky took very small part. For him the first volume of *Capital* contained all that was of importance to the workers and their movement. It dealt with the process of production, the factory and exploitation, and contained all that was needed to support a workers' movement against capitalism. The other two volumes dealing in greater detail with capitalist tendencies towards crises and collapse did not correspond to immediate reality and found little interest not only by Kautsky but by all Marxian theoreticians of the upswing period of capitalism. In a review of the second volume of *Capital*, written in 1886, Kautsky expressed the opinion that this volume is of less interest to the workers, as it deals largely with the problem of the realisation of surplus value, which after all should be rather the concern of the capitalists. When Bernstein, in the course of his attack upon Marx's economic theories, rejected the latter's theory of collapse, Kautsky defended Marxism by simply denying that Marx ever had developed a special theory pointing to an objective end of capitalism, and that such a concept was merely an invention of Bernstein. The difficulties and contradictions of capitalism he searched for in the sphere of circulation.

Consumption could not grow so rapidly as production and a permanent over-production would lead to the political necessity of introducing socialism. Against Tugan-Baranowsky's theory of an unhampered capitalist development proceeding from the fact that capital creates its own markets and can overcome developing disproportionalities, a theory which influenced the whole reformist movement, Kautsky^[13] set his underconsumption theory to explain the unavoidability of capitalist crises, crises which helped to create the subjective conditions for a transformation from capitalism to socialism. However, 25 years later, he openly admitted that he had been wrong in his evaluation of the economic possibilities of capitalism, as "from an economic viewpoint, capital is much livelier today than it was 50 years ago."^[14]

The theoretical unclarity and inconsistency that Kautsky's displayed on economic questions, were only climaxed by his acceptance of the once denounced views of Tugan-Baranowsky. They were only a reflection of his changing general attitude towards bourgeois thought and capitalist society. In his book "The Materialistic Conception of History," which he himself declares to be the best and final product of his whole life's work, dealing as it does in nearly 2000 pages with the development of nature, society and the state, he demonstrates not only his pedantic method of exposition and his far-reaching knowledge of theories and facts, but also his many misconceptions as regards Marxism and his final break with Marxian science. Here he openly declares "that at times revisions of Marxism are unavoidable."^[16] Here he now accepts all that during his whole life he had apparently struggled against. He is no longer solely interested in the interpretation of Marxism, but is ready to accept responsibility for his own thoughts, presenting his main work as his own conception of history, not totally removed but independent from Marx and Engels. His masters, he now contends, have restricted the materialistic conception of history by neglecting too much the natural factors in history. He, however, starting not from Hegel but from Darwin, "will now extend the scope of historical materialism till it merges with biology."^[17] But his furthering of historical materialism turns out to be no more than a reversion to the crude naturalistic materialism of Marx's forerunners, a return to the position of the revolutionary bourgeoisie, which Marx had overcome with his rejection of Feuerbach. On the basis of this naturalistic materialism, Kautsky, like the bourgeois philosophers before him, cannot help adopting an idealistic concept of social development, which, then, when it deals with the state, turns openly and completely into the old bourgeois conceptions of the history of mankind as the history of states. Ending in the bourgeois democratic state, Kautsky holds that "there is no room any longer for violent class conflict. Peacefully, by way of propaganda and the voting system can conflicts be ended, decisions be made."^[18]

Though we cannot possibly review in detail at this place this tremendous book of Kautsky,^[19] we must say that it demonstrates throughout the doubtful character of Kautsky's 'Marxism'. His connection with the labour movement, seen retrospectively, was never more than his participation in some form of bourgeois social work. There can be no doubt that he never understood the real position of Marx and Engels, or at least never dreamed that theories could have an immediate connection with reality. This apparently serious Marxist student had actually never taken Marx seriously. Like many pious priests engaging in a practice contrary to their teaching, he might not even have been aware of the duality of his own thought and action. Undoubtedly he would have sincerely liked being in reality the bourgeois of whom Marx once said, he is "a capitalist solely in the interest of the proletariat." But even such a change of affairs he would reject, unless it were attainable in the 'peaceful' bourgeois, democratic manner. Kautsky, "repudiates the Bolshevik melody that is unpleasant to his ear," wrote Trotsky, "but does

not seek another. The solution is simple: the old musician refuses altogether to play on the instrument of the revolution.”^[20]

Recognising at the close of his life that the reforms of capitalism that he wished to achieve could not be realised by democratic, peaceful means, Kautsky turned against his own practical policy, and just as he was in former times the proponent of a Marxian ideology which, altogether divorced from reality, could serve only its opponents, he now became the proponent of bourgeois *laissez faire* ideology, just as much removed from the actual conditions of the developing fascistic capitalist society, and just as much serving this society as his Marxian ideology had served the democratic stage of capitalism. “People love today to speak disdainfully about the liberalistic economy,” he wrote in his last work; “however, the theories founded by Quesnay, Adam Smith and Ricardo are not at all obsolete. In their essentials Marx had accepted their theories and developed them further, and he has never denied that the liberal freedom of commodity production constituted the best basis for its development. Marx distinguishes himself from the Classicists therein, that when the latter saw in commodity production of private producers the only possible form of production, Marx saw the highest form of commodity production leading through its own development to conditions allowing for a still better form of production, social production, where society, identical with the whole of the working population, controls the means of production, producing no longer for profit but to satisfy needs. The socialist mode of production has its own rules, in many respects different from the laws of commodity production. However, as long as commodity production prevails, it will best function if those laws of motion discovered in the era of liberalism are respected.”^[21]

These ideas are quite surprising in a man who had edited Marx’s “Theories of Surplus Value”, a work which proved exhaustively “that Marx at no time in his life countenanced the opinion that the new contents of his socialist and communist theory could be derived, as a mere logical consequence, from the utterly bourgeois theories of Quesnay, Smith and Ricardo.”^[22] However, this position of Kautsky’s gives the necessary qualifications to our previous statement that he was an excellent pupil of Marx and Engels. He was such only to the extent that Marxism could be fitted into his own limited concepts of social development and of capitalist society. For Kautsky, the ‘socialist society’, or the logical consequence of capitalist development of commodity production, is in truth only a state-capitalist system. When once he mistook Marx’s value concept as a law of socialist economics if only applied consciously instead of being left to the ‘blind’ operations of the market, Engels pointed out to him^[23] that for Marx, value is a strictly historical category; that neither before nor after capitalism did there exist or could there exist a value production which differed only in form from that of capitalism. And Kautsky accepted Engels’ statement, as is manifested in his work “The Economic Doctrines of Karl Marx” (1887), where he also saw value as a historical category. Later, however, in reaction to bourgeois criticism of socialist economic theory, he re-introduced in his book “The Proletarian Revolution and its Programme” (1922) the value concept, the market and money economy, commodity production, into his scheme of a socialist society. What was once historical became eternal; Engels had talked in vain. Kautsky had returned from where he had sprung, from the *petite-bourgeoisie*, who hate with equal force both monopoly control and socialism, and hope for a purely quantitative change of society, an enlarged reproduction of the *status quo*, a better and bigger capitalism, a better and more comprehensive democracy — as against a capitalism climaxing in fascism or changing into communism.

The maintenance of liberal commodity production and its political expression were preferred by Kautsky to the ‘economics’ of fascism because the former system

determined his long grandeur and his short misery. Just as he had shielded bourgeois democracy with Marxian phraseology, so he now obscured the fascist reality with democratic phraseology. For now, by turning their thoughts backward instead of forward, he made his followers mentally incapacitated for revolutionary action. The man who shortly before his death was driven from Berlin to Vienna by marching fascism, and from Vienna to Prague, and from Prague to Amsterdam, published in 1937 a book^[24] which shows explicitly that once a 'Marxist' makes the step from a materialistic to an idealistic concept of social development, he is sure to arrive sooner or later at that borderline of thought where idealism turns into insanity. There is a report current in Germany that when Hindenburg was watching a Nazi demonstration of storm troops he turned to a General standing beside him saying, 'I did not know we had taken so many Russian prisoners.' Kautsky, too, in this his last book, is mentally still at 'Tannenberg'. His work is a faithful description of the different attitudes taken by socialists and their forerunners to the question of war since the beginning of the fifteenth century up to the present time. It shows, although not to Kautsky, how ridiculous Marxism can become when it associates the proletariat with the bourgeois needs and necessities.

Kautsky wrote his last book, as he said, "to determine which position should be taken by socialists and democrats in case a new war breaks out despite all our opposition to it."^[25] However, he continued, "There is no direct answer to this question before the war is actually here and we are all able to see who caused the war and for what purpose it is fought." He advocates that "if war breaks out, socialists should try to maintain their unity, to bring their organisation safely through the war, so that they may reap the fruit wherever unpopular political regimes collapse. In 1914 this unity was lost and we still suffer from this calamity. But today things are much clearer than they were then; the opposition between democratic and anti-democratic states is much sharper; and it can be expected that if it comes to the new world war, all socialists will stand on the side of democracy." After the experiences of the last war and the history since then, there is no need to search for the black sheep that causes wars, nor is it a secret any longer why wars are fought. However, to pose such questions is not stupidity as one may believe. Behind this apparent naïveté lies the determination to serve capitalism in one form by fighting capitalism in another. It serves to prepare the workers for the coming war, in exchange for the right to organise in labour organisations, vote in elections, and assemble in formations which serve both capital and capitalistic labour organisations. It is the old policy of Kautsky, which demands concessions from the bourgeoisie in exchange for millions of dead workers in the coming capitalistic battles. In reality, just as the wars of capitalism, regardless of the political differences of the participating states and the various slogans used, can only be wars for capitalist profits and wars against the working class, so, too, the war excludes the possibility of choosing between conditional or unconditional participation in the war by the workers. Rather, the war, and even the period preceding the war, will be marked by a general and complete military dictatorship in fascist and anti-fascist countries alike. The war will wipe out the last distinction between the democratic and the anti-democratic nations. And workers will serve Hitler as they served the Kaiser; they will serve Roosevelt as they served Wilson; they will die for Stalin as they died for the Tsar.

Kautsky was not disturbed by the reality of fascism, since for him, democracy was the natural form of capitalism. The new situation was only a sickness, a temporary insanity, a thing actually foreign to capitalism. He really believed in a war for democracy, to allow capitalism to proceed in its logical course towards a real commonwealth. And his 1937 predictions incorporated sentences like the following: "The time has arrived where it is finally possible to do away with wars as a means of solving political conflicts

between the states.^[26] Or, “The policy of conquest of the Japanese in China, the Italians in Ethiopia, is a last echo of a passing time, the period of imperialism. More wars of such a character can hardly be expected.^[27] There are hundreds of similar sentences in Kautsky’s book, and it seems at times that his whole world must have consisted of no more than the four walls of his library, to which he neglected to add the newest volumes on recent history. Kautsky is convinced that even without a war fascism will be defeated, the rise of democracy recur, and the period return for a peaceful development towards socialism, like the period in the days before fascism. The essential weakness of fascism he illustrated with the remark that “the personal character of the dictatorships indicates already that it limits its own existence to the length of a human life.^[28] He believed that after fascism there would be the return to the ‘normal’ life on an increasingly socialistic abstract democracy to continue the reforms begun in the glorious time of the social democratic coalition policy. However, it is obvious now that the only capitalistic reform objectively possible today is the fascistic reform. And as a matter of fact, the larger part of the ‘socialisation programme’ of the social democracy, which it never dared to put into practice, has meanwhile been realised by fascism. Just as the demands of the German bourgeoisie were met not in 1848 but in the ensuing period of the counter-revolution, so, too, the reform programme of the social democracy, which it could not inaugurate during the time of its own reign, was put into practice by Hitler. Thus, to mention just a few facts, not the social democracy but Hitler fulfilled the long desire of the socialists, the Anschluss of Austria; not social democracy but fascism established the wished — for state control of industry and banking; not social democracy but Hitler declared the first of May a legal holiday. A careful analysis of what the socialists actually wanted to do and never did, compared with actual policies since 1933, will reveal to any objective observer that Hitler realised no more than the programme of social democracy, but without the socialists. Like Hitler, the social democracy and Kautsky were opposed to both bolshevism and communism. Even a complete state-capitalist system as the Russian was rejected by both in favour of mere state control. And what is necessary in order to realise such a programme was not dared by the socialists but undertaken by the fascists. The anti-fascism of Kautsky illustrated no more than the fact that just as he once could not imagine that Marxist theory could be supplemented by a Marxist practice, he later could not see that a capitalist reform policy demanded a capitalist reform practice, which turned out to be the fascist practice. The life of Kautsky can teach the workers that in the struggle against fascistic capitalism is necessarily incorporated the struggle against bourgeois democracy, the struggle against Kautskyism. The life of Kautsky can, in all truth and without malicious intent, be summed up in the words: From Marx to Hitler.

Notes

1 *Der Sozialistische Kampf*. Paris, November 5, 1938, p.271.

2 K. Kautsky, *Aus der Fruhzeit des Marxism us*. Prague, 1935, p.20.

3 *Ibid.*, p.93.

4 *Capital*. Vol I, p.677 (Kerr ed.).

5 *Die Internationale*. Spring 1915.

6 *The Letters of Lenin*. London 1937, p.342.

7 *The Social Revolution*.

8 K. Kautsky, *Sozialisten und Krieg*. Prague, 1937, p.673.

9 *Aus der Fruhzeit des Marxismus*, p. 50.

10 *Ibid.*, p.112.

11 *Ibid.*, p.155.

12 *Ibid.*, p.273.

13 *Neue Zeit*, 1902, No. 5

14 K. Kautsky, *Die Materialistische Geschichtsauffassung*. Berlin, 1927. Vol. II, p.623.

15 The limitations of Kautsky's economic theories and their transformations in the course of his activities are excellently described and criticised by Henryk Grossman in his book *Das Akkumulations- und Zusammenbruchsgesetz des kapitalistischen Systems* (Leipzig, 1929), to which the interested reader is referred.

16 K. Kautsky, *Die Materialistische Geschichtsauffassung*. Vol. II, p.630.

17 *Ibid.*, p.629.

18 *Ibid.*, p.431.

19 The reader is referred to Karl Korsch's extensive criticism of Kautsky's work, *Die Materialistische Geschichtsauffassung. Eine Auseinandersetzung mit Karl Kautsky*. Leipzig, 1929.

20 L. Trotsky, *Dictatorship vs. Democracy*.

21 *Sozialisten und Krieg*. p.665.

22 K. Korsch, *Karl Marx*. New York, 1938, p.92. See also: Engels' Preface to the German edition of *The Poverty of Philosophy*, 1884; and to the second volume of *Capital*, 1895.

23 *Aus der Fruhzeit des Marxismus*, p. 145.

24 *Sozialisten und Krieg*.

25 *Ibid.*, p. VIII.

26 *Ibid.*, p.265.

27 *Ibid.*, p.656.

28 *Ibid.*, p.646.

Marxism and Marginal Utility Economics

(1939)

Source: *Living Marxism*, April 1939;

Transcribed: by Adam Buick;

Proofed: and corrected by Geoff Traugh, August 2005.

Recently the editors of *Common Sense*¹ have once more dealt with the “unscientific character” of Marxism by pointing out that:

“Ricardo’s labor theory of value, taken over by Marx and embellished with the theory of surplus value, was abandoned long ago by all but Marxist economists, and a whole branch of ‘marginal utility’ economics developed, of which Marx could know nothing ... that even in the Soviet Union (so far as Five Year Plans go, if not at the Marx-Engels Institute) marginal utility economics have displaced the useless and misleading Marxian economics.”

However, what is brought forward here as an argument against Marxism is in reality only another confirmation of it. Certainly, the Russian state-capitalism, in which class relations are continued, cannot employ the Marxian science, for this science consists of nothing but the critique of those selfsame capitalistic conditions, which characterize Russia and every other capitalistic country. For the purpose of justifying the exploitation of the workers, the inequalities of income, and the accumulation of capital that exists there, the Marxian economic theories are certainly useless. What Marx had said² of the science of bourgeois economy — namely, that it reached its limits with Ricardo because,

“He consciously made the antagonism of class interests, of wages and profits, of profits and rents, the starting point of his investigation,”

holds equally true for Russian economic “science.” The continued class society forces Russian economic theory to embrace those ideological weapons of bourgeois society which appears as economic theory, and to attempt to destroy even that kernel of truth contained in Classical economy, which served with Marxists as a basis of attack upon the whole capitalistic society.

The development of marginal utility economics is closely connected with the difficulty of the proponents of the classical theory to confute Marxist theories, as both the Classicists and the Marxists based their argument on the same objective value concept. The marginal utility school arose in defense of capitalism, and its apology consisted in the construction of a value concept which justified the prevailing class and income differentiations. The existing inequalities based on the exploitation of labor were explained as an undefeatable *natural* law of *diminishing utility*. This theory, as was so well stated by C. E. Ayres³,

“Only undertakes to demonstrate under any given conditions of income distribution the automatic achievement of the maximum total of human satisfaction: the greatest good

¹ ‘Marx over Europe’, *Common Sense*, September 1938, p. 4.

² K. Marx, *Capital*. Vol I, p. 18.

³ *The Problems of Economic Order*, New York, 1938, p. 43.

of all. Even so, this poor-little-rich-girl notion which proposes to balance the surfeit of the rich against the precarious existence of the poor is so extravagantly complacent that most economists have hesitated to give it clear and unequivocal expression.”

Though single concepts of this theory were adopted by economists of other schools, nevertheless, as a general theory, it was slowly abandoned. The Neo-Classicists, for instance, did not bother themselves any longer with questions as to the desirability or the justification of the prevailing economic system: they simply took for granted that it was the best possible one, and merely tried to find means of making it more efficient, a condition which forced them to restrict themselves, as far as market phenomena were concerned, to mere price considerations. The value concept was displaced by a cost-of-production theory, which the Neo-Classicists thought sufficient to explain the existing division of wealth.

However, the question of utility was raised anew in relation to the problem of the allocation of resources in a socialist economy⁴ and it was pointed out that even with an acceptance of the labour theory of value, the question of *demand* must be dealt with. It is clear that no society can prevail which entirely disregards the real needs of its people; that production is impossible unless men are able to eat and work.

“Every child knows, too, that the mass of products corresponding to the different needs require different and quantitatively determined masses of the total labor of society. That this necessity of distributing social labor in definite proportions cannot be done away with by the *particular* form of social production, but can only change the *form it assumes*, is self-evident.”⁵

However, the question of the allocation of resources to meet demand and in the interest of economy as it is raised in modern economic theory has no connection with the simple and direct statement of Marx just quoted, but is determined by class considerations based on a particular form in which the union of labor and the means of production is accomplished.

In Russia, as elsewhere, the means of production are not controlled by the workers but are the monopoly of a special group in society. In the relations of the workers to the means of production, no difference exists between a private property society and a state-capitalist system. The position of the Russian bureaucracy to its workers is exactly the same as that of the individual entrepreneur to his. The first need of that bureaucracy is to safeguard its own position in order to develop industry and agriculture. Whatever else this bureaucracy may do, it has first of all to “plan” its own security, and then to proceed to “plan” life for the rest of the population. This is recognized not only by the present and supposedly “degenerated” Russian bureaucracy, but was clear also to the “founders” of the Russian state-capitalist system.

“As a general rule,” Trotsky has said⁶, “man strives to avoid labor. The problem before the social organization is just to bring ‘laziness’ within a definite framework, to discipline it, and to pull mankind together ... The only way to attract the labor power necessary for our economic problems is to introduce compulsory labor service ... We can have no way to Socialism except by the authoritative regulation of the economic forces and resources of the country, and the centralized distribution of labor power in harmony with the general State plan. The Labor State considers itself empowered to send every worker to the place where his work is necessary. And not one serious Socialist will begin to deny to the Labor State the right to lay its hand upon the worker who refuses to execute his labor duty.”

⁴ Oscar Lange, *On the Economic Theory of Socialism*, Minneapolis 1938.

⁵ *The Correspondence of Marx and Engels*, New York, 1934, p. 246.

⁶ L. Trotsky, *Dictatorship vs. Democracy*, New York, 1922, pp. 133-142.

After the question of production is thus settled, the question of distribution is easily solved.

“We still retain, and for a long time will retain, the system of wages,” Trotsky pointed out⁷. However, “Wages, in the form both of money and of goods, must be brought into the closest possible touch with the productivity of individual labor ... Those workers who do more for the general interest than others receive the right to a greater quantity of the social product than the lazy, the careless, and the disorganizers. Finally, when it rewards some, the Labor State cannot but punish others — those who are clearly infringing labor solidarity, undermining the common work, and seriously impairing the Socialist renaissance of the country. Repression for the attainment of economic ends is a necessary weapon of the Socialist dictatorship.”

The control of production by a particular group in society carries with it their control of distribution. The division of society into rulers and ruled as deemed necessary by Trotsky and as exists in Russia requires, besides a sufficient number of bayonets, an ideology which convinces those who are ruled that their status is natural, unavoidable, and beneficial. Income differentiations and, with this, the formation of additional group interests, becomes an increasing necessity, and is accentuated still more by the political need to preclude a unity of misery against the privileged in society. Because Marxism could be employed only in opposition to such a state of affairs, it had to be ignored, or emasculated in favor of evaluations supposedly based on *scarcity, utility, or demands*; for behind such terms, not only real but also assumed utility, scarcity, and demand can be hidden and justified. The “utility” of the one or other social function or labor is first of all the “utility” it has for the safeguarding of existing class relations and its corresponding mode of production. Not social needs will determine “utility,” but groups interests. The class structure of society comes to light precisely in its need for such evaluations. Just as little as the privileges of the capitalists results from their “utility” but from the fact that they control the means of production and are thus able to exploit the workers, so little does “utility” explain the privileges of the Russian bureaucracy. Those privileges are also based on the conditions of the control of the means of production by the bureaucracy. A theory justifying class rule and exploitation is necessary in Russia, and its acceptance of the defense theories of capitalism does not, as the editors of *Common Sense* believe, indicate the faulty character of Marxism, but its continued usefulness in the class struggle of the Russian workers against their present masters.

⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 149.

Leon Trotsky

Source: *Living Marxism*, Fall 1940;

Transcribed: by Adam Buick;

Proofed: and corrected by Geoff Traugh, August 2005.

With Leon Trotsky there passed away the last of the great leaders of bolshevism. It was his activity during the last fifteen years that kept alive some of the original content of the Bolshevik ideology — the great weapon for transforming backward Russia into its present state-capitalistic form.

As all men are wiser in practice than in theory, so also Trotsky by his accomplishments achieves far greater importance than through his rationalizations that accompanied them. Next to Lenin, he was without doubt the greatest figure of the Russian Revolution. However, the need for leaders like Lenin and Trotsky, and the effect these leaders had, brings to light the utter helplessness of the proletarian masses to solve their own real needs in face of a merciless unripe historical situation.

The masses had to be led; but the leaders could lead only in accordance with their own necessities. The need for leadership of the kind practiced by bolshevism finally indicates nothing else than the need to discipline and terrorize the masses, so that they may work and live in harmony with the plans of the ruling social group. This kind of leadership in itself demonstrates the existence of class relations, class politics and economics, and an irreconcilable opposition between the leaders and the led. The over-towering personality of Leon Trotsky reveals the non-proletarian character of the Bolshevik Revolution just as well as the mummified and deified Lenin in the Moscow Mausoleum.

In order that some may lead, others must be powerless. To be the vanguard of the workers, the elite has to usurp all social key positions. Like the bourgeoisie of old, the new leaders had to seize and control all means of production and destruction. To hold their control and keep it effective, the leaders must constantly strengthen themselves by bureaucratic expansion, and continually divide the ruled. Only masters can be leaders.

Trotsky was such a master. At first he was the masterly propagandist, the great and never tiring orator, establishing his leading position in the revolution. Then he became the creator and master of the Red Army, fighting against the *Right* and the *Left*, fighting for bolshevism, which he hoped to master too. But here he failed. When leaders make history, those who are led no longer count; but neither do they disappear. Trusting in the force of grand historical spectacles, Trotsky neglected to be the efficient opportunist behind the scenes of bureaucratic development that he was in the spotlight of world history.

Today, great men are no longer necessary. Modern propaganda instruments can transform any fraud into a hero, any mediocre personality into an all-comprehending genius. Propaganda actually transforms through its collective efforts any average, if not stupid, leader, like Hitler and Stalin, into a great man. The leaders become symbols of an organized, collective, and really intelligent will to maintain given social institutions. Outside of Russia, Trotsky was soon reduced to the master of a small sect of professional revolutionists and their providers. He was “the Old Man,” the indisputable authority of an

artificial growth upon the political scene, destined to end in absurdity. To become the master of a *Fourth International*, as his adversary Stalin was master of the *Third*, remained the illusion with which he died.

There is here no need to re-trace Trotsky's individual development; his autobiography suffices. Neither is it necessary to stress his many qualifications, literary and otherwise. His works, and most of all his *History of the Russian Revolution*, will immortalize his name as a writer and politician. But there is a real need to oppose the development of the Trotsky legend which will make out of this leader of the Russian state capitalist revolution a martyr of the international working class — a legend which must be rejected together with all other postulates and aspects of bolshevism.

Louis Ferdinand Céline has said that revolutions should be judged twenty years later. And in doing so, he found only words of condemnation for bolshevism. To us, however, it seems that a present-day re-evaluation of bolshevism could well do without any kind of moralizing. In retrospect it is quite easy to see in bolshevism the beginning of a new phase of capitalist development, which was initiated by the first World War. No doubt, in 1917, Russia was the weakest link in the capitalist world structure. But the whole of capitalism in its private property form was already on the verge of stagnation. To erect and expand a workable economic system of the laissez-faire type was no longer possible. Only the force of complete centralism, of dictatorial rule over the whole of society, could guarantee the establishment of an exploitative social order capable of expanding production despite the declining world-capitalism.

There can be no doubt that the Bolshevik leaders by creating their state-capitalistic structure — which has, within twenty years, become the example for the further evolution of the whole of the capitalist world — were deeply convinced that their construction conformed to the needs and desires of their own and the world proletariat. Even when they found that they could not alter the fact that their society continued to be based on the exploitation of labor, they sought to alter the meaning of this fact by offering in excuse a theory that identified the rule of the leaders with the interests of the led. The motive force of social development in class society — the class struggle — theoretically was done away with; but practically, an authoritarian regime had to be developed masked as the dictatorship of the proletariat. In the creation of this regime, and in the attempt to camouflage it, Trotsky won most of his laurels. He rested on those laurels to the very last. It is only necessary to reflect on the paramount role which Trotsky played in the first thundering years of Bolshevik Russia to understand why he could not admit that the Bolshevik revolution was able only to change the form of capitalism but was not able to do away with the capitalistic form of exploitation. It was the shadow of that period that darkened his understanding.

In the general backwardness that prevailed in Czarist Russia, the intelligentsia had little opportunity to improve its position. The talent and capacities of the educated middle classes found no realization in this stagnating society. Later this situation found its parallel in the middle class conditions in Italy and Germany after Versailles and in the wake of the following world crisis. In all three countries, and in both situations, the intelligentsia and large layers of the middle classes became politicized and counter-poised to the declining economic system. In the search for ideologies useful as weapons, and in the search for allies, all had to appeal to the proletarian layer of society, and to all other dissatisfied elements. The leadership of the Bolshevik as well as of the fascist movements was not proletarian, but middle class: the result of the frustration of intellectuals under conditions of economic stagnation and atrophy.

In Russia, before 1917, a revolutionary ideology was developed with the help of western socialism — with Marxism. But the ideology served only the act of revolution,

nothing more. It had to be altered continuously and re-fitted to serve the developing needs of the state-capitalist revolution and its profiteers. Finally, this ideology lost all connection with reality and served as religion, a weapon to maintain the new ruling class.

With this ideology, the Russian intelligentsia, supported by ambitious workers, were able to seize power and to hold it because of the disintegration of Czarist society, the wide social gap between peasants and workers, the undeveloped proletarian consciousness, and the general weakness of international capitalism after the war. Coming to power with the help of a russified Marxian ideology, Trotsky, after he lost power, had no choice but to maintain the revolutionary ideology in its original form against the degeneration of Marxism indulged in by the Stalinists. He could afford this luxury, for he had escaped the iron consequences of the social system he had helped to bring about. Now he could lead a life of dignity, that is, a life of opposition. But had he suddenly been brought back to power, his actions could have been none other than those of Stalin's which he so despised. After all, the latter is himself no more than the creature of Lenin's and Trotsky's policies. As a matter of fact, "Stalinists" as a particular type are, so long as they are controllable, just that type of men which leaders like Lenin and Trotsky need and love most. But sometimes the worm turns. Those Bolshevik underlings elevated into power positions understand to the fullest that the only insurance for security lies in imprisonment, exile, and murder.

In 1925 oppressive methods were not far enough advanced to secure absolute power for the great leader. The dictatorial instruments were still hampered by the traditions of democratic capitalism. Leadership remained after Lenin's death; there was not yet the Leader. Though Trotsky was forced into exile, the unripeness of the authoritarian form of government spared his life for fifteen years. Soon both old and new oppositions to Stalin's rule could easily be destroyed. Hitler's overwhelming success in the "night of the long knives," when he killed off with one bold stroke the whole of the effective opposition against him, showed Stalin the way to handle his own problems. Whoever was suspected of having at one time or another entertained ideas unpleasant to Stalin's taste and absolute rule, whoever because of his critical capacities was suspected of being able in the future to reach the willing ears of the underdogs and disappointed bureaucrats, was eliminated. This was done not in the Nibelungen manner in which the German fascists got rid of Roehm, Strasser and their following, but in the hidden, scheming, cynical manner of the Moscow Trials, to exploit even the death of the potential oppositionists for the greater glory of the all-embracing and beloved leader, Stalin. The applause of those taking the offices emptied by the murdered was assured. To make the broad masses happily accept the miserable end of the "old Bolsheviks" was merely a job for the minister of propaganda. Thus the whole of Russia, not only the leading bureaucratic group, finished off the "traitors to the fatherland of the workers."

Though secretly celebrating Trotsky's death at studio parties, the defenders of Stalinism, affecting naïveté, will ask why Stalin should be interested in doing away with Trotsky. After all, what harm could Trotsky do to the mighty Stalin and his great Russia? However; a bureaucracy capable of destroying thousands of books because they contain Trotsky's name, re-writing and again re-writing history to erase every accomplishment of the murdered opposition, a bureaucracy able to stage the Moscow Trials, is certainly also capable of hiring a murderer, or finding a volunteer to silence the one discordant voice in an otherwise perfect harmony of praise for the new ruling class in Russia. The self-exalting identification with his leader of the last pariah within the Communist Party, the idiotic fanaticism displayed by these people when the mirror of truth is held before their eyes, permits no surprise at Trotsky's murder. It is surprising only that he was not

murdered sooner. To understand the assassination of Trotsky, it is only necessary to look at the mechanism and the spirit of any Bolshevik organization, Trotsky's included.

What harm could Trotsky do? Precisely because he was not out to harm his Russia and his workers' state was he so intensely hated by the ruling Bolshevik bureaucracy. For the very reason that the Trotskyites in countries where they had a foothold were not out to change in the least the party instrument devised by Lenin, that their spirit remained the spirit of bolshevism, they were hated by the proprietors of the separate Communist Parties.

The swift steps of history make possible any apparent impossibility. Russia is not immune to the vast changes the present world experiences. In a tottering world, all governments become insecure. No one knows where the hurricane will strike next. Each one has to reckon with all eventualities. Because Trotsky insisted on defending the heritage of 1917, because he remained the Bolshevik who saw in state capitalism the basis for socialism and in the rule of the party the rule of the workers, because he wanted nothing but the replacement of Stalin and the Stalin-supporting bureaucracy, he was really dangerous to the latter.

That he had other arguments, such as that of the "permanent revolution" against the slogan of "socialism in one country," etc., is rather meaningless, because the permanence of the revolution as well as the isolation of Russia, is dependent not upon slogans and political decisions, but on realities over which even the most powerful party has no control. Such arguments serve only to disguise the quite ordinary interests for which political parties struggle.

It was the non-revolutionary character of Trotsky's policies with regard to the Russian scene that made him so dangerous. The Russian bureaucracy knows quite well that the present world situation is not given to revolutionary changes in the interests of the world proletariat. Dictators and bureaucrats think in terms of dictatorship and bureaucracy. It is pretenders to the throne they fear, not the rabble of the street. Napoleon found it easy to control any insurrectionary crowd; he found it far more difficult to deal with the machinations of Fouché and Talleyrand. A Trotsky, living, could be recalled with the help of the lower layers of the Russian bureaucracy whenever an opportune moment arose. The chance to replace Stalin, to triumph finally, depended on Trotsky's restricting his criticism to Stalin's individual, brutal moroseness, to the sickening, newly-rich attitudes of the Stalin satellites. He realized that he could return to power only with the help of the greater part of the bureaucracy, that he could take his seat in the Kremlin again only in the wake of a palace revolution, or a successful Roehm putsch. He was too much of a realist — despite all the convenient mysticism of his political program — not to realize the silliness of an appeal to the Russian workers, those workers who must have learned by now to see in their new masters their new exploiters, and to tolerate them out of fear and necessity. Not to tolerate, and not to approve the new situation means to surrender the chance to improve one's own situation; and as long as Russian economy is expanding, individual ambitions and individual apologia will rule individuals. The suckers make the best of a situation which they feel is beyond their power to alter. Precisely because Trotsky was not a revolutionary, but merely a competitor for leadership under existing Russian conditions — ever ready to follow the call of a bureaucracy in re-organization should a national crisis demand the abdication of Stalin — he became increasingly more dangerous to the present ruling clique engaged, as it is, in new, vast imperialistic adventures. Trotsky's murder is one of the many consequences of the re-birth of Russian imperialism.

Today Bolshevism stands revealed as the initial phase of a great movement which, expected to perpetuate capitalistic exploitation, is slowly but surely embracing the whole

world and changing the no longer functioning private property economy into greater state capitalistic units. The rule of the bolshevist commissar finds its logical conclusion in fascistic dictatorships spreading over the globe. Just as little as Lenin and Trotsky knew what they were actually doing when they were fighting for socialism, just as little do Hitler and Mussolini know today what they are doing in fighting for a greater Germany and the Roman Empire. In the world as it is, there is a wide difference between what men want to do, and what they are actually doing. Men, however great, are very small before history, which steps beyond them and surprises them always anew with the results of their own surprising schemes.

In 1917, Trotsky knew as little as we ourselves knew that the Bolshevik revolution would have to end in an international fascistic movement and in the preparation and execution of another world war. If he had known the trend of development, he would either have been murdered twenty years ago, or today he would occupy Stalin's place. As it is, he ended as a victim of the fascist counter-revolution against the international working class and the peace of the world.

Nevertheless, despite the fact that Stalin murdered Trotsky, despite the displacement of all forms of bolshevism by fascism, a final evaluation of Trotsky's historical role will have to place him in line with Lenin, Mussolini, Stalin and Hitler as one of the great leaders of a world-wide movement attempting, knowingly and unknowingly, to prolong the capitalist exploitation system with methods first devised by bolshevism, then completed by German fascism, and finally glorified in the general butchery which we are now experiencing. After that — the labor movement may begin.

How New is the 'New Order' of Fascism

Source: *Partisan Review*, New York, Vol. VIII, No. 4, July/August 1941, pp. 289-310.
Transcribed: by Thomas Schmidt;

The democratic nations recognize in the totalitarian regimes new social and economic systems incompatible with their own ideas of freedom and progress. The fascists, too, speak of the existence of "two worlds" which must fight each other until one of them succumbs. The democracies become increasingly more "fascistic" the more vigorously they defend their system. And the fascists claim that there is more "real democracy" within their "new order" than there ever was in liberal capitalism. They see in their own rise to power a real revolution that is changing the whole of society. Some "anti-fascists" share this view, but speak of the "fascist revolution" as a "substitute revolution," "middle-class revolution," "managerial revolution," "nihilist revolution," and so forth. Others describe the present social transformation as a "counter-revolution against a revolution that did not take place," or as a political movement that merely serves the internal and imperialistic interests of monopoly capitalism.

The abundance of definitions of fascism is, in itself, interesting but it does not help to lay bare the real differences between the fascistic states and the capitalistic democracies. That differences exist is obvious. An investigation of the change from the "old" into the "new" social order shows, however, that the transition affects only some, not all of the social and economic relationships that constitute the capitalistic system. The questions are, then: (1) Are these differences important enough to justify the claim that an

old socio-economic system has been replaced by a *new and basically different* system?
 (2) Will the new system be subject to the contradictions and developmental laws of capitalism?

Laissez Faire versus State Control

The essential difference between the “old” and the “new” social order is that between *laissez faire* and a controlled economy. The general competition which characterized the early stage of capitalist development was interpreted as an assurance that the market mechanism of the commodity-producing society provided for a more or less harmonious growth of production and the wealth of nations. Whoever prospered under *laissez faire* was bound to believe in a *law of supply and demand* that brought order into social production and distribution. Whoever did not fare so well was inclined to rebel against this philosophy. Free trade, recognized as advantageous to the more developed capitalist nations, could be opposed by the less developed countries only with additional political means such as state-fostered industries and tariff regulations. The *laissez faire* theory was opposed by theories favoring state interventions in the economy.

The question of free-trade was always debated and never solved. It could not be solved because the protectionists were protectionists only in order to compete with the free-traders; the latter controlling the trade of the world, were actually protectionists. These issues disappeared temporarily whenever there was rapid capital expansion and they always returned as soon as this expansion stopped.

However, the present-day struggle between “democratic” and “fascist” economies, though still partly determined by the inequality of opportunities for participating in the world-exploitation of labor, goes beyond the old struggle. Today state interferences in the economy are no longer restricted to national protection against foreign competition but involve the destruction of the internal market as well. Of course, even the former limited form of state interference disturbed the internal markets, but the adjustment to new situations thus created was left to the decisions of the individual capitalists. State interferences are no longer designed mainly for protective but for aggressive purposes; they are the medium of present-day imperialism.

Long before the rise of fascism, competitive capitalism was replaced in each capitalist nation by monopoly capitalism. The markets were controlled by trusts and cartels. The development from *laissez faire* to monopoly capitalism led to the creation of the world market, the international division of labor, the concentration of capital, and the increase of the productivity of labor. They are all interdependent; one is unthinkable without the others.

The fascist economy and its social structure is the direct outcome of the previous process of capitalistic competition. It is thus not possible to oppose fascism without opposing capitalism during all its developmental stages. That not all capitalist nations reach their fascist “maturity” simultaneously is explained by the simple fact that their development did not start at the same time and under identical conditions. There is, however, an apparent contradiction here; for if fascism must be regarded as the direct outcome of the previous capitalist development it should appear first in the oldest and most advanced nations. But this is not the case. Russia, in which we find the most complete totalitarian system, was one of the most backward nations, as was Italy which experienced the first “fascist revolution.” Germany was a comparatively new and poor capitalist nation and so were Japan, Turkey, Mexico.

We may recall here that Marx together with the liberal economists thought that “the more developed nation only shows to the less developed the image of its own

future."¹ History has meanwhile shown that the opposite is equally true. Whereas Marx, from his point of view, was inclined to

“favor the free trade system, because it breaks old nationalities and carries antagonism of proletariat and bourgeoisie to the uttermost point and thus hastens the social revolution, while the protective system is conservative,”²

present-day proponents of “national economy,” as opposed to modern “free-traders,” prove that they can “destroy old nationalities” more effectively even than can the “free play” of capitalistic forces. They have actually succeeded in carrying the “antagonism between proletariat and bourgeoisie to the uttermost point.” And as far as hastening the revolution is concerned, both systems have been able equally to prevent its actual occurrence.

The specific form in which surplus labor was taken from the producers was similar in both the *laissez faire* and the protective systems. Similar, also, for all capitalist nations were the social and economic consequences which stemmed from this exploitative relationship. Outside of this relationship, however, there were great variations and gradations in the different national economies which allowed for different political structures. That the free-trade system was for a time dominant and thus the “progressive” one does not make it the capitalistic system *per se*. It could have been replaced at any time in any country by a protective system, and the change would have been not in the capitalist nature of the nation but only in its competitive methods.

The more rapidly capital accumulates, the more it becomes concentrated. Until the world war the more highly developed capitalist nations were also the more centralized. The “richer” a country was in an economic sense, however, the less urgent was its need to rule politically. In America, for instance, the powerful capitalists could ignore the government to the point where the later seemed at times to be in strict opposition to the needs of Big Business. In poor countries like Japan, the concentration of wealth was from the beginning identical with the concentration of political power. In Germany, too,

“the government displayed all the initiative in the capitalist development that in the Western world rested almost exclusively with private capitalists.”³

But the Western world did not shrink from state interference in the economy whenever it seemed profitable. Napoleon III, for instance, in his policies regarding free-trade and protectionism “turned to the right and then to the left and one could never tell where he was going.”⁴

The high capital concentration already reached in the more “successful” nations accounts for the forced concentration of wealth and power in the more backward countries.⁵ In this forced centralization we see the real international character of capitalist production which forces its weakest units to reach and overtake the richer nations. When at an earlier stage the backward nations opposed the monopolistic position of the *laissez faire* nations with monopolistic actions by way of state interferences and thus escaped economic exploitation by simply refusing to let the “market dictate” to them, they countered an effective competitive method with a still more effective one. When today the highly industrialized monopolistic countries compete with capitalistically weaker nations, the latter must oppose a practically dictatorial economic policy with still greater dictatorial measures. State protection in the traditional sense is not forceful enough;

¹ *Capital*. Vol. I; p. 13.

² Free Trade. An Address Delivered before the Democratic Association of Brussels. 1848; p. 43.

³ Gustav Stolper, *German Economy 1870-1940*; p. 10.

⁴ Theophile Gautier; quoted by S. B. Clough in *France: A History of National Economics 1789-1939*; p. 182.

⁵ The Bolshevik slogan, “to reach and overtake Western capitalism,” for example, was dictated by necessity in order to escape foreign exploitation and to foster a national development that made full use of national resources and labor in the interest of a native ruling class.

complete state control is needed. And just as Hitler's rise to power coincided with the economic crisis that in 1929 spread from the United States to Europe, so also the German totalitarian state is a product of both German and world capitalism. Whoever favors American democracy necessarily also favors German fascism. In turn, the German fascists are just as responsible for the growing authoritarian tendencies in America as are Americans.⁶ In brief, the "new order" cannot be divorced from the "old order."

The replacement of economic competition by open warfare, the predominance of politics over economics, which seems to distinguish the present from the past, is not new. Wars accompanied the whole capitalist development; politics have always interfered with economic activities. The expansion of capital demands an increase of exploitation and likewise the development of the conditions of exploitation. The military aspects of imperialism are as essential as its economic reasons and results. Besides, one should not be surprised, as Marx once said,

"by the bourgeoisie's thirst for conquest. To seize things is the vital principle of every bourgeois and to take foreign provinces is after all 'taking'."⁷

The proportions in which nationally and internationally the surplus labor of the world was divided among the diverse ruling classes was to a large extent, but never absolutely, determined by exchange processes. Thus what is new in the "new order" is that the former relationship between "economic" and "extra-economic" means for appropriating and distributing the surplus labor of the world has been reversed. In this sense Gustav Stolper is right when he says that the Germany of today

"has staked her very existence on the *Blitzkrieg* technique. On the success or failure of this technique the fate of the world depends. If it succeeds, the face of the globe will be altered beyond recognition."⁸

However, not "Germany" but the present German rulers have staked their very existence on the *Blitzkrieg* technique. Not the fate of the world, but the fate of numerous vested interests based on the *status quo* is here involved.⁹ Nevertheless, it is true that situations can be altered by political measures just as well as, and at times even better than, through the "organic" development of *laissez faire* capitalism.

Competition and the Destruction of Capital

In class society the distinction between politics and economics refers to differences of method for appropriating and distributing the products taken from the producers by the owners and controllers of capital. Political methods influence economic measures and vice versa. From this point of view, the difference between state protection in the "old" order and state control in the "new" order is only a difference in degree, a quantitative change that is determined by the highly monopolistic character of capitalist society. The increase in control is an attempt to break the stagnation of the depression, i.e., the decline

⁶ *The New York Times* of May 11th, 1941, quotes L. Domeratzky, trade specialist of the Department of Commerce, as saying: "Confronted by a political combination on the Continent of Europe under the domination of Germany, the *individual American entrepreneur* would hardly be strong enough to find a market for his product or service except on terms laid down by the National Socialist State; ... the mere fact that an American product or service might be superior would not be a sufficient basis for successful export trade... . If we should be compelled to adopt economic self-sufficiency as a national policy, it would involve a degree of economic planning that might seriously affect some of our fundamental political institutions."

⁷ *Letters to Dr. Kugelmann*; p. 114.

⁸ *Germany Economy*; p. XIII.

⁹ Eric Voegelin writes in "Some Problems of German Hegemony" (*The Journal of Politics*, May 1941, p. 166): "Where the revolutionary and military expansion was successful, it resulted in a radical change of personnel in all governmental key positions... . The measures employed ... range from simple dismissal to detention in concentration camps, killing, and forced emigration."

of competition during the crisis. It is true that the crisis itself sharpens competition. However, this intensified competition at first only hastens the decline through its destruction of capital values. Because of numerous bankruptcies the crisis leads to further capital concentration and to a situation where those enterprises which can weather the depression are once more capable of increasing the profitability of their production. *The competitive struggle, for a time fought almost exclusively in the sphere of distribution, is again fought mainly in the sphere of production.* This latter kind of competition leads to a new prosperity because it is a competition by way of capital investments.

In former depressions a number of capitalist enterprises disappeared. Those that the state did not wish to see disappear it had to support with subsidies either by government financing or protectionist measures. Long before Hitler's ascendancy in Germany, a great number of capitalist enterprises were entirely dependent upon state subsidies. The same was true to a less extent in other nations. However, the continuation of competition by way of capital investments depends on the successful destruction of capital in the sphere of distribution. National protection of capital contradicts the destructive needs of the internationally determined economy. The more the state interferes, the greater the difficulty of overcoming the depression. The deeper the depression, the greater the need for state interferences.

Furthermore, the more monopolization advanced, the less was the crisis able to serve as the destroyer of capital. The monopolies were powerful enough to safeguard themselves at the cost of the rest of society. The crisis in the traditional sense disappeared, but prosperity in the traditional sense disappeared, too. Capitalist development ceased to appear as a cycle of depression and prosperity, and economists began to ponder over the meaning of "long" and "short" waves in the business cycle. They began to speak of monopoly capitalism as a system of "imperfect competition." In short, because monopolies could not be so easily destroyed as were formerly the small enterprises, the competition that previously deepened but also overcame the depression lost its "regulative" force.

Every society is in need of regulation. If the competitive process no longer serves as the "regulator," social chaos is bound to increase. Short of the complete socialization of society, that is, the attempt to regulate production and distribution directly and consciously in accordance with social needs and desires, there is no way of bringing "order" into the prevailing society other than by a revival of competition. This fact is acknowledged by both liberal and fascist economists. The former, however, advocate the return to an earlier developmental stage; they advocate, that is, breaking up existing monopolies and reestablishing more general competition. The latter not only want, but actually bring about, the return of competition.

The liberal attempt to recapture the past is illusory. Breaking up monopolies without altering the basis of capital production can lead only to the reformation of monopolies. One cannot have the material basis of present-day capitalism, the widespread division of labor and large-scale industry, without having monopolies. The whole thing is a practical irresponsibility; it is the wish of the dying to live their lives all over again. Their hopes merely serve the ideological needs of monopolistic capitalism in its struggle against the totalitarian states.

A competition that serves as a "regulator" of capitalistic production and distribution can be revived only in the fascistic manner, that is, by breaking up the monopolistically-determined stagnation through still greater monopolization. Formerly the competitive struggle was waged simultaneously by competitive enterprises among themselves, by monopolistic enterprises among themselves, and by competitive against monopolistic enterprises. Likewise today the whole of the capitalist world is engaged in

the competitive struggle, whether still largely competitive, outspokenly monopolistic, or already completely state-controlled. Just as previously the “initiative” was on the side of the strongest capitalists, that is, on the side of monopolies and was “ended” in their favor, so today the “initiative” is on the side of the totalitarian state as the stronger monopolistic force. The result will be the victory of fascism independent of the question of whether or not the present fascist states will be victorious in the current war. Because the fascist state is able to revive a forceful competition *it is the true representative of present-day capitalism*. It operates with all the competitive weapons at the disposal of capitalist society simultaneously and in a coordinated manner in both the sphere of production and the sphere of distribution. Its competitive attack is all-inclusive: economic, political, and military. In short, *present-day competition is total war*.

The Decisive Factor: The Labor Market

At present the plight of capitalist society is blamed on everything except the real cause—the capitalist system of production. Liberal economists make the appearance of state-controlled economies responsible for all the woes of the world. The “elimination of the market” in the totalitarian state and the destruction of “international free trade” they see as the beginning of the end of all civilization. Blaming extra-economic factors for the disturbances in their economy, they never seemed to notice that just as many of those factors were operative when all went well. If formerly state interferences were less important, it was because capital itself was less developed.

Fascist economists, however, blame liberal economies for the prolongation of the crisis because liberal society opposes a necessary reorganization of world economy. And just as formerly monopolistic trends in capitalist society were mistaken for socializing tendencies, so, at present, fascists look upon state-control as the realization of a nationally limited socialism. Though only the fascists, and not even all of them, dare to draw this conclusion, socialists opposed to both the “old” and the “new” order find difficulty naming this new fascist society because of the apparent disappearance of “market-determined production” in the fascist states.

However, *what market* no longer determines production? Or rather, *what market* did determine production in the “old” capitalism? Bourgeois economists assume that capitalist production and distribution are regulated by the market. The market, that is, selling and buying to realize a profit, is seen as a conglomeration of competing capitalists. Their competition, it is argued, forbids extraordinary prices and thus exceptional profits. If there is a shortage of commodities of some sort, prices will rise, but only temporarily. An increased production of those commodities initiated by the great demand will reduce the price again to “normal.” The price-mechanism based on competition is held to be the “regulator” of production and distribution by all economists whether they belong to the classical, marginal, or neo-classical school. The first school makes the price dependent on the “objective supply,” the second on the “subjective demand,” and the third on both. Even the Historical School and the Institutionalists do not deny the existence of the price-mechanism, but believe that it could, in addition, be influenced by other forces than merely those of supply and demand. On price fluctuations depend the grandeur and misery of all capitalists. Thus the price-mechanism is their only real concern.

Because the beginnings of capitalism were cumbersome, the transformation of surplus labor into capital generally went through the metamorphoses: money-commodity-money plus profit. But this historically-conditioned awkwardness cannot be taken as the essential feature of capital production. With the growth of capital, an increasing amount of surplus labor was directly converted into capital without first having to enter the

exchange process. The growth of capital implies an always greater "exchange" *in natura* because a progressively greater part of the social labor is converted into means of production. In America, for example, during the period from 1899 to 1922, the ratio between quantities of labor and capital changed continuously

"until in 1922 only 37 per cent as much labor was combined with each unit of capital as in 1899, and reciprocally 270 per cent as much capital combined with a unit of labor as then."¹⁰

This change in the "organic composition" of capital alters the whole structure of capitalism; it changes the importance and the character of the market. Because of the monopolization of capital connected with this process the control over diverse products was concentrated into fewer hands; and thus non-market distribution for purposes of capital formation became more important.¹¹

The market for production goods is the market for capitalists, not the market that regulates production and consumption. With the growing interdependence of capital through concentration, cartelization, and monopolization, the capital-market contracts. Bookkeeping transactions replace market transactions. Though the reproduction process of capital is still a circulation process, the latter is no longer in need of the old market arrangements. The market is not only controlled but is slowly abolished in favor of the direct transformation of surplus labor into capital.

All other phenomena related to market relations change with the above changes. The transformation from monopolistic to governmental control of production, prices, profits, and investments; the change from tariff regulations that serve the growth of home industries to absolute control of all foreign trade; the fact that banks which previously were *mainly* credit-organizations are now *mainly* politico-economic instruments; that concentration by means of acquisition of shares, contracts, interlocking directorates is now augmented by direct political decisions—the equivalent of a combination of all previous control measures; the fact that monetary policy is to a larger extent used politically rather than economically; that syndicates, corporations, conventions are now enforced by governmental decree when previously they were established by both consent and force; the fact that non-profitable enterprises are now operated whereas, previously, unprofitable industries were state-supported; all this and more does not indicate the ascendancy of a new economic system. All this indicates is that the distribution of the surplus products appropriated from the workers has changed once again as it always has throughout capitalist development.

The differences between state controls in the various nations are differences only in degree.¹² Further development in this direction will make all capitalist nations once more look alike as they appeared to look during the hey-day of liberalism because nobody dared to look closer. The difference between the German Four Year Plan and the American armament program is the difference between an early start and a belated reaction to current war needs. The new government-financed enterprises in the U. S. for air-craft, aluminum, magnesium, steel and synthetic rubber production differ from the *Goering Reichswerke* only in size. In the "war of production" now waged, the difference

¹⁰ P. H. Douglas, *The Theory of Wages*; p. 129.

¹¹ Henry Ford, to use a relatively simple example, today buys less from other enterprises than he did before. He produces to a large extent his own factories, machines tools, steel, soy beans, etc. Thus his capital grows by a more direct conversion of surplus labor into capital; that is, a growing part of his production does not enter the market at all, nor is it taken from the market.

¹² For a good description of this see Monograph No. 40 of the Temporary National Economic Committee, *Regulation of Economic Activities in Foreign Countries*. For capital concentration and monopoly control and related questions see *The Structure of the American Economy* of the National Resources Committee. Also the respective Monographs of the Investigation of Concentration of Economic Power" by the T.N.E.C.

of size will disappear or even shift in favor of the “democracies.” If private property, private initiative, the profit motive and economic competition still exist in America, so do they exist in Germany. In the latter nation, it is true, they exist only by virtue of government support and toleration; but the development in America shows clearly that here, too, private property and all that goes with it become increasingly subordinated to the needs of government. The war which hastens this development is not a “state of emergency” that will disappear as soon as peace breaks out. It is the outcome of the previous “peace”; the structural changes it brings about are based just as much on previous events as on the war itself.

The fact that the capitalist market contracts until nothing is left but the buying and selling of labor power does not transform the production of exchange values into a production for use.¹³ The production of “use-values” today, that is, production carried on according to the demands of crisis and war, without apparent regard for profitability, still serves only the production of profits, or rather is intended to serve such purposes. It is a sort of “investment,” an advance of capital for future returns. The apparent loss, it is hoped, will be compensated for at a later date; just as many enterprisers in former times, provided they had sufficient reserves, sold below production cost in order to sell above “value” at another time. The barter system, too, has changed nothing in the capitalist manner of exchange; less labor is still bartered for more labor.¹⁴

These changes in market relations do not indicate the beginning of a consciously regulated social system so long as the class relations behind the market relations continue to determine production and distribution. *Class relations are market relations between capital and labor.* This market is nowhere disturbed and no one seems to have any intention of ending it. The market on which labor power is sold and bought is the *only market that determines production.* The fact that labor is no longer “free” in the sense that it was “free” in liberal capitalism, the fact that it can now be drafted whenever the state thinks it necessary, that it can be ordered from place to place just as the government sees fit, that it can no longer choose its employment at will, all these and other restrictions do not invalidate the fact that labor is also still “free” from all productive property, that its power to produce is still a commodity bought by governments at a price.

The *whole* of the capitalist market—except the market-relations between capital and labor—may disappear without affecting the capitalist form of production at all. The market-relation between capital and labor is the only capitalist relation *per se*. Short of its abolition the historically developed form of production for human exploitation that has been called capitalism cannot disappear.

Capitalism, Fascism, and the Law of Value

The classical economists, in distinction to the modern price theorists who do not care to find an objective basis for their reasoning, did not stop at the description of the supply and demand mechanism. They said that its existence proved the relevance of a “law of value” that regulated society as the law of gravity regulates the known universe.

The “law of value” means that the “value” of a commodity is determined by the labor-time socially necessary for its production. Thus the “law of supply and demand” realized an exchange of labor-time against labor-time. It saw to it that this exchange was

¹³ Manya Gordon in her book *Workers Before and After Lenin* (p. 180) quotes Premier Molotov as saying in 1932: “It is necessary to oppose vehemently all those who believe that socialism means production for use.”

¹⁴ According to the U. S. Department of Commerce *Economic Review of Foreign Countries in 1939 and 1940*, Germany’s balance of trade, even under war conditions, has become more favorable than it was before the war. The Reich was enabled to reduce its clearing indebtedness in many countries.

a more or less equal one, for if one seller should succeed in getting more for less, and another should be forced to accept less for more, these occurrences were only deviations from the general rule which would not invalidate this rule. In the long run some sort of equilibrium should be observable. This equilibrium would also realize the necessary distribution of the available labor-time between the different branches of production that were engaged in satisfying human needs.

The Marxian critique of bourgeois economy began with a challenge of its "law of value." Marx pointed out that this law was not at all working in the manner in which the bourgeois theoreticians thought it worked. Rather, in the midst of all the accidental and ever-fluctuating exchange relations, the law of value asserts itself "like an overriding law of nature just as the law of gravity does when a house falls about our ears."¹⁵ It is obvious, Marx once explained,

"that the mass of products corresponding to the different needs require different and quantitatively determined masses of the total labor of society. That this necessity of distributing social labor in definite proportions cannot be done away with is self evident... . What can change, in changing historical circumstances, is the *form* in which these laws operate... . The form in which this proportional division of labor operates in a society where the interconnection of social labor is manifested in the *private exchange* of the individual products of labor, is precisely the *exchange value* of these products."¹⁶

Thus the *real value relation*, if one speaks in capitalistic terms, is the necessity for distributing social labor in definite proportions- the need for the social coordination of individual operations based on the social division of labor in order to satisfy human, i.e., social needs. *The capitalistic value relation* is a *specific form* of this *real "value relation."* However, in its *capitalistic form* the "law of value" cannot serve as a *continuous* "automatic regulator" that squares the social needs with the social division of labor. There never was "equality" of power and opportunity either in society or among the capitalists, there never was "equality" in the exchange process. Consequently no "regulation" could be brought about by a "law of value" that was realized through the exchange of "equal" quantities of labor.¹⁷

In capitalism, human necessities must first be translated into value relations before they can be realized. But *value production* is *surplus value production*. It is the profit need that determines what and how much is produced. The profit need may or may not coincide with the needs of social life. If it coincides, this is merely accidental. In brief, the class relations in society and the production of surplus value that they imply "regulate" production and distribution, supply and demand. No mysterious "invisible hand" is guiding society; it is "regulated" by the relentless permanent social war.

Because of the fact that capitalist production is profit-production, the accumulation of capital is an accumulation for the sake of accumulation. This accumulation, in turn, destroys competition. Each capitalist, in order to remain such, must fight other capitalists; the famous profit incentive is the incentive to destroy capital. The whole production, being a production to appropriate the surplus labor of the workers, is a production that *continuously disrupts the connection between social needs and capitalist needs*. Instead of mastering production, the people are mastered by production. The more capital accumulates, the more it destroys both the capacity to *continue the accumulation process*

¹⁵ *Capital*. Vol. I; p. 86.

¹⁶ *Letters to Dr. Kugelmann*; pp. 73-74.

¹⁷ In his book *The Politics of Democratic Socialism* (p. 101) E. F. M. Durbin writes: "If hitherto industries lived by strangling each other, and benefits were gained for a section by starving, not by feeding, the whole of society, with the increase of the number of monopolized sections, even the sectional benefits diminished, as all prices rose against everybody. We came to live, not by taking in each other's washing, but by each man garroting his neighbor."

and to *maintain some sort of proportioning of the social labor* in order to secure social life. Short of the destruction of the whole capitalist system, the latter situation can be temporarily remedied only by *remedying the situation which prevents continued capital formation*. The capitalist crisis, by re-establishing a lost basis for the continuation of profit production, temporarily also re-proportioned the social labor so that society could maintain some sort of stability. The only law that asserted itself throughout the capitalist development was the *law of value in the Marxian sense*, that is, the *law of crises and collapse*. Naturally, the bourgeoisie could not admit that the only "order" to be found in their system was the disorder of the crisis. Thus they looked everywhere to discover the forces and reasons that disturbed the smooth working of the "market laws"- which explains the ridiculous but gigantic literature on economics.

If in capitalist society "the determination of the magnitude of value by labor-time is a secret, hidden under the apparent fluctuations in the relative values of commodities,"¹⁸ the secret deepens with the development of capitalism. Though "logically" the opposite should occur, because the exchange contracts, because the number of independent producers relative to the total capital decreases, because control displaces anarchy in production and distribution, actually the demands of the law of value are violated in increasing measure. Because the number of anonymous, atomistic competitors declines and cost, sales prices, and margins are increasingly "regulated," the

"realization of a rational economy relies on the will, insight, and abilities of the few persons who are in dictatorial command of the whole of society. Thus a decisive irrational, personal, and subjective element comes in."¹⁹

The reason for this increasing "irrationality" should not be looked for, however, in the abilities or lack of abilities of those who rule society dictatorially *but in the dictatorial rule itself*.

Regulation is possible only in "production by freely associated men, and is consciously exercised by them in accordance with a settled plan."²⁰ But then it would be senseless to continue to speak of a "law of value." "Value is a strictly historical category; neither before nor after capitalism does there exist value production."²¹ As long as the means of production oppose the workers as capital, however, i.e., as long as a *third* party has control over them, these means of production can be used only to create surplus products for this third agency. So long, too, will the law of value and not planning "regulate" production and distribution.

In the controlled economy the state acts-as previously the private entrepreneur acted-as a *third factor* in addition to the two needed for production: means of production and labor. This third agency forbids, but at the same time cannot prevent; the divorce between production and social needs. The controlling position of any ruling class depends on its capacity to keep their subjects subdued and "satisfied." Just to keep them subdued would not be enough today because it would lead to a severe decline of productivity. The rulers are forced to undertake actions that secure a sort of social balance. Though each class, group, or state acts and can only act to safeguard its own interests, it is forced nevertheless to *react* to the actual social needs.²²

¹⁸ *Capital*. Vol. I; p. 74.

¹⁹ H von Beckerath. *The Philosophical Review*. Nov. 1937; p. 595.

²⁰ *Capital*. Vol. I; p. 92.

²¹ F. Engels in a letter to Kautsky [20. September 1884] in *Aus der Frühzeit des Marxismus*; p. 145.

²² Hitler's rise to power, his foreign policy, and his internal program are all interdependent. To revive German imperialism, all else that has been done in Germany was also necessary-the "ending of unemployment," the increasing of state control, the rearmament program, etc, and vice versa. These actions had their repercussions because to create "social balance" in one class society is to dislocate it in another.

Previous processes of economic and political development created a situation that endangered both the profits of a growing number of capitalists and the lives of millions of people. There was no longer in evidence any sort of "regulation" between production and distribution that allowed for even a miserable social existence. The *violated real law of value* asserted itself *capitalistically* in a gigantic crisis. It forced the ruling classes of the most depressed nations first to react to its demands and to try to bring about a distribution of social labor that allowed for both the continuation of capital accumulation and the postponement of the collapse.

However, the world is not so often radically re-divided as the productive process changes nor so often as the composition of capital is altered. Maintaining profitability in the divided world of many privileged groups, classes, nations demands reorganization by force. In the world as it is, it would help Hitler very little to declare himself not only a national but also an international socialist. Other class societies would fight him just the same. It would not help Churchill to declare himself converted from *laissez faire* internationalism into a national socialist; the struggle between "democracy" and "fascism" would still go on.

Because it was a class society which reacted to the demands of the law of value its reaction gave new impetus and additional force to the old activities that were designed to combat depressions. "The general character of the action taken to meet the democratic demand arising out of the trade cycle is always the same. It is called 'planning.' It actually consists in the substitution of monopoly control for competition in all the markets and industries it touches."²³

Once more now, the crisis is fought with still greater concentration, still more "planning," but this greater "planning" involves a greater destruction of vested interests. Because "all contradictions of the capitalist production come to the fore in the general economic world-crisis,"²⁴ the destruction of those vested interests demands warfare. The total war indicates that present-day society is still determined by a law of value that asserts itself like an "overriding law of nature." Hence the inability to "understand" how the war could happen in our "civilization," and the "magnetic force" that draws nation after nation into the conflict. If any proof should be needed that the world is still a capitalistic world, the war itself is proof enough. Those nations complying with the demands of the law of value most vigorously, that is, the fascist nations, have to be appraised therefore as the *most capitalistic*.

What Is Capitalism?

It is often assumed that if it were not for the war, Hitler's production for warfare, i.e., less butter and more cannons, could be transformed into a social production, i.e., no cannons and more butter. Hitler's production is not solely "war production"; it is capitalistic production pure and simple and therefore also war production. The assumption, furthermore, that socialism might be introduced in Germany and Russia if Hitler and Stalin desired it and if it were not for the "enemy," or the "war," is senseless because all economy is world economy. These nations are not isolated; they are integrated parts of the world production and distribution, just as much determined by other nations as they themselves determine the rest of the world. Aside from this, the continuation of class rule in the "new order" precludes *social production*. Production is determined by the need of the ruling group to remain on top, just as previously it was

²³ Durbin, *The Politics of Democratic Socialism*; p. 100.

²⁴ K. Marx, *Theorien über den Mehrwert*; Vol. III, p. 318.

determined by the need of the capitalists to increase their capital in order to remain capitalists. But, it is argued, just as the totalitarian state eliminates competition within the territory it controls; it does away with political competition by the creation of the one-party state. However, we have seen already that the "end of national competition" was no more than a necessary prerequisite for a sharpened international competition. The elimination of democracy is the prerequisite for a greater "democratic" participation in the international scramble for power positions. After all, Germany, Russia, Italy, do play a greater part in international politics than they did twenty years ago. Besides, as Stolper has remarked, "the class struggle which the party (controlling the nation) went out to suppress was only shifted into the party."²⁵

The struggle of all against all has not been ended in the "new order." Private incentives are only detoured; they are now directed toward political and social positions which determine the degree to which one may participate in the enjoyment of surplus value. There are rich and poor people in the "new order";²⁶ exploited and exploiters, employed and unemployed, the latter being dressed in uniform and sent to their own destruction. Production for the sake of production that benefited minorities and kept majorities in misery is, in the "new order," still production for the sake of production-but only more so, because the results of human labor are destroyed faster than they are created. If formerly the products of labor-capital-only served to increase the exploitation of labor, they now serve to put the workers to death on the battlefields of the world. There is no sense in hoping that the privileged groups will on their own part change the situation in which the products of society destroy their producers. The more the privileged positions disappear, the fiercer the struggle for the remaining positions: Whoever has or believes he has an opportunity to reach them will struggle unless the whole basis for social privileges is done away with. This, however, can be done only by those who have never a chance to rise, that is, by the proletarian masses.

Capitalist production necessitates a social situation wherein the means of production belong to one class in society. Another class must have at its disposal nothing but its labor power. The divorce of the laborers from the means of production is the prerequisite for and the basis of capitalistic production. So far as this fundamental capitalistic relationship is concerned nothing has changed in the totalitarian systems. What has been altered is the relationship between government and individual capitalists. In the democracies, individual ownership predominates over governmental control; in the fascist states, governmental control over individual ownership. In Russia, alone, individual ownership has been done away with altogether and the state has complete control of the productive apparatus and natural resources.

The trends of development indicate that the democracies travel in the direction of fascism and the fascist nations in the direction of the Russian system. But in all these states the real basis of capitalistic production has not been abolished. However different the world may look to individual proprietors who have been displaced by governmental agencies, for the great mass of the population nothing of real importance has taken place. They have changed their masters as they changed them before in the hiring and firing process, or when they shifted from private to governmental employment. If the "fascist revolution" involves no more than the change of control of the means of production from the hands of private entrepreneurs into those of government officials, nothing new has evolved as regards the relationship between capital and labor.

²⁵ *German Economy*; p. 234.

²⁶ German income tax figures for 1938 disclosed an increase in the number and income of taxpayers in the highest brackets, and sharp proportional decreases among those at the lowest levels.

The capital-labor relationship is the only one that really concerns the working class. Unable or unwilling to alter it by their own independent actions, the workers remain apathetic toward the struggle between fascism and democracy. They are not opposed to state control of the economy. So long as they are willing to work for capital at all, they are just as willing to work for the government as for private enterprises. That the workers in the democratic nations nevertheless participate in the fight against fascism is not a sign of a genuine anti-fascism on their part. They are merely opposed to *German fascism*, that is, they are defending the capitalistic interests of their own countries. The anti-fascism angle of this struggle is only incidental; its absence would alter only some of the propaganda phrases employed.

From Liberalism to 'Statism'

Capitalists far more than the workers are affected by the recent social transformations. That this should come to them as a surprise only shows once more how little they understand their own society. Bourgeois thinkers, however, foresaw quite early what has now come to pass.²⁷ If their present-day heirs despise the most recent metamorphoses of the capitalist system, some of their forefathers²⁸ found delight in the thought that at a later day the state would not only symbolically but actually represent the "whole of society."

Capitalistic development displaced individual capitalists by organized capitalist groups; individual workers by trade or political organizations. Just as the market mechanism was increasingly disrupted through this development, so the apparatus of the state became increasingly incapable of serving under the new conditions. Additional state powers were needed to assure some sort of social stability. The *laissez faire* arguments against government power became ridiculous. The

"question was no longer whether business could, or ought to, stop government, but among what groups the business of governing the country was to be distributed."²⁹

The trend towards increasing centralization asserts itself, however, only within the chaotic interplay of various monopolies and pressure-groups. Monopolies began, either by reason of strength or weakness, to cooperate with the state, whose controlling powers increased correspondingly. Political pressure groups operated for or against the state, for or against other autonomous groups, or against the indirect pressure of still unorganized activities. The state-essentially a monopolistic enterprise like any other in the capitalist society-used those various forces operating in society to its own advantage.³⁰ In the attempt to support the monopolies the state increased its own power. In turn, "the corporations only assisted in the complete breakdown of individual freedom without winning freedom for themselves."³¹ Within the general crisis conditions the state became

²⁷ Hobbes believed that a totalitarian state might be needed to secure order in the capitalist society. His *Leviathan*, writes R. H. S. Crossman (*Government and the Governed*; p. 69) "is the first democratic attack upon democracy." Hegel's discussion of the various stages of government, writes H. Marcuse (*Reason and Revolution*; p. 59) "is a concrete description of the development from liberalism to an authoritarian political system... The gist of Hegel's analysis is that liberalistic society gives birth to an authoritarian state."

²⁸ Saint-Simon and Comte, for example, derived their optimism precisely from the authoritarian tendencies inherent in the capitalistic reproduction process. They dreamed of a conscious re-organization of society through the wisdom and intelligence of a selected ruling body which would plan and establish a desired social harmony.

²⁹ J. J. Robbins and G. Heckscher, "The Constitutional Theory of Autonomous Groups." *The Journal of Politics*. Vol. 3, No. 1; p. 19.

³⁰ Remember, for instance, the use the Roosevelt Administration made of the C.I.O. movement in order to consolidate its power, won by virtue of the depression, and to strengthen the government's position against all other groups.

³¹ Robbins and Heckscher, op. cit. *The Journal of Politics*. Vol. 3, No. 1; p. 23.

the strongest force in society. The new and dominating position of the state monopoly within the monopolistic society allowed parties, competing for state control, to oppose both the workers and the bourgeoisie.³² J. C. Calhoun, by the mid-nineteenth century, sounded

“a warning against the danger to constitutional government from a corporation of politicians having a cohesive group interest and an economic base in the national treasury.”³³

Parties developed corporate interests of their own. “The existence of the state as an economic base has given the professional politicians a degree of independence from economic interest groups”³⁴ and has thereby prepared the way which, finally-within the general crisis conditions-led to complete control over all the economy by a party-controlled state apparatus. The politicians found little opposition³⁵ in the weakened bourgeoisie, because

“one of the most important developments during the last fifty years was the separation of, and even enmity between, enterprise and property. The development of the stock company is partly responsible for this; even more responsible however, is the increasing indebtedness of the enterprises. The latter really no longer belonged to the entrepreneurs.”³⁶

To speak of a difference between property and state was only another way of saying that the division of surplus value was still largely determined by a decentralized competition. It is now determined by a centralized competition. Those who lose in this sharpened competition see in the “new order” not only a new arrangement in the distribution of surplus value hut the end of all social life because it means the end of *their capitalistic existence*. Those who win in this battle will pose as the creators of a “new society,” a better society, for it is a society that does secure *for them* a better capitalistic existence. For the workers, however, no *new* problem arises. Their goal remains the establishment of a *direct unity* between production and consumption and thus the abolition of the existence of a separate class or political group that controls capital and exploits labor.

³² H. Goering writes in *Germany Reborn* (p. 67) : “It will always remain Hitler’s greatest merit that he did not bridge the gulf between proletariat and bourgeoisie, but filled it by hurling both Marxian parties and bourgeois parties into the abyss.”

³³ Quoted by N. E. Long in *The Journal of Politics*, May 1941; p. 201.

³⁴ N. E. Long, “Party and Constitution.” *The Journal of Politics*, May 1941; p. 202.

³⁵ *The New Statesman and Nation* (November 23, 1940) writes: “It is the railway shareholders who now clamor for nationalization since they know that the state must give them what is known as a ‘fair return in perpetuity.’ The banks are quite indifferent to such a threat of nationalization. They know they won’t lose in the process, and the big executives will find a peaceful home in the Consolidated Fund. There are many captains of industry who would now like to be the Commissars of State-fostered monopolies with the same or larger incomes obtained free of risk. There is even a horrid suspicion that some Labour leaders could be flattered by the offer of such posts.”

³⁶ E. Wagemann, *Wirtschaftspolitische Strategie*; p. 341.

Pannekoek's "The Party and the Working Class"

(1941)

Source: *Paul Mattick Home page*;

Proofed: and corrected by Geoff Traugh, August 2005.

Our custom of omitting names has led to a misunderstanding. The article, "The Party and the Working Class," which, after it had appeared in Council Correspondence, was reprinted by the APCF and discussed in *Solidarity* (Nos. 34-36) by Frank Maitland, was written by Anton Pannekoek. The latter is at present in no position to answer Maitland's critique. Being in some way responsible for the contents of Council Correspondence, I will try to answer some of Maitland's questions.

The problems raised cannot be approached in an abstract manner and in general terms, but only specifically in regard to concrete historical situations. When Pannekoek said that the "belief in parties" is the main reason for the impotence of the working class, he spoke of parties as they have actually existed. It is obvious that they have not served the working class, nor have they been a tool for ending class rule. In Russia the party became a new ruling and exploiting institution. In Western Europe, parties have been abolished by fascism and have thus proved themselves incapable either of emancipating the workers or of raising themselves into power positions. (The fascist parties cannot be regarded as instruments designed to end the exploitation of labour). In America parties serve not the workers but the capitalists. Parties have fulfilled all sorts of functions, but none connected with the real needs of the workers.

Maitland does not question these facts. Like the Christians who reject criticism with the argument that Christianity has never been tried in earnest, Maitland argues that "the problem is not one of party or no party, but of what kind of party." Even if it is true that hitherto all parties have failed, he thinks that that does not prove that a new party, his "conception of the party," will also fail. It is clear that a "conception of a party" cannot fail merely because real parties have failed. But then "conceptions" do not matter. The party of which he speaks does not exist. His arguments have to be proven in practice; but there is no such practice. All parties that have thus far functioned started out with Maitland's conception of what a party ought to be. This did not hinder them from violating this conception throughout their history.

The party "Lenin strove to create," for instance, and the party he actually created were two different things because Lenin and his party were only parts of history; they could not force history into their own conceptions. There are other forces in society besides conceptions that shape events. Maitland may be right in saying that the "present debacle of the Comintern does not show that Lenin's conception of the party was incorrect," but the debacle certainly shows that, independent of his conception, the party was indeed "incorrect" if measured by Maitland's ideas and the needs of the international working class.

The party, Maitland maintains, "is a historic creation, which cannot be thrown aside." Unfortunately that was true in the past history has also shown, however, that parties were not what they were supposed to be. They are the historic creation of liberal

capitalism and within this particular setting they served – for a time – the needs of the workers, but only incidentally. They were chiefly involved in building up the group interest and social influence of the party. They became capitalistic institutions, participating in the exploitation of labour and fighting with other capitalistic groups for the control of power positions. Because of general crisis conditions, the concentration of capital, and the centralisation of political power, the state apparatus became the most important social power centre. A party that got control over the state – either legally or illegally – could transform itself into a new ruling class. This is what parties did or tried to do. Wherever the party succeeded, it did not serve the workers. Just the opposite occurred: the workers served the party. Capitalism, too, is a “historic creation.” If the “party cannot be thrown aside because it is a historic creation,” how is Maitland going to abolish capitalism now that it is identical with the one-party state? In reality both must be “thrown aside”; to end capitalism today implies the ending of the party.

For Maitland “the party should be the material apparatus for integrating the conscious minority and the unconscious mass.” The mass is “unconscious,” however, for the same reason that it is powerless. The “conscious” minority could not alter the one situation without changing the other. It cannot bring “consciousness” to the masses unless it brings them power. If the consciousness and the power depend on the party, the whole class struggle question takes on a religious character. If the people that constitute the party are “good” people, they will give the masses power and consciousness; if they are “bad” people they will withhold both. There is no question of “integration” involved here, but only a question of “ethics.” Thus we may trust not only in abstract conceptions as to what a party ought to be but also in the good will of men. In brief, we must trust our leaders. What parties can give, however, they can also take away. Under conditions as they are, the “consciousness” of the minority is either meaningless, or it is connected with a power position in society. To increase “consciousness” is thus to increase the power of the group that incorporates it. There arises no “integration” between “leaders” and “led”; instead, the existing gap between them widens continuously. The conscious group defends its position as a conscious group; it can defend this position only against the “unconscious” mass. The “integration” of the conscious minority and the unconscious mass is only a pleasanter-sounding description of the exploitation of the many by the few.

The fact that Maitland sees the party as the “material instrument” that co-ordinates thought and action reveals that his mind is still in the past. That is why he advocates the party of the future. The material apparatus (meetings, newspapers, books, cinema, radio, etc) of which he speaks has meanwhile ceased to be at the disposal of such parties as Maitland has in mind. The stage of capitalistic development in which parties could grow up like any other business concern and utilise the instruments of propaganda to their own advantage has ended. In present-day society, the development of labour organisations can no longer follow traditional paths. A party that “develops class consciousness in the masses” can no longer arise. The propaganda means are centralised and at the exclusive service of the ruling class or party. They cannot be used to unseat them. If the workers are not able to develop methods of struggle beyond the control of the ruling groups, they will not be able to emancipate themselves. A party is no weapon against the ruling classes; they do not even exist in fascist societies. Against the present power of the state-party-capital combination only the “conscious action of the whole mass of people” will help. As long as that mass remains “unconscious”, as long as it needs the “brain” of a party, this mass will remain powerless, for that “brain” will not develop.

Yet, there is no reason for despair. We can raise another question: what is this “consciousness” that parties supposedly have to bring to the workers? And what is that “unconsciousness” which demands the support of the masses by a separate “brain” – by

the party? Is that kind of consciousness that we find in parties really necessary in order to change society? What has been really dangerous hitherto for the masses and their needs is precisely that "consciousness" that prevails in party organisations. The "consciousness" of which Maitland speaks, as it was experienced in practice, has nothing whatever to do with a "consciousness" needed to rebel against the present, and to organise a new society. The lack of that sort of consciousness that is nourished by parties is no lack at all as regards the practical needs of the working class.

The workers' job is essentially a simple one. It consists in recognising that all previously-existing ruling groups have hindered the development of a truly social production and distribution; in recognising the necessity for doing away with production and distribution as determined by the profit and power needs of special groups in society who control the means of production and the other social power sources. Production has to be shifted so that it can serve the real needs of the people; it has to become a production for consumption. When these things are recognised, the workers have to act upon them to realise their needs and desires. Little philosophy, sociology, economics and political science are needed to recognise those simple things and to act upon the recognition. The actual class struggle is here decisive and determining. But in the practical field of revolutionary and social activities the "conscious" minority is no better informed than the "unconscious" majority. Rather the opposite is true. This has been proven in all actual revolutionary struggles. Any factory organisation, furthermore, will be better able than an outside party to organise its production. There is enough non-party intelligence in the world to co-ordinate social production and distribution without the help or interference of parties specialised in ideological fields. The party is a foreign element in social production just as the capitalist class was an unnecessary third factor to the two needed for the carrying on of the social life: the means of production and labour. The fact that parties participate in class struggles indicates that those class struggles do not tend towards a socialistic goal. Socialism finally means nothing more than the elimination of that third factor that stands between the means of production and labour. The "consciousness" developed by parties is the "consciousness" of an exploiting group struggling for the possession of social power. If it would propagate a "socialist consciousness" it must first of all do away with the party concept and with the parties themselves.

The "consciousness" to rebel against and to change society is not developed by the "propaganda" of conscious minorities, but by the real and direct propaganda of events. The increasing social chaos endangers the habitual life of greater and ever greater masses of people and changes their ideologies. So long as minorities operate as separate groups within the mass, the mass is not revolutionary, but neither is the minority. Its "revolutionary conceptions" can still serve only capitalistic functions. If the masses become revolutionary, the distinction between conscious minority and unconscious majority disappears, and also the capitalistic function of the apparently "revolutionary consciousness" of the minority. The division between a conscious minority and an unconscious majority is itself historical. It is of the same order of the division between workers and bosses.

Just as the difference between workers and bosses tends to disappear in the wake of unsolvable crisis conditions and in the social levelling process connected therewith, so the distinction between conscious minority and unconscious mass will also disappear. Where it does not disappear we will have a fascist society.

"Integration" can only mean helping to do away with the distinction between conscious minority and unconscious mass. Within classes and within society differences will remain between people. Some will be more energetic than others, some cleverer than

others, etc. There will remain a division of labour. That these real differences froze into differences between capital and labour, into differences between party and mass, is due merely to historically conditioned specific production relations, to the capitalist mode of production. This distinction as regards social activity must be ended in order that capitalism may be ended. If one sees the need for “integration” he has to approach the problem in quite a different manner from Maitland. The “integration” has to go on not from the top down – where the party brings consciousness to the mass – but from the bottom up, where the class keeps all its intelligence and energy to itself, and does not isolate and thus capitalise it in separate organisations.

Production is social. All people, whatever they are or whatever they do, are, in a socially determined society, equally important. Their actual integration, not the “ideological integration” through the traditional party-mass relationship, is required. But this real integration, the human solidarity that is necessary in order to put an end to the misery of the world, must be fostered now. It can be developed only by destroying the forces which operate against it. Class solidarity and class actions can arise not with, but only against, groups and party interests.

August-September 1941

Otto Rühle and the German Labour Movement

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I

Otto Rühle’s activity in the German Labour Movement was related to the work of small and restricted minorities within and outside of the official labour organisations. The groups which he directly adhered to were at no time of real significance. And even within these groups he held a peculiar position; he could never completely identify himself with any organisation. He never lost sight of the general interests of the working class, no matter what specific political strategy he was advocating at any particular time. He could not regard organisations as an end in themselves, but merely as mediums for the establishment of real social relations and for the fuller development of the individual. Because of this broad view of life he was at times suspected of apostasy, yet he died as he lived – a Socialist in the true sense of the word.

Today every programme and designation has lost its meaning; socialists speak in capitalistic terms, capitalists in socialistic terms and everybody believes anything and nothing. This situation is merely the climax of a long development which has been initiated by the labour movement itself. It is now quite clear that only those in the traditional labour movement who opposed its undemocratic organisations and their tactics

can properly be called socialists. The labour leaders of yesterday and today did not and do not represent a workers' movement but only a capitalist movement of workers. Only by standing outside the labour movement has it been possible to work towards decisive social changes. The fact that even within the dominant labour organisations Rühle remained an outsider attests to his sincerity and integrity. His whole thinking was, however, determined by the movement which he opposed and it is necessary to analyse its characteristics in order to understand the man himself.

The official labour movement functioned neither in accordance with its original ideology nor with its real immediate interests. For a time it served as a control instrument of the ruling classes. First losing its independence, it was soon to lose its very existence. Vested interests under capitalism can be maintained only by the accumulation of power. The process of the concentration of capital and political power forces any socially important movement to attempt either to destroy capitalism or to serve it consistently. The old labour movement could not do the latter and was neither willing nor able to do the former. Content to be one monopoly among others it was swept aside by the capitalistic development toward the monopolistic control of monopolies.

Essentially the history of the old labour movement is the history of the capitalist market approached from a 'proletarian' point of view. The so-called market laws were to be utilised in favour of the commodity, labour power. Collective actions should lead to the highest possible wages. 'Economic power' gained in this manner was to be secured by way of social reform. To get the highest profits possible, the capitalists increased the organised control over the market. But this opposition between capital and labour also expressed an identity of interests. Both sides fostered the monopolistic re-organisation of capitalist society, though, to be sure, behind their consciously-directed activities there was finally nothing but the expansive need of capital itself. Their policies and aspirations, however much based on real considerations of facts and special needs, were still determined by the fetishistic character of their system of production.

Aside from commodity-fetishism, whatever meaning the market laws may have with regard to special fortunes and losses, and however they may be manipulated by one or another interest group, under no circumstances can they be used in favour of the working class as a whole. It is not the market which controls the people and determines the prevailing social relations but rather the fact that a separate group in society either owns or controls both the means of production and the instruments of suppression. Market situations, whatever they may be, always favour capital. And if they do not do so they will be altered, set aside or supplemented with more direct, more forceful and more basic powers inherent in the ownership or control of the means of production.

To overcome capitalism, actions outside the labour-capital-market relations are necessary, actions that do away with both the market and with class relations. Restricted to actions within the framework of capitalism, the old labour movement fought from the very beginning on unequal terms. It was bound to destroy itself or to be destroyed from without. It was destined either to be broken up internally by its own revolutionary opposition, which would give rise to new organisations, or doomed to be destroyed by the capitalistic change from a market to a controlled-market economy and the accompanying political alterations. Actually, the latter happened, for the revolutionary opposition within the labour movement failed to grow. It had a voice but no power and no immediate future, as the working class had just spent half a century entrenching its capitalistic enemy and building a huge prison for itself in the form of the labour movement. It is, therefore, still necessary to single out men like Otto Rühle in order to describe the modern revolutionary opposition, although such singling out is quite contrary to his own

point of view and to the needs of the workers who must learn to think in terms of classes rather than in terms of revolutionary personalities.

II

The first world war and the positive reaction of the labour movement to the slaughter surprised only those who did not understand capitalist society and the successful labour movement within its confines. But only a few actually understood. Just as the pre-war opposition within the labour movement can be brought into focus by mentioning the literary and scientific products of a few individuals among whom Rühle must be counted, so the 'workers' opposition' to the war may also be expressed in names like Liebknecht, Luxemburg, Mehring, Rühle and others. It is quite revealing that the anti-war attitude, in order to be effective at all, had first to find parliamentary permission. It had to be dramatised on the stage of a bourgeois institution, thus indicating its limitations from the very beginning. In fact, it served only as a forerunner of the bourgeois-liberal peace movement that finally succeeded in ending the war without disturbing the capitalistic status quo. If, in the beginning, most of the workers were behind the war-majority, they were no less behind the anti-war activity of their bourgeoisie which ended in the Weimar Republic. The anti-war slogans, although raised by revolutionists, merely served a particular brand of bourgeois politics and ended up where they started – in the bourgeois democratic parliament.

The real opposition to war and imperialism came to the fore in desertions from army and factory and in the slowly growing recognition on the part of many workers that their struggle against war and exploitation must include the fight against the old labour movement and all its concepts – it speaks in Rühle's favour that his own name disappeared quickly from the honour roll of the war opposition. It is clear, of course, that Liebknecht and Luxemburg were celebrated up to the beginning of the second world war only because they died long before the warring world had been restored to 'normalcy' and was again in need of dead labour heroes to support the living labour leaders who carried out a 'realistic' policy of reforms or served the foreign policy of Bolshevik Russia.

The first world war revealed more than anything else that the labour movement was part and parcel of bourgeois society. The various organisations in every nation proved that they had neither – the intention nor the means to fight capitalism, that they were interested only in securing their own existence within the capitalistic structure. In Germany this was especially obvious because within the international movement the German organisations were the largest and most unified. To hold on to what had been built up since Bismarck's anti-socialist laws, the minority opposition within the socialist party displayed a self restraint to an extent unknown in other countries. But, then, the exiled Russian opposition had less to lose; it had, furthermore, split away from the reformists and class-collaborationists a decade before the outbreak of the war. And it is quite difficult to see in the meek pacifist arguments of the Independent Labour Party any real opposition to the social patriotism that had saturated the British labour movement. But more had been expected of the German left-wing than of any other group within the International, and its behaviour at the outbreak of the war was therefore particularly disappointing. Apart from the psychological conditions of individuals, this behaviour was the product of the organisation-fetishism prevailing in the movement.

This fetishism demanded discipline and strict adherence to democratic formulae – the minority must submit to the will of the majority. And although it is clear that under capitalistic conditions these democratic formulae merely hide facts to the contrary, the

opposition failed to perceive that democracy within the labour movement did not differ from bourgeois democracy in general. A minority owned and controlled the organisations just as the capitalist minority owns and controls the means of production and the state apparatus. In both cases, the minorities by virtue of this control determine the behaviour of the majorities. But by force of traditional procedures, in the name of discipline and unity, uneasy and against its better knowledge, the anti-war minority supported social-democratic chauvinism. There was just one man in the German Reichstag of August 1914 – Fritz Kunert – who was not able to vote for war credits but who was also not able to vote against them and thus, to satisfy his conscience, abstained from voting altogether.

In the spring of 1915 Liebknecht and Rühle were the first to vote against the granting of war credits to the government. They remained alone for quite some time and found new companions only to the degree that the chances of a victorious peace disappeared in the military stalemate. After 1916 the radical anti-war attitude was supported and soon swallowed up by a bourgeois movement in search of a negotiated peace, a movement which, finally, was to inherit the bankrupt stock of German imperialism.

As violators of discipline Liebknecht and Rühle were expelled from the social-democratic Reichstag faction. Together with Rosa Luxemburg, Franz Mehring and others, more or less forgotten by now, they organised the group, Internationale, publishing a magazine of the same title in order to uphold the idea of internationalism in the warring world. In 1916 they organised the Spartakusbund which cooperated with other left-wing formations such as the Internationale Sozialist with Julian Borchardt as their spokesman, and the group around Johann Knief and the radical Bremen paper, Arbeiterpolitik. In retrospect it seems that the last-named group was the most advanced, that is, advanced away from social-democratic traditions and toward a new approach to the proletarian class struggle. How much the Spartakusbund still adhered to the organisation and unity fetish that ruled the German labour movement came to light in their vacillating attitude toward the first attempts at re-orienting the international socialist movement in Zimmerwald and Kienthal. The Spartacists were not in favour of a clean break with the old labour movement in the direction of the earlier Bolshevik example. They still hoped to win the party over to their own position and carefully avoided irreconcilable policies. In April 1917 the Spartakusbund merged with the Independent Socialists [Unabhängige Sozialdemokratische Partei Deutschlands] which formed the centre in the old labour movement but was no longer willing to cover up the chauvinism of the conservative majority-wing of the social-democratic party. Relatively independent, yet still within the Independent Socialist Party, the Spartakusbund left this organisation only at the end of the year 1918.

III

Within the Spartakusbund Otto Rühle shared Liebknecht's and Rosa Luxemburg's position which had been attacked by the Bolsheviks as inconsistent. And inconsistent it was but for pertinent reasons. At first glance, the main reason seemed to be based on the illusion that the Social Democratic Party could be reformed. With changing circumstances, it was hoped, the masses would cease to follow their conservative leaders and support the left-wing of the party. And although such illusions did exist, first with regard to the old party and later with regard to the Independent Socialists, they do not altogether explain the hesitancy on the part of the Spartacist leaders to adopt the ways of Bolshevism. Actually, the Spartacists faced a dilemma no matter in what direction they looked. By not trying – at the right time – to break resolutely with social-democracy, they

forfeited their chance to form a strong organisation capable of playing a decisive role in the expected social upheavals. Yet, in view of the real situation in Germany, in view of the history of the German labour movement, it was quite difficult to believe in the possibility of quickly forming a counter-party to the dominant labour organisations. Of course, it might have been possible to form a party in the Leninist manner, a party of professional revolutionists, willing to usurp power, if necessary, against the will of the majority of the working class. But this was precisely what the people around Rosa Luxemburg did not aspire to. Throughout the years of their opposition to reformism and revisionism, they had never narrowed their distance from the Russian 'left', from Lenin's concept of organisation and revolution. In sharp controversies, Rosa Luxemburg had pointed out that Lenin's concepts were of a Jacobin nature and inapplicable in Western Europe where not a bourgeois but a proletarian revolution was the order of the day. Although she, too, spoke of the dictatorship of the proletariat, it meant for her, in distinction to Lenin, "the manner in which democracy is employed, not in its abolition – it was to be the work of the class, and not of a small minority in the name of the class".

Enthusiastically as Liebknecht, Luxemburg and Rühle greeted the overthrow of Czarism, they did not lose their critical capacities, nor did they forget the character of the Bolshevik party, nor the historical limitations of the Russian Revolution. But regardless of the immediate realities and the final outcome of this revolution, it had to be supported as a first break in the imperialistic phalanx and as the forerunner of the expected German revolution. Of the latter many signs had appeared in strikes, hunger riots, mutinies and all kinds of passive resistances. But the growing opposition to the war and to Ludendorff's dictatorship did not find organisational expression to any significant extent. Instead of going to the left, the masses followed their old organisations, which lined up with the liberal bourgeoisie. The upheavals in the German Navy and finally the November rebellion were carried on in the spirit of social-democracy, that is, in the spirit of the defeated German bourgeoisie.

The German revolution appeared to be more significant than it really was. The spontaneous enthusiasm of the workers was more for ending the war than for changing existing social relations. Their demands, expressed through workers' and soldiers' councils, did not transcend the possibilities of bourgeois society. Even the revolutionary minority, and here particularly the Spartakusbund, failed to develop a consistent revolutionary programme. Its political and economic demands were of a twofold nature; they were constructed to serve as demands to be agreed upon by the bourgeoisie and its social-democratic allies, and as slogans of a revolution which was to do away with bourgeois society and its supporters.

Of course, within the ocean of mediocrity that was the German revolution there were revolutionary streams which warmed the hearts of the radicals and induced them to undertake actions historically quite out of place. Partial successes, due to the temporary stunning of the ruling classes and the general passivity of the broad masses – exhausted as they were by four years of hunger and war – nourished the hope that the revolution might end in a socialist society. Only no one really knew what the socialist society would be like, what steps ought to be taken to usher it into existence. "All power to the workers' and soldiers' councils", however attractive as a slogan, still left all essential questions open. The revolutionary struggles that followed November 1918 were thus not determined by the consciously concocted plans of the revolutionary minority but were thrust upon it by the slowly developing counter-revolution which was backed by the majority of the people. The fact was that the broad German masses inside and outside the labour movement did not look forward to the establishment of a new society, but backwards to the restoration of liberal capitalism without its bad aspects, its political

inequalities, its militarism and imperialism. They merely desired the completion of the reforms started before the war which were designed to lead into a benevolent capitalistic system.

The ambiguity which characterised the policy of the Spartakusbund was largely the result of the conservatism of the masses. The Spartacist leaders were ready, on the one hand, to follow the clear revolutionary course desired by the so-called 'ultra-left' and on the other hand they felt sure that such a policy could not be successful in view of the prevailing mass attitude and the international situation.

The effect of the Russian Revolution upon Germany had hardly been noticeable. Nor was there any reason to expect that a radical turn in Germany would have any repercussions in France, England and America. If it had been difficult for the Allies to interfere decisively in Russia, they would face lesser difficulties in crushing a German communist uprising. Emerging from the war victorious, the capitalism of these nations had been enormously strengthened; there was no real indication that their patriotic masses would refuse to fight against a weaker revolutionary Germany. At any rate, aside from such considerations, there was little reason to believe that the German masses, engaged in getting rid of their arms, would resume the war against foreign capitalism in order to get rid of their own. The policy which was apparently the most 'realistic' for dealing with the international situation and which was soon to be proposed by Wolfheim and Lauffenberg under the name of National-Bolshevism was still unrealistic in view of the real power relations after the war. The plan to resume the war with Russia's help against Allied capitalism failed to consider that the Bolsheviks were neither ready nor able to participate in such a venture. Of course, the Bolsheviks were not averse to Germany or any other nation making difficulties for the victorious imperialists, yet they did not encourage the idea of a new large-scale war to carry on the 'world-revolution'. They desired support for their own regime, whose permanency was still questioned by the Bolsheviks themselves, but they were not interested in supporting revolutions in other countries by military means. Both to follow a nationalistic course, independent of the question of alliances, and to unite Germany once more for a war of 'liberation' from foreign oppression was out of the question for the reason that these social layers which the 'national revolutionists' would have to win over to their cause were precisely the people who ended the war before the complete defeat of the German armies in order to prevent a further spreading of 'Bolshevism'. Unable to become the masters of international capitalism, they had preferred to maintain themselves as its best servants. Yet, there was no way of dealing with internal German questions which did not involve a definite foreign policy. The radical German revolution was thus defeated even before it could arise both by its own and by world capitalism.

The need to consider seriously international relations never arose, however, for the German Left. Perhaps this was the clearest indication of its insignificance. Neither was the question as to what to do with political power, once it was captured, raised concretely. No one seemed to believe that these questions would have to be answered. Liebknecht and Luxemburg felt sure that a long period of class struggles was facing the German proletariat with no sign of an early victory. They wanted to make the best of it, suggesting a return to parliament and to trade union work. However, in their previous activities they had already overstepped the boundaries of bourgeois politics; they could no longer return to the prisons of tradition. They had rallied around themselves the most radical element of the German proletariat which was determined to consider any fight the final struggle against capital. These workers interpreted the Russian revolution in accordance their own needs and their own mentality; they cared less for the difficulties lurking in the future than about destroying as soon possible of the forces of the past. There were only two

ways open to the revolutionists: either to go down with the forces whose cause is lost in advance, or to return to the fold of bourgeois democracy and perform social work for the ruling classes. For the real revolutionist there was, of course, only one way: to go down with the fighting workers. This is why Eugen Levine spoke of the revolutionist as 'a dead person on furlough', and why Rosa Luxemburg and Liebknecht went to their death almost somnambulistically. It is a mere accident that Otto Rühle and many others of the determined Left remained alive .

IV

The fact that the international bourgeoisie could conclude its war with no more than the temporary loss of Russian business determined whole post-war history down to the second world war. In retrospect, the struggles of the German proletariat from 1919 to 1923 appear minor frictions that accompanied the capitalistic re-organisation process which followed the war crisis. But there has always been a tendency consider the by-products of violent changes in the capitalist structure as expressions of the revolutionary will of the proletariat. The radical optimists, however, were merely whistling in the dark. The darkness is real, to be sure, and the noise is encouraging, yet at this late hour there is no need to take it too seriously. As impressive as Otto Rühle's record as a practical revolutionist may be, as exciting as it is to recall the proletarian actions in Dresden, in Saxonia, in Germany – the meetings, demonstrations, strikes, street-fights, the heated discussions: the hopes, fears and disappointments, the bitterness of defeat and the pain of prison and death – yet no lessons but negative ones can be drawn from all these undertakings. All the energy and all the enthusiasm were not enough to bring about a social change nor to alter the contemporary mind. The lesson learned was how not to proceed. How to realise the revolutionary needs of the proletariat was not discovered.

The emotional upheavals provided a never ending incentive for research. Revolution, which for so long had been mere theory and a vague hope, had appeared for a moment as a practical possibility. The chance had been missed, no doubt, but it would return to be better utilised next time. If not the people, at least the 'times' were revolutionary and the prevailing crisis conditions would sooner or later revolutionise the minds of the workers. If actions had been brought to an end by the firing-squads of the social-democratic police, if the workers' initiative was once more destroyed through the emasculation of their councils by way of legalisation, if their leaders were again acting not with the class but 'on behalf of the class' in the various capitalistic institutions – nevertheless the war had revealed that the fundamental capitalistic contradictions could not be solved and that crisis conditions were now the normal conditions of capitalism. New revolutionary actions were probable and would find the revolutionists better prepared.

Although the revolutions in Germany, Austria and Hungary had failed, there was still the Russian Revolution to remind the world of the reality of the proletarian claims. All discussions circled around this revolution, and rightly so, for this revolution was to determine the future course of the German Left. In December 1918 the Communist Party of Germany was formed. After the murder of Liebknecht and Luxemburg it was led by Paul Levi and Karl Radek. This new leadership was at once attacked by a left opposition within the party to which Rühle belonged, because of its tendency to advocate a return to parliamentary activities. At the foundation of the party its radical elements had succeeded in giving it an anti-parliamentarian character and a wide democratic control in distinction to the Leninist type of organisation. An anti-trade union policy had also been adopted. Liebknecht and Luxemburg subordinated their own divergent views to those of the

radical majority. Not so Levi and Radek. Already in the summer of 1919 they made it clear that they would split the party in order to participate in parliamentary elections. Simultaneously they began to propagandise for a return to trade-union work despite the fact that the party was already engaged in the formation of new organisations no longer based on trades or even industries, but on factories. These factory organisations were combined into one class organisation, the General Labour Union (Allgemeine Arbeiter Union Deutschlands). At the Heidelberg convention in October 1919 all the delegates who disagreed with the new central committee and maintained the position taken at the founding of the Communist Party were expelled. The following February the central committee decided to get rid of all districts controlled by the left opposition. The 'opposition' had the Amsterdam bureau of the Communist International on its side which led to the dissolution of that bureau by the International in order to support the Levi-Radek combination. And finally in April 1920 the left wing founded the Communist Workers' Party (Kommunistische Arbeiter Partei Deutschlands). Throughout this period Otto Rühle was on the side of the left opposition.

The Communist Workers' Party did not as yet realise that its struggle against the groups around Levi and Radek was the resumption of the old fight of the German Left against Bolshevism, and in a larger sense against the new structure of world capitalism which was slowly taking shape. It was decided to enter the Communist International. It seemed to be more Bolshevik than the Bolsheviks. Of all the revolutionary groups, for example, it was the most insistent upon direct help for the Bolsheviks during the Russian-Polish war. But the Communist International did not need to decide anew against the 'ultra-left'; its leaders had made their decision twenty years before. Nevertheless, the executive committee of the Communist International still tried to keep in contact with the Communist Workers' Party not only because it still contained the majority of the old Communist Party, but also because both Levi and Radek, although doing the work of the Bolsheviks in Germany, had been the closest disciples not of Lenin but of Rosa Luxemburg. At the Second World Congress of the Third International in 1920 the Russian Bolsheviks were already in a position to dictate the policy of the International. Otto Rühle, attending the Congress, recognised the impossibility of altering this situation and the immediate need of fighting the Bolshevik International in the interest of the proletarian revolution.

The Communist Workers' Party sent a new delegation to Moscow only to return with the same results. These were summed up in Herman Gorter's *Open Letter to Lenin*, which answered Lenin's *Left Wing Communism – An Infantile Disorder*. The actions of the International against the 'ultra-left' were the first open attempts to interfere with and control all the various national sections. The pressure upon the Communist Workers' Party to return to parliamentarianism and trade unionism was constantly increased, but the Communist Workers' Party withdrew from the International after its Third Congress.

V

At the Second World Congress the Bolshevik leaders, in order to secure control over the International proposed twenty-one conditions of admission to the Communist International. Since they controlled the Congress they had no difficulty in getting these conditions adopted. Thereupon the struggle on questions of organisation which, twenty years previously, had caused controversies between Luxemburg and Lenin were openly resumed. Behind the debated organisational questions were, of course, the fundamental differences between the Bolshevik revolution and the needs of the Western proletariat.

For Otto Rühle these twenty-one conditions were enough to destroy his last illusions about the Bolshevik regime. These conditions endowed the executive of the International, that is, the leaders of the Russian party, with complete control and authority over all national sections. In Lenin's opinion, it was not possible to realise dictatorship on an international scale "without a strictly centralised, disciplined party, capable of leading and managing every branch, every sphere, every variety of political and cultural work." To Rühle it seemed at first that behind Lenin's autocratic attitude there was merely the arrogance of the victor trying to thrust upon the world the methods of struggle and the type of organisation that had brought power to the Bolsheviks. This attitude – which insisted on applying the Russian experience to Western Europe where entirely different conditions prevailed appeared as an error, a political mistake, a lack of understanding of the peculiarities of Western capitalism and the result of Lenin's fanatical pre-occupation with Russian problems. Lenin's policy seemed to be determined by the backwardness of the Russian capitalistic development, and though it had to be fought in Western Europe since it tended to support the capitalist restoration, it could not be called an out-right counter-revolutionary force. This benevolent view towards the Bolshevik revolution was soon to be destroyed by the further activities of the Bolsheviks themselves.

The Bolsheviks went from small 'mistakes' to always greater 'mistakes'. Although the German Communist Party which was affiliated with the Third International grew steadily, particularly after its unification with the Independent Socialists, the proletarian class, already on the defensive, lost one position after another to the forces of capitalist reaction. Competing with the Social-Democratic Party, which represented parts of the middle-class and the so-called trade-unionist labour aristocracy, the Communist Party could not help growing as these social layers became pauperised in the permanent depression in which German capitalism found itself. With the steady growth of unemployment, dissatisfaction with the status quo and its staunchest supporters, the German social-democrats, also increased.

Only the heroic side of the Russian Revolution was popularised, the real every day character of the Bolshevik regime was hidden by both its friends and foes. For, at this time, the state capitalism that was unfolding in Russia was still as foreign to the bourgeoisie, indoctrinated with laissez-faire ideology, as was socialism proper. And socialism was conceived by most socialists as a kind of state control of industry and natural resources. The Russian Revolution became a powerful and skilfully fostered myth, accepted by the impoverished sections of the German proletariat to compensate for their increasing misery. The myth was bolstered by the reactionaries to increase their followers' hatred for the German workers and for all revolutionary tendencies generally.

Against the myth, against the powerful propaganda apparatus of the Communist International that built up the myth, which was accompanied and supported by a general onslaught of capital against labour all over the world – against all this, reason could not prevail. All radical groups to the left of the Communist Party went from stagnation to disintegration. It did not help that these groups had the right policy and the Communist Party the 'wrong' policy, for no questions of revolutionary strategy were here involved. What was taking place was that world capitalism was going through a stabilisation process and ridding itself of the disturbing proletarian elements which under the crisis conditions of war and military collapse had tried to assert themselves politically.

Russia, which of all nations was most in need of stabilisation, was the first country to destroy its labour movement by way of the Bolshevik party dictatorship. Under conditions of imperialism, however, internal stabilisation is possible only by external power politics. The character of Russia's foreign policy under the Bolsheviks was determined by the peculiarities of the European post-war situation. Modern imperialism is

no longer content with merely asserting itself by means of military pressure and actual warfare. The 'fifth column' is the recognised weapon of all nations. Yet the imperialist virtue of today was still a sheer necessity for the Bolsheviks who were trying to hold their own in a world of imperialist competition. There was nothing contradictory in the Bolshevik policy of taking all power from the Russian workers and, at the same time, attempting to build up strong labour organisations in other nations. Just as these organisations had to be flexible in order to move in accordance with Russia's changing political needs, so their control from above had to be rigid.

Of course, the Bolsheviks did not regard the various sections of their International as mere foreign legions in the service of the 'workers' fatherland'. They believed, that what helped Russia was also serving progress elsewhere. They believed, and rightly so, that the Russian Revolution had initiated a general and world-wide movement from monopoly capitalism to state capitalism, and they held that this new state of affairs was a step in the direction of socialism. In other words, if not in their tactics, then in their theory they were still social democrats and from their point of view the social-democratic leaders were really traitors to their own cause when they helped preserve the *laissez faire* capitalism of yesterday. Against social-democracy they felt themselves to be true revolutionists; against the 'ultra-left' they felt they were realists, the true representatives of scientific socialism.

But what they thought of themselves and what they really were are different things. In so far as they continued to misunderstand their historical mission, they were continuously defeating their own cause; in so far as they were forced to live up to the objective needs of their revolution, they became the greatest counter-revolutionary force of modern capitalism. By fighting as true social-democrats for predominance in the socialist world movement, by identifying the narrow nationalistic interests of state-capitalistic Russia with the interests of the world proletariat, and by attempting to maintain at all cost the power position they had won in 1917, they were merely preparing their own downfall, which was dramatised in numerous factional struggles, reached its climax in the Moscow trials, and ended in the Stalinist Russia of today – one imperialist nation among others.

In view of this development, what was more important than Otto Rühle's relentless criticism of the actual policies of the Bolsheviks in Germany and the world at large was his early recognition of the real historical importance of the Bolshevik movement, that is, of militant social-democracy. What a conservative social-democratic movement was capable of doing and nor doing, the parties in Germany, France and England had revealed only too clearly. The Bolsheviks showed what they would have done had they still been a subversive movement. They would have attempted to organise unorganised capitalism and to replace individual entrepreneurs by bureaucrats. – they had no other plans and even these were only extensions of the process of cartellisation, trustification and centralisation which was going on all over the capitalist world. In Western Europe, however, the socialist parties could no longer act bolshevistically, for their bourgeoisie was already instituting this kind of 'socialisation' of their own accord. All that the socialists could do was to lend them a hand, that is, to grow slowly into the emerging 'socialist society'.

The meaning of Bolshevism was completely revealed only with the emergence of fascism. To fight the latter, it was necessary, in Otto Rühle's words, to recognise that "the struggle against fascism begins with the struggle against Bolshevism". In the light of the present, the 'ultra-left' groups in Germany and Holland must be considered the first anti-fascist organisations, anticipating in their struggle against the communist parties the future need of the working class to fight the fascist form of capitalism. The first theorists

of anti-fascism are to be found among the spokesmen of the radical sects: Gorter and Pannekoek in Holland; Rühle, Pfempfert, Broh and Fraenkel in Germany ; and they can be considered as such by reason of their struggle against the concept of party-rule and state-control, by their attempts to actualise the concepts of the council movement towards the direct determination of its destiny, and by their upholding the struggle of the German Left against both social-democracy and its Leninistic branch.

Not long before his death, Rühle, in summing up his findings with regard to Bolshevism, did not hesitate to place Russia first among the totalitarian states. "It has served as the model for other capitalistic dictatorships. Ideological divergences do not really differentiate socioeconomic systems. The abolition of private property in the means of production (combined with) the control of workers over the products of their labour and the end of the wages system." Both these conditions, however, are unfulfilled in Russia as well as in the fascist states.

To make clear the fascist character of the Russian system, Rühle turned once more to Lenin's Left Wing Communism – An Infantile Disorder, for "of all programmatic declarations of Bolshevism it was the most revealing of its real character". When in 1933 Hitler suppressed all socialist literature in Germany, Rühle related, Lenin's pamphlet was allowed publication and distribution. In this work Lenin insists that the party must be a sort of war academy of professional revolutionists. Its chief requirements were unconditional leader authority, rigid centralism, iron discipline, conformity, militancy, and the sacrifice of personality for party interests - And Lenin actually developed an elite of intellectuals, a centre which, when thrown into the revolution, was to capture leadership and assume power. "There is no use trying," Rühle said, "to determine logically and abstractly if this kind of preparation for revolution is wrong or right ... Other questions must be raised first; what kind of revolution was in preparation? And what was the goal of the revolution?" He answered by showing that Lenin's party worked within the belated bourgeois revolution in Russia to overthrow the feudal regime of Czarism. What may be regarded as a solution for revolutionary problems in a bourgeois revolution cannot, however, at the same time be regarded as a solution for the proletarian revolution. The decisive structural differences between capitalist and socialist society exclude such an attitude. According to Lenin's revolutionary method, the leaders appear as the head of the masses. "This distinction between head and body," Rühle pointed out, "between intellectuals and workers, officers and privates, corresponds to the duality of class society. One class is educated to rule; the other to be ruled. Lenin's organisation is only a replica of bourgeois society. His revolution is objectively determined by the forces that create a social order incorporating these class relations, regardless of the subjective goals accompanying this process."

To be sure, whoever wants to have a bourgeois order will find in the divorce of leader and masses, the advance guard and the working class, the right strategical preparation for revolution. In aspiring to lead the bourgeois revolution in Russia, Lenin's party was highly appropriate. When, however, the Russian Revolution showed its proletarian features, Lenin's tactical and strategical methods ceased to be of value. His success was due not to his advance guard, but to the soviet movement which had not at all been incorporated in his revolutionary plans. And when Lenin, after the successful revolution had been made by the soviets, dispensed with this movement, all that had been proletarian in the revolution was also dispensed with. The bourgeois character of the revolution came to the fore again and eventually found its 'natural' completion in Stalinism.

Lenin, Rühle has said, thought in rigid, mechanical rules, despite all his pre-occupation with Marxian dialectics. There was only one party for him – his own; only

one revolution – the Russian; only one method – the Bolshevik. “The monotonous application of a once discovered formula moved in an egocentric circle undisturbed by time and circumstances, developmental degrees, cultural standards, ideas and men. In Lenin there came to light with great clarity the rule of the machine age in politics; he was the ‘technician’, the ‘inventor’ of the revolution. All the fundamental characteristics of fascism were in his doctrine, his strategy, his ‘social planning’ and his art of dealing with men ... He never learned to know the prerequisites for the freeing of the workers; he was not bothered by the false consciousness of the masses and their human self-alienation. The whole problem to him was nothing more or less than a problem of power. Bolshevism as representing a militant power policy, does not differ from traditional bourgeois forms of rule. The rule serves as the great example of organisation. Bolshevism is a dictatorship, a nationalistic doctrine, an authoritarian system with a capitalistic social structure. Its ‘planning’ concerns technical-organisational not socio-economic questions. It is revolutionary only within the framework of capitalistic development, establishing not socialism but state-capitalism. It represents the present stage of capitalism and not a first step towards a new society.”

VI

The Russian soviets and the German workers’ and soldiers’ councils represented the proletarian element in both the Russian and the German revolution. In both nations these movements were soon suppressed by military and judicial means. What remained of the Russian soviets after the firm entrenchment of the Bolshevik party dictatorship was merely the Russian version of the later Nazi labour front. The legalised German council movement turned into an appendage of trade-unionism and soon into a capitalistic instrument of control. Even the spontaneously formed councils of 1918 were — the majority of them – far from being revolutionary. Their form of organisation, based on class needs and not on the various special interests resulting from the capitalistic division of labour was all that was radical about them. But whatever their shortcomings, it must be said that there was nothing else on which to base revolutionary hopes. Although they frequently turned against the Left, still it was expected that the objective needs of this movement would bring it inevitably into conflict with the traditional powers. This form of organisation was to be preserved in its original character and built up in preparation for coming struggles.

Thinking in terms of a continued German revolution, the ‘ultra-left’ was committed to a fight to the finish against trade-unions and against the existing parliamentary parties; in brief, against all forms of opportunism and compromise. Thinking in terms of the probability of a side-by-side existence with the old capitalist powers, the Russian Bolsheviks could not conceive a policy without compromises. Lenin’s arguments in defence of the Bolshevik position in relation to trade unions, parliamentarianism and opportunism in general elevated the particular needs of Bolshevism into false revolutionary principles. Yet it would not do to show the illogical character of the Bolshevik arguments, for as illogical as the arguments were from a revolutionary point of view, they emanated logically from the peculiar role of the Bolsheviks within the Russian capitalistic emancipation and from the Bolshevik international policy which supported Russia’s national interests.

That Lenin’s principles were false from a proletarian point of view in both Russia and in Western Europe, Otto Rühle demonstrated in various pamphlets and in numerous articles in the press of the General Labour Union and in Franz Pfempert’s left-wing magazine, *Die Aktion*. He exposed the expedient trickery involved in giving these

principles a logical appearance, trickery which consisted in citing a specific experience at a given period under particular circumstances in order to draw from it conclusions of immediate and general application. Because trade unions had once been of some value, because parliament had once served revolutionary propaganda needs, because occasionally opportunism had resulted in certain gains for workers, they remained for Lenin the most important mediums of proletarian policy for all times and under all circumstances. And as if all this would not convince the adversary, Lenin was fond of pointing out that whether or not these policies and organisations were the right ones, it was still a fact that the workers adhered to them and that the revolutionist must always be where the masses are.

This strategy flowed from Lenin's capitalistic approach to politics. It never seemed to enter his mind that the masses were also in factories and that revolutionary factory organisations could not lose contact with the masses even if they tried. It never seemed to occur to him that with the same logic that was to hold the revolutionists in the reactionary organisations, he could demand their presence in the church, in fascist organisations, or wherever masses could be found. The latter, to be sure, would have occurred to him had the need arisen to unite openly with the forces of reaction as happened at a later day under the Stalinist regime.

It was clear to Lenin that for the purposes of Bolshevism, council organisations were the least suitable. Not only is there small room in factory organisations for professional revolutionists, but the Russian experience had shown how difficult it was to 'manage' a soviet movement. At any rate, the Bolsheviks did not intend to wait for chances of revolutionary interference in political processes; they were actively engaged in everyday politics and concerned with immediate results in their favour. In order to influence the Western labour movement with a view to eventually controlling it, it was far easier for them to enter into, and to deal with, existing organisations. In the competitive struggles waged between and within these organisations, they saw a chance to gain a foothold quickly. To build up entirely new organisations opposed to all the existing ones would be to attempt what could have only belated results — if any at all. Being in power in Russia, the Bolsheviks could no longer indulge in long-view politics; in order to maintain their power they had to march up all the avenues of politics, not only the revolutionary ones. It must be said, however, that aside from their being forced to do so, the Bolsheviks were more than willing to participate in the many political games that accompany the capitalistic exploitation process. To be able to participate they needed trade unions and parliaments and parties and also capitalistic supporters, which made opportunism both a necessity and a pleasure.

There is no longer any need to point to the many 'misdeeds' of Bolshevism in Germany and in the world at large. In theory and in practice the Stalinist regime declares itself a capitalistic, imperialistic power, opposing not only the proletarian revolution, but even the fascist reforms of capitalism. And it actually does favour the maintenance of bourgeois democracy in order to utilise more fully its own fascistic structure. Just as Germany was very little interested in spreading fascism over her borders and the borders of her allies since she had no intention of strengthening her imperialistic competitors, so Russia concerns herself with safeguarding democracy everywhere save within her own territory. Her friendship with bourgeois-democracy is a true friendship; fascism is no article for export, for it ceases to be an advantage as soon as it is generalised. Despite the Stalin-Hitler pact, there are no greater 'anti-fascists' than the Bolsheviks on behalf of their own native fascism. Only so far as their imperialistic expansion, if any, will reach, will they be guilty of consciously supporting the general fascistic trend.

This general fascistic trend does not stem from Bolshevism but incorporates it. It stems from the peculiar developmental laws of capitalist economy. If Russia finally becomes a 'decent' member of the capitalist family of nations, the 'indecencies' of her fascistic youth will in some quarters still be mistaken for a revolutionary past. The opposition to Stalinism, however, unless it includes opposition to Leninism and to the Bolshevism of 1917, is no opposition but just a quarrel among political competitors. In so far as the myth of Bolshevism is still defended against the Stalinist reality, Otto Rühle's work in showing that the Stalinism of today is merely the Leninism of yesterday, is still of contemporary importance, the more so as attempts might be made to recapture the Bolshevik past in the social upheavals of the future.

The whole history of Bolshevism could be anticipated by Rühle and the 'ultra-left' movement because of their early recognition of the real content of the Bolshevik revolution and the real character of the old social-democratic movement. After 1920 all activities of Bolshevism could be only harmful to the workers of the world. No common actions with its various organisations were any longer possible and none were attempted.

VII

Together with 'ultra-left' groups in Dresden, Frankfurt am Main and other places, Otto Rühle went one step beyond the anti-Bolshevism of the Communist Workers' Party and its adherents in the General Labour Union. He thought that the history of the social-democratic parties and the practices of the Bolshevik parties proved sufficiently that it was futile to attempt to replace reactionary parties with revolutionary parties for the reason that the party-form of organisation itself had become useless and even dangerous. As early as 1920 he proclaimed that 'the revolution is not a party affair' but demands the destruction of all parties in favour of the council movement. Working chiefly within the General Labour Union, he agitated against the need of a special political party until this organisation was split in two. One section (Allgemeine Arbeiter Union – Einheitsorganisation) shared Rühle's views, the other remained as the 'economic organisation' of the Communist Party. The organisation represented by Rühle leaned toward the syndicalist and anarchist movements without, however, giving up its Marxian Weltanschauung. The other considered itself the heir to all that had been revolutionary in the Marxian movement of the past. It attempted to bring about a Fourth International but succeeded only in effecting a closer cooperation with similar groups in a few European countries.

In Rühle's opinion a proletarian revolution was possible only with the conscious and active participation of the broad proletarian masses. This again presupposed a form of organisation that could not be controlled from above, but was determined by the will of its members. The factory organisation and the structure of the General Labour Union would, he thought, prevent a divorce between organisational and class interests; it would prevent the emergence of a powerful bureaucracy served by the organisation instead of serving it. It would, finally, prepare the workers to take over the industries and manage them according to their own needs and thus prevent the arising of new states of exploitation.

The Communist Workers' Party shared these general ideas and its own factory organisations were hardly distinguishable from those that agreed with Rühle. But the party maintained that at this stage of development factory organisation alone could not guarantee a clear-cut revolutionary policy. All kinds of people would enter these organisations, there would be no method of proper selection, and politically undeveloped workers might determine the character of the organisations, which thus might not be able

to live up to revolutionary requirements of the day. This point was well demonstrated by the relatively backward character of the council movement of 1918. The Communist Workers Party held that class-consciousness, Marxian trained revolutionists, although belonging to factory organisations should, at the same time, be combined in a separate party in order to safeguard and develop revolutionary theory and, so to speak, watch over the factory organisations to prevent them from going astray.

The Communist Workers' Party saw in Rühle's position a kind of disappointment seeking refuge in a new form of utopianism. It maintained that Rühle merely generalised the experiences of the old parties and it insisted that the revolutionary character of its organisation was the result of its own party form. It rejected the centralistic principles of Leninism but insisted upon keeping the party small so that it should be free of all opportunism. There were other arguments supporting the party idea. Some referred to international problems, some were concerned with the questions of illegality, but all arguments failed to convince Rühle and his followers. They saw in the party the perpetuation of the leader-mass principle, the contradiction between party and class, and feared a repetition of Bolshevism in the German Left.

Neither of the two groups could prove its theory. History by-passed them both; they were arguing in a vacuum. Neither the Communist Workers' Party nor the two General Labour Unions overcame their status of being 'ultra-left' sects. Their internal problems became quite artificial, for there was actually no difference between the Communist Workers' Party and the General Labour Union. Despite their theories, Rühle's followers did not function in the factories either. Both unions indulged in the same activities. Hence all theoretical divergencies had no practical meaning.

These organisations – remnants of the proletarian attempt to play a role in the upheavals of 1918 – attempted to apply their experiences within a development which was consistently moving in the opposite direction from that in which these experiences originated. The Communist Party alone, by virtue of Russian control, could really grow within this trend towards fascism. But by representing Russian, not German fascism, it too, had to succumb to the emerging Nazi movement which, recognising and accepting prevailing capitalist tendencies, finally inherited the old German labour movement in its entirety.

After 1923 the German 'ultra-left' movement ceased to be a serious political factor in the German labour movement. Its last attempt to force the trend of development in its direction was dissipated in the short-lived activity in March 1921 under the popular leadership of Max Hoelz. Its most militant members, being forced into illegality, introduced methods of conspiracy and expropriation into the movement, thereby hastening its disintegration. Although organisationally the 'ultra-left' groups continued to exist up to the beginning of Hitler's dictatorship, their functions were restricted to that of discussion clubs trying to understand their own failures and that of the German revolution.

VIII

The decline of the 'ultra-left' movement, the changes in Russia and in the composition of the Bolshevik parties, the rise of fascism in Italy and Germany restored the old relationship between economics and politics that had been disturbed during and shortly after the first world war. All over the world capitalism was now sufficiently stabilised to determine the main political trend. Fascism and Bolshevism, products of crisis conditions were – like the crisis itself – also mediums for a new prosperity, a new expansion of capital and the resumption of the imperialistic competitive struggles. But

just as any major crisis appears as the final crisis to those who suffer most, so the accompanying political changes appeared as expressions of the breakdown of capitalism. But the wide gap between appearance and reality sooner or later changes an exaggerated optimism into an exaggerated pessimism with regard to revolutionary possibilities. Two ways, then, remain open for the revolutionist: he can capitulate to the dominant political processes, or he can retire into a life of contemplation and wait for the turn of events.

Until the final collapse of the German labour movement, the retreat of the 'ultra-left' appeared to be a return to theoretical work. The organisations existed in the form of weekly and monthly publications, pamphlets and books. The publications secured the organisations, the organisations the publications. While mass-organisations served small capitalistic minorities, the mass of the workers were represented by individuals. The contradiction between the theories of the 'ultra-left' and the prevailing conditions became unbearable. The more one thought in collective terms the more isolated one became. Capitalism, in its fascistic form, appeared as the only real collectivism, anti-fascism as a return to an early bourgeois individualism. The mediocrity of capitalist man, and therefore the revolutionist under capitalist conditions, became painfully obvious within the small stagnating organisations. More and more people, starting from the premise that the 'objective conditions' were ripe for revolution, explained its absence with such 'subjective factors' as lack of class consciousness and lack of understanding and character on the part of the workers. These lacks themselves, however, had again to be explained by 'objective conditions', for the shortcomings of the proletariat undoubtedly resulted from their special position within the social relations of capitalism. The necessity of restricting activity to educational work became a virtue: developing the class-consciousness of the workers was regarded as the most essential of all revolutionary tasks. But the old social-democratic belief that 'knowledge is power' was no longer convincing for there is no direct connection between knowledge and its application.

The breakdown of *laissez faire* capitalism and the increasing centralist control over always greater masses through capitalistic production and war increased intellectual interest in the previously neglected fields of psychology and sociology. These branches of bourgeois 'science' served to explain the bewilderment of that part of the bourgeoisie which had been displaced by more powerful competitors and of that part of the petty-bourgeoisie reduced to proletarian levels of existence during the depression. In its early stages the capitalistic concentration process of wealth and power had been accompanied by the absolute growth of the bourgeois layers of society. After the war the situation changed; the European depression hit both bourgeoisie and proletariat and generally destroyed confidence in the system and in the individuals themselves. Psychology and sociology, however, were not only expressions of bourgeois bewilderment and insecurity but, simultaneously, served the need for a more direct determination of mass behaviour and ideological control than has been necessary under less centralistic conditions. Those who lost power in the political struggles which accompanied the concentration of capital as well as those who gained power offered psychological and sociological explanations for their full failures or successes. What to one was the 'rape of the masses' to the other was a newly-won insight – to be systematised and incorporated in the science of exploitation and control – into the social processes.

Under the capitalistic division of labour the maintenance and extension of prevailing ideologies is the job of the intellectual layers of the bourgeoisie and petty bourgeoisie. This division of labour is of course, determined more by existing class conditions than by the productive needs of the complex society. What we know we know by way of a capitalist production of knowledge. But as there is no other, the proletarian approach to all that is brought forth by bourgeois science and pseudo-science must

always be a critical one. To make this knowledge serve other than capitalistic purposes means to cleanse it of all the elements entering it which are related to the capitalistic class structure. It would be as false as it would be impossible to reject wholesale all that is produced by bourgeois science. Yet it can only be approached skeptically. The proletarian critique – again on account of the capitalistic division of labour – is quite limited. It is of real importance only where bourgeois knowledge deals with social relationships. Here its theories can be tested as to their validity and their meaning for the various classes and for society as a whole. There arose, then, with the vogue of psychology and sociology, the need to examine the new findings in these fields from the critical point of view of the suppressed classes.

It was unavoidable that the vogue for psychology should penetrate the labour movement. But the whole decay of this movement was once more revealed by its attempt to use the new theories of bourgeois psychology and sociology for a critical investigation of its own theories instead of using the Marxian theory to criticise the new bourgeois pseudo-science. Behind this attitude was the growing distrust of Marxism due to the failures of the German and Russian revolutions. Behind it also was the inability to go beyond Marx in a Marxian sense, an inability clearly brought to light by the fact that all that appeared new in bourgeois sociology had been taken from Marx in the first place. Unfortunately, from our point of view, Otto Rühle was one of the first to clothe the more popular ideas of Marx in the new language of bourgeois sociology and psychology. In his hands the materialistic conception of history now became ‘sociology’ in so far as it dealt with society; in so far as it dealt with the individual, it was now ‘psychology’. The principles of this theory were to serve both the analysis of society and the analysis of the psychological complexities of its individuals. In his biography of Marx, Rühle applied his new psycho-sociological concept of Marxism which could only help to support the tendency toward incorporating an emasculated Marxism into capitalistic ideology. This kind of ‘historical materialism’, which searched for reasons of ‘inferiority and superiority complexes’ in the endless domains of biology, anthropology, sociology, economics and so forth in order to discover a kind of ‘balance-of-power of complexes by way of compensations’ which could be considered the proper adjustment between individual and society, this kind of Marxism was not able to serve any of the practical needs of the workers, nor could it help in their education. This part of Rühle’s activity, whether one evaluates it positively or negatively, has little if anything, to do with the problems that beset the German proletariat. It is, therefore, unnecessary to deal here with Rühle’s psychological work. We mention it nevertheless, for the double reason that it may serve as an additional illustration of the general despair of the revolutionist in the period of counter-revolution and as a further manifestation of the sincerity of the revolutionist, Rühle, within the conditions of despair. For in this phase of his literary activity, as in every other that dealt with pedagogical-psychological, historical-cultural, or economic-political questions, he also speaks out against the inhuman conditions of capitalism, against possible new forms of physical and mental slavery, and for a society befitting a free humanity.

IX

The triumph of German fascism ended the long period of revolutionary discouragement, disillusionment and despair. Everything became at once more extremely clear; the immediate future was outlined in all its brutality. The labour movement proved for the last time that the criticism directed against it by the revolutionist was more than

justified. The fight of the 'ultra-left' against the official labour movement proved to have been the only consistent struggle against capitalism that had this far been waged.

The triumph of German fascism, which was not an isolated phenomenon but was closely connected with the previous development of the whole capitalist world, did not cause but merely helped to initiate the new world conflict of the imperialistic powers. The days of 1914 had returned. But not for Germany. The German labour leaders were deprived of the 'moving experience' of declaring themselves once more the truest sons of the fatherland. To organise for war meant to institute totalitarianism, and that meant that many special interests had to be eliminated. Under the conditions of the Weimar Republic and within the framework of world imperialism, this was possible only by way of internal struggles. The 'resistance' of the German labour movement to fascism, half hearted in the first place, must not, however, be mistaken for a resistance to war. In the case of social-democracy and the trade unions it was not a resistance but merely an abdication accompanied by verbal protests to save face. And even this came only in the wake of Hitler's refusal to incorporate these institutions, in their traditional form and with their 'experienced' leaders, into the fascist scheme of things. Neither was the 'resistance' on the part of the Communist Party a resistance to war and fascism as such but only in so far as they were directed against Russia. If the official labour organisations in Germany were prevented from siding with their bourgeoisie, in all other nations they did so without deliberation and without struggle.

A second time in his life, the exiled Otto Rühle had to decide which side to take in the new world-wide struggle. This time it seemed somewhat more difficult because Hitler's consistent totalitarianism was designed to prevent a repetition of the vacillating days of liberalism during the last world war. This situation allowed the second world war to masquerade as a struggle between democracy and fascism and provided the social chauvinists with better excuses. The exiled labour leaders, in step with the labour organisations in their adopted countries, could still point to the political differences between the two forms of the capitalistic system although they were unable to deny the capitalistic nature of their new fatherlands. The theory of the lesser evil served to make plausible the reason why the democracies should be defended against the further spreading of fascism. Rühle, however, maintained his old position of 1914. For him the 'enemy was still at home', in the democracies as well as in the fascist states. The proletariat could not, or rather should not, side with any of them but oppose both with equal vehemence. Rühle pointed out that all the political, ideological, racial and psychological arguments offered in defence of a pro-war position could not really cover up the capitalistic reason for war: the struggle for profits among the imperialist competitors. In letters and articles he reiterated all the implications of the laws of capitalist development as established by Marx in order to combat the nonsense of popular 'anti-fascism' which could only hasten the fascistisation process of world capitalism.

For Rühle fascism and state-capitalism were not the inventions of vicious politicians but the outcome of the capitalist process of concentration and centralisation in which the accumulation of capital manifests itself. The class relationship in capitalist production is beset by many insoluble contradictions. The main contradiction, Rühle saw, lies in the fact that capital accumulation means also a tendency toward a falling rate of profit. This tendency can be combated only by a more rapid capital accumulation – which implies an increase of exploitation. But in spite of the fact that exploitation is increased in relation to the rate of accumulation necessary to avoid crises and depressions, profits continue to show a tendency to fall. During depressions capital is re-organised to allow for a new period of capital expansion. If nationally a crisis implies the destruction of weaker capital and capital concentration by ordinary business means, internationally re-

organisation finally demands war. This means the destruction of the weaker capitalist nations in favour of the victorious imperialisms in order to bring about a new capital expansion and its further concentration and centralisation. Every capitalist crisis – at this stage of capital accumulation – involves the world; likewise every war is at once a world-wide war. Not particular nations but the whole of the world capitalism is responsible for war and crisis. This, Rühle saw, is the enemy and he is everywhere.

To be sure Rühle had no doubt that totalitarianism was worse for the workers than bourgeois democracy. He had fought against Russian totalitarianism since its inception. He was fighting German fascism, but he could not fight in the name of bourgeois democracy because he knew that the peculiar developmental laws of capitalist production would change bourgeois democracy sooner or later into fascism and state-capitalism. To fight totalitarianism meant to oppose capitalism in all its forms. “Private Capitalism,” he wrote, “and with it democracy, which is trying to save it, are obsolete and going the way of all mortal things. State-Capitalism – and with it fascism, which paves the way for it are growing and seizing power. The old is gone forever and no exorcism works against the new. No matter how hard we may try to revive democracy, all efforts will be futile. All hopes for a victory of democracy over fascism are the crassest illusions, all belief in the return of democracy as a form of capitalist government has only the value of cunning betrayal and cowardly self-delusion ... It is the misfortune of the proletariat that its obsolete organisations based upon an opportunistic tactic make it defenceless against the onslaught of fascism. It has thus lost its own political position in the body politic at the present time. It has ceased to be a history-making factor at the present epoch. It has been swept upon the dungheap of history and will rot on the side of democracy as well as on the side of fascism, for the democracy of today will be the fascism of tomorrow.”

X

Although Otto Rühle faced the second world war as uncompromisingly as he had faced the first, his attitude with regard to the labour movement was different from that of 1914. This time he could not help being certain that “no hope could spring from the miserable remnants of the old movement in the still-democratic nations for the final uprising of the proletariat and its historical deliverance. Still less could hope spring from the shabby fragments of those party traditions that were scattered and spilled in the emigration of the world, nor from the stereotyped notions of past revolutions, regardless of whether one believes in the blessings of violence or in peaceful transition.” Yet he did not look hopelessly into the future. He felt sure that new urges and new impulses will animate the masses and force them to make their own history.

The reasons for this confidence were the same as those that convinced Rühle of the inevitability of the capitalist development toward fascism and state-capitalism. They were based on the insoluble contradictions inherent in the capitalist system of production. Just as the re-organisation of capital during the crisis is simultaneously a preparation for greater crises, so war can breed only bigger and more devastating wars. Capitalistic anarchy can become only more chaotic, no matter how much its supporters may try to bring order into it. Always greater parts of the capitalist world will be destroyed so that the stronger capitalistic groups can keep on accumulating. The miseries of the masses of the world will mount until a breaking point is reached and new social upsurges will destroy the murderous system of capitalist production.

Rühle was as little able as anybody else at this time to state by what specific means fascism would be overcome. But he felt certain that the mechanics and dynamics of revolution will undergo fundamental changes. In the self-expropriation and

proletarianisation of the bourgeoisie by the second world war, in the surmounting of nationalism by the abolition of small states, in the state-capitalistic world politic based on state federations he saw not only the immediately negative side but also the positive aspects of providing new starting-points for anti-capitalist actions. To the day of his death he was certain that the class concept was bound to spread until it would foster a majority interest in socialism. He looked for the class struggle to be transformed from an abstract-ideological category into a practical-positive-economic category. And he envisioned the rise of factory councils within the unfolding of labour democracy as a reaction to bureaucratic terror. For him the labour movement was not dead but was still to be born in the social struggles of the future.

If Rühle, finally, had nothing more to offer than the ‘hope’ that the future will solve the problems which the old labour movement failed to solve, this hope did not spring from faith but from knowledge, knowledge which consisted in recognising actual social trends. It did not contain a clue as to how to achieve the necessary social transformation. It demanded, however, dissociation from futile activities and hopeless organisations. It demanded recognition of the reasons that led to the disintegration of the old labour movement and a search for the elements that point to the limitations of the prevailing totalitarian systems. It demanded a sharper distinction between ideology and reality in order to discover in the latter the factors that escape the control of the totalitarian organisers. How little or how much is needed to transform society is always discovered only after that fact. But the balance-scale of society is delicate, and is particularly sensitive at the present time. The most powerful controls over men are really weak when compared with the tremendous contradictions that rend the world today. Otto Rühle was right in pointing out that the activities which will finally tip the scale of society in favour of socialism will not be discovered by means and methods related to previous activities and traditional organisations. They must be discovered within the changing social relationships which are still determined by the contradiction between the capitalist relations of production and the direction in which the productive forces of society are moving. To discover those relationships, that is, to recognise the coming revolution in the realities of today, will be the job of those who carry on in the spirit of Otto Rühle.

Bolshevism and Stalinism

Source: [Kurasje Archive](#); 1947

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The alleged purpose of Trotsky's biography of Stalin^[1] is to show “how a personality of this sort was formed, and how it came to power by usurpation of the right

to such an exceptional role.” The real purpose of the book, however, is to show why Trotsky lost the power position he temporarily occupied and why his rather than Stalin’s name should follow Lenin’s. Prior to Lenin’s death it had always been ‘Lenin *and* Trotsky’; Stalin’s name had invariably been near or at the end of any list of prominent Bolsheviks. On one occasion Lenin even suggested that he put his own signature second to Trotsky’s. In brief, the book helps to explain why Trotsky was of the opinion “that he was the natural successor to Lenin” and in effect is a biography of both Stalin and Trotsky.

All beginnings are small, of course, and the Bolshevism of Lenin and Trotsky differs from present-day Stalinism just as Hitler’s brown terror of 1933 differed from the Nazism of World War II. That there is nothing in the arsenal of Stalinism that cannot also be found in that of Lenin and Trotsky is attested to by the earlier writings of Trotsky himself.^[2] For example Trotsky, like Stalin, introduced *compulsory labour service* as a ‘socialist principle’. He, too, was convinced “that not one serious socialist will begin to deny to the Labour State the right to lay its hands upon the worker who refuses to execute his labour power.” It was Trotsky who hurried to stress the ‘socialistic character’ of inequality, for, as he said, “those workers who do more for the general interest than others receive the right to a greater quantity of the social product than the lazy, the careless, and the disorganisers.” It was his opinion that everything must be done to “assist the development of rivalry in the sphere of production.”

Of course, all this was conceived as the ‘socialist principle’ of the ‘transformation period’. It was dictated by objective difficulties in the way of full socialisation. There was not the desire but the need to strengthen party dictatorship until it led to the abolishment of even those freedoms of activity which, in one fashion or another, had been granted by the bourgeois state. However, Stalin, too, can offer the excuse of necessity.

In order to find other arguments against Stalinism than his personal dislike for a competitor in intra-party struggles, Trotsky must discover and construct political differences between himself and Stalin, and between Stalin and Lenin in order to support his assertion that without Stalin things would have been different in Russia and elsewhere.

There could not have been any ‘theoretic’ differences between Lenin and Stalin, as the only theoretical work bearing the name of the latter had been inspired and supervised by Lenin. And if Stalin’s ‘nature craved’ the centralised party machine, it was Lenin who constructed the perfect machine for him, so that on that score, too, no differences could arise. In fact, as long as Lenin was active, Stalin was no trouble to him, however troublesome he may have been to ‘The Number Two Bolshevik’.

Still, in order for Trotsky to explain the ‘Soviet Thermidor’, there must be a difference between Leninism and Stalinism, provided, of course, there was such a Thermidor. On this point, Trotsky has brought forth various ideas as to when it took place, but in his Stalin biography he ignores the question of time in favour of the simple statement that it had something to do with the “increasing privileges for the bureaucracy”. However, this only brings us back to the early period of the Bolshevik dictatorship which found Lenin and Trotsky engaged in creating the state bureaucracy and increasing its efficiency by increasing its privileges.

Competitors for Power

The fact that the relentless struggle for position came into the open only after Lenin’s death suggests something other than the Soviet Thermidor. It simply indicates that by that time the Bolshevik state was of sufficient strength, or was in a position, to

disregard to a certain degree both the Russian masses and the international bourgeoisie. The developing bureaucracy began to feel sure that Russia was theirs for keeps; the fight for the plums of the Revolution entered its more general and more serious stage.

All adversaries in this struggle stressed the need of dictatorship in view of the unsolved internal frictions between 'workers' and 'peasants', the economic and technological backwardness of the country as a whole, and the constant danger of attack from the outside. But within *this* setting of dictatorship, all sorts of arguments could be raised. The power-struggle within the developing ruling class expressed itself in policy-proposals either for or against the interests of the peasants, either for or against the limitation of factory councils, either for or against an offensive policy on the international front. High-sounding theories were expounded with regard to the estimation of the peasantry, the relationship between bureaucracy and revolution, the question of party generations, etc. and reached their climax in the Trotsky-Stalin controversy on the 'Permanent Revolution' and the theory of 'Socialism in one Country'.

It is quite possible that the debaters believed their own phrases; yet, despite their theoretical differentiations, whenever they acted upon a real situation they all acted alike: In order to suit their own needs, they naturally expressed identical things in different terms. If Trotsky rushes to the front — to all fronts in fact — he merely defends the fatherland. But Stalin "is attracted by the front, because here for the first time he could work with the most finished of all the administrative machines, the military machine" for which, by the way, Trotsky claims all credit. If Trotsky pleads for discipline, he shows his 'iron hand'; if Stalin does the same, he deals with a 'heavy hand'.

If Trotsky's bloody suppression of the Kronstadt Rebellion was a 'tragic necessity' Stalin's suppression of the Georgian independence movement is in the manner of a "great-Russian Russifier, riding roughshod over the rights of his own people as a nation". And *vice versa*: suggestions made by Trotsky are called false and counter-revolutionary by Stalin's henchmen; when carried out under Stalin's auspices, they become additional proof of the great leader's wisdom.

To understand Bolshevism, and in a narrower sense Stalinism, it is not enough to follow the superficial and often silly controversies between Stalinists and Trotskyites. After all, the Russian Revolution embraces more than just the Bolshevik Party. It was not even initiated by organised political groups but by spontaneous reactions of the masses to the breakdown of an already precarious economic system in the wake of military defeat. The February upheavals 'started' with hunger riots in market places, protest strikes in factories, and the spontaneous declaration of solidarity with the rioters on the part of the soldiers. But all spontaneous movements in modern history have been accompanied by organised forces. As soon as the collapse of Czarism was imminent, organisations came to the fore with directives and definite political goals.

If prior to the Revolution Lenin had stressed organisation rather than spontaneity, it was because of the retarded Russian conditions, which gave the spontaneous movements a backward character. Even the politically advanced groups offered only limited programmes. The industrial workers desired capitalistic reforms similar to those enjoyed by the workers in more capitalistically advanced countries. The petty-bourgeoisie and important layers of the capitalist class wanted a Western bourgeois democracy. The peasants desired land in a capitalist agriculture. Though progressive for Czarist Russia, these demands were of the essence of bourgeois revolution.

The new liberalistic February government attempted to continue the war. But it was the conditions of war against which the masses were rebelling. All promised reforms within the Russian setting of that time and within the existing imperialistic power relationships were doomed to remain empty phrases; there was no way of directing the

spontaneous movements into those channels desired by the government. In new upsurges the Bolsheviks came into power not by way of a *second revolution* but by a forced change of government. This seizure of power was made easy by the lack of interest that the restless masses were showing in the existing government. The October *coup*, as Lenin said, “was easier than lifting a feather.” The final victory was “practically achieved by default ... Not a single regiment rose to defend Russian democracy ... The struggle for supreme power over an empire that comprised one-sixth of the terrestrial globe was decided between amazingly small forces on both sides in the provinces as well as in the two capital cities.”

The Bolsheviks did not try to restore the old conditions in order to reform them, but declared themselves in favour of the *concrete results* of the conceptually backward spontaneous movements: the ending of the war, the workers’ control of industry, the expropriation of the ruling classes and the division of land. And so they stayed in power.

The pre-revolutionary demands of the Russian masses had been backward for two reasons: they had long been realised in the main capitalist nations, and they could no longer be realised in view of existing world conditions. At a time when the concentration and centralisation process of world capitalism had brought about the decline of bourgeois democracy almost everywhere, it was no longer possible to initiate it afresh in Russia. If *laissez faire* democracy was out of the question, so were all those reforms in capital-labour relations usually related to social legislation and trade-unionism. Capitalist agriculture, too, had passed beyond the breaking up of feudal estates and production for a capitalist market to the industrialisation of agriculture and its consequent incorporation into the concentration process of capital.

The Bolsheviks and Mass Spontaneity

The Bolsheviks did not claim responsibility for the Revolution. They gave full credit to the spontaneous movements. Of course, they underlined the obvious fact that Russia’s previous history, which included the Bolshevik Party, had lent some kind of vague revolutionary consciousness to the unorganised masses and they were not backward about asserting that without their leadership the course of the Revolution would have been different and most probably would have led to a counter-revolution. “Had the Bolsheviks not seized power,” writes Trotsky, “the world would have had a Russian name for Fascism five years before the March of Rome.”

But counter-revolution attempts on the part of the traditional powers failed not because of any conscious direction of the spontaneous movements, not because of Lenin’s “sharp eyes, which surveyed the situation correctly,” but because of the fact that these movements could not be diverted from their *own* course. If one wants to use the term at all, the ‘counter-revolution’ possible in the Russia of 1917 was that inherent in the Revolution itself, that is, in the opportunity it offered the Bolsheviks to restore a centrally-directed social order for the perpetuation of the capitalistic divorce of the workers from the means of production and the consequent restoration of Russia as a competing imperialist power.

During the revolution, the interests of the rebelling masses and of the Bolsheviks merged to a remarkable degree. Beyond the temporary merger, there also existed a deep unity between the socialising concepts of the Bolsheviks and the *consequences* of the spontaneous movements. Too ‘backward’ for socialism but also too ‘advanced’ for liberal capitalism, the Revolution could end only in that consistent form of capitalism which the Bolsheviks considered a pre-condition of socialism, namely, State-capitalism.

By identifying themselves with the spontaneous movement they could not control, the Bolsheviks gained control over this movement as soon as it had spent itself in the realisation of its immediate goals. There were many such goals differently reached in different territories. Various layers of the peasantry satisfied, or failed to satisfy, divergent needs and desires. Their interests, however, had no real connection with those of the proletariat. The working class itself was split into various groups with a variety of specific needs and general plans. The petty-bourgeoisie had still other problems to solve. In brief, there was a spontaneous unity against the conditions of Czarism and war, but there was no unity in regard to immediate goals and future policy. It was not too difficult for the Bolsheviks to utilise this social division for building up their own power, which finally became stronger than the whole of society because it never faced society as a whole.

Like the other groups which asserted themselves within the revolution, the Bolsheviks, too, pressed to gain their particular end: the control of government. This goal reached farther than those aspired to by the others. It involved a never-ending struggle, a continuous winning and re-winning of power positions. Peasant groups settled down after dividing the land, workers returned to the factories as wage labourers, soldiers, unable to roam the countrysides forever, returned to the life of peasant and worker, but for the Bolsheviks the struggle only really began with the success of the Revolution. Like all governments, the Bolshevik regime involves submission of all existing social layers to its authority. Slowly centralising all power and control into their hands, the Bolsheviks were soon able to dictate policy. Once more Russia became thoroughly organised in the interests of a special class — the class of privilege in the emerging system of State-capitalism.

The Party ‘Machine’

All this has nothing to do with Stalinism and ‘Thermidor’ but represents Lenin’s and Trotsky’s policy from the very day they came to power. Reporting to the Sixth Congress of Soviets in 1918, Trotsky complained that “Not all Soviet workers have understood that our administration has been centralised and that all orders issued from above must be final. ... We shall be pitiless with those Soviet workers who have not yet understood; we will remove them, cast them out of our ranks, pull them up with repressions.” Trotsky now claims that these words were aimed at Stalin who did not co-ordinate his war-activity properly and we are willing to believe him. But how much more directly must they have been aimed at all those who were not even ‘second-rate’ but had no rating at all in the Soviet hierarchy. There already existed, as Trotsky relates, “a sharp cleavage between the classes in motion and the interests of the party machines. Even the Bolshevik Party cadres, who enjoyed the benefit of exceptional revolutionary training were definitely inclined to disregard the masses and to identify their own special interests with the interests of the machine on the very day after the monarchy was overthrown.”

Trotsky holds, of course, that the dangers implied in this situation were averted by Lenin’s vigilance and by objective conditions which made the “masses more revolutionary than the Party, and the Party more revolutionary than *its* machine.” But the machine was headed by Lenin. Even before the Revolution, Trotsky points out, the Central Committee of the Party “functioned almost regularly and was entirely in the hands of Lenin.” And even more so after the Revolution. In the spring of 1918 the “ideal of ‘democratic centralism’ suffered further reverses, for in effect the power within both the government and the Party became concentrated in the hands of Lenin and the immediate retinue of Bolshevik leaders who did not openly disagree with him and carried

out his wishes.” As the bureaucracy made headway nevertheless, the emerging Stalinist machine must have been the result of an oversight on the part of Lenin.

To distinguish between the ruler of the machine and the machine on the one hand, and between the machine and the masses on the other implies that only the masses and its top-leader were truly revolutionary, and that both Lenin and the revolutionary masses were later betrayed by Stalin’s machine which, so to speak, made itself independent. Although Trotsky needs such distinctions to satisfy his own political interests, they have no basis in fact. Until his death — disregarding occasional remarks against the dangers of bureaucratisation, which for the Bolsheviks are the equivalent of the bourgeois politicians’ occasional crusades for a balanced budget — Lenin never once came out against the Bolshevik Party machine and its leadership, that is, against himself. Whatever policy was decided upon received Lenin’s blessing as long as he was at the helm of the machine; and he died holding that position.

Lenin’s ‘democratic’ notions are legendary. Of course state-capitalism under Lenin was different from state-capitalism under Stalin because the dictatorial powers of the latter were greater — thanks to Lenin’s attempt to build up his own. That Lenin’s rule was less terroristic than Stalin’s is debatable. Like Stalin, Lenin catalogued *all* his victims under the heading ‘counter-revolutionary’. Without comparing the statistics of those tortured and killed under both regimes, we will admit that the Bolshevik regime under Lenin and Trotsky was not strong enough to carry through such Stalinist measures as enforced collectivisation and slave-labour camps as a main economic and political policy. It was not design but weakness which forced Lenin and Trotsky to the so called *New Economic Policy*, that is, to concessions to private property interests and to a greater lip-service to ‘democracy’.

Bolshevik ‘toleration’ of such non-Bolshevik organisations as the Social Revolutionists in the early phase of Lenin’s rule did not spring, as Trotsky asserts, from Lenin’s ‘democratic’ inclinations but from inability to destroy all non-Bolshevik organisations at once. The totalitarian features of Lenin’s Bolshevism were accumulating at the same rate at which its control and police power grew. That they were forced upon the Bolsheviks by the ‘counter-revolutionary’ activity of all non-Bolshevik labour organisations, as Trotsky maintains, can not of course explain their further increase after the crushing of the various nonconformist organisations. Neither could it explain Lenin’s insistence upon the enforcement of totalitarian principle in the extra-Russian organisations of the Communist International.

Trotsky, Apologist for Stalinism

Unable to blame non-Bolshevik organisations entirely for Lenin’s dictatorship, Trotsky tells “those theoreticians who attempt to prove that the present totalitarian regime of the U.S.S.R. is due ... to the ugly nature of Bolshevism itself,” that they forget the years of Civil War, “which laid an indelible impress on the Soviet Government by virtue of the fact that very many of the administrators, a considerable layer of them, had become accustomed to command and demanded unconditional submission to their orders.” Stalin, too, he continues, “was moulded by the environment and circumstances of the Civil War, along with the entire group that later helped him to establish his personal dictatorship”. The Civil War, however, was initiated by the international bourgeoisie. And thus the ugly sides of Bolshevism under Lenin, as well as under Stalin, find their chief and final cause in capitalism’s enmity to Bolshevism which, if it is a monster, is only a reluctant monster, killing and torturing in mere self-defence.

And so, if only in a roundabout way, Trotsky's Bolshevism, despite its saturation with hatred for Stalin, leads in the end merely to a defence of Stalinism as the only possible self-defence for Trotsky. This explains the superficiality of the ideological differences between Stalinism and Trotskyism. The impossibility of attacking Stalin without attacking Lenin helps to explain, furthermore, Trotsky's great difficulties as an oppositionist. Trotsky's own past and theories preclude on his part the initiation of a movement to the *left* of Stalinism and condemned 'Trotskyism' to remain a mere collecting agency for unsuccessful Bolsheviks. As such it could maintain itself outside of Russia because of the ceaseless competitive struggles for power and positions within the so-called 'communist' world-movement. But it could not achieve significance for it had nothing to offer but the replacement of one set of politicians by another. The Trotskyist defence of Russia in the Second World War was consistent with all the previous policies of this, Stalin's most bitter, but also most loyal, opposition.

Trotsky's defence of Stalinism does not exhaust itself with showing how the Civil War transformed the Bolsheviks from servants into masters of the working class. He points to the more important fact that it is the "bureaucracy's law of life and death to guard the nationalisation of the means of production and of the land." This means that "in spite of the most monstrous bureaucratic distortions, the class basis of the U.S.S.R. remains proletarian." For a while — we notice — Stalin had Trotsky worried. In 1921, Lenin had been disturbed by the question as to whether the New Economic Policy was merely a 'tactic' or an 'evolution'. Because the NEP released private-capitalistic tendencies, Trotsky saw in the growing Stalinist bureaucracy "nothing else than the first stage of bourgeois restoration." But his worries were unfounded; "the struggle against equality and the establishment of very deep social differentiations has so far been unable to eliminate the socialist consciousness of the masses or the nationalisation of the means of production and the land, which were the basic social conquests of the revolution." Stalin, of course, had nothing to do with this, for "the Russian Thermidor would have undoubtedly opened a new era of bourgeois rule, if that rule had not proved obsolete throughout the world."

The Result: State Capitalism

With this last statement of Trotsky's we approach the essence of the matter under discussion. We have said before that the *concrete* results of the revolution of 1917 were neither socialistic nor bourgeois but state-capitalistic. It was Trotsky's belief that Stalin would destroy the state-capitalist nature of the economy in favour of a bourgeois economy. This was to be the Thermidor. The decay of bourgeois economy all over the world prevented Stalin from bringing this about. All he could do was to introduce the ugly features of his personal dictatorship into that society which had been brought into existence by Lenin and Trotsky. In this way, and despite the fact that Stalin still occupies the Kremlin, Trotskyism has triumphed over Stalinism.

It all depends on an equation of state-capitalism with socialism. And although some of Trotsky's disciples have recently found it impossible to continue making the equation, Trotsky was bound to it, for it is the beginning and the end of Leninism and, in a wider sense, of the whole of the social-democratic world-movement of which Leninism was only the more realistic part. Realistic, that is, with regard to Russia. What was, and still is, understood by this movement under 'workers' state is governmental rule by the party; what is meant by 'socialism' is the nationalisation of the means of production. By adding control over the economy to the political control of the government the totalitarian rule over all of society emerges in full. The government secures its totalitarian rule by

way of the party, which maintains the social hierarchy and is itself a hierarchical institution.

This idea of 'socialism' is now in the process of becoming discredited, but only because of the experience of Russia and similar if less extensive experiences in other countries. Prior to 1914, what was meant by the seizure of power, either peacefully or violently, was the seizure of the government machinery, replacing a given set of administrators and law-makers with another set. Economically, the 'anarchy' of the capitalistic market was to be replaced by a planned production under the control of the state. As the socialist state would by definition be a 'just' state, being itself controlled by the masses by way of the democratic processes, there was no reason to expect that its decisions would run counter to socialistic ideals. This theory was sufficient to organise parts of the working class into more or less powerful parties.

The theory of socialism boiled down to the demand for centralised economic planning in the interest of all. The centralisation process, inherent in capital-accumulation itself, was regarded as a *socialistic* tendency. The growing influence of 'labour' within the state-machinery was hailed as a step in the direction of socialism. But actually the centralisation process of capital indicated something else than its self-transformation into social property. It was identical with the destruction of *laissez faire* economy and therewith with the end of the traditional business-cycle as the regulator of the economy. With the beginning of the twentieth century the character of capitalism changed. From that time on it found itself under permanent crisis conditions which could not be resolved, by the 'automatic' workings of the market. Monopolistic regulations, state-interferences, national policies shifted the burden of the crisis to the capitalistically under-privileged in the world-economy. All 'economic' policy became imperialistic policy, culminating twice in world-wide conflagrations.

In this situation, to reconstruct a broken-down political and economic system meant to adapt it to these new conditions. The Bolshevik theory of socialisation fitted this need in an admirable way. In order to restore the national power of Russia it was necessary to do in a radical fashion what in the Western nations had been merely an evolutionary process. Even then it would take time to close the gap between the Russian economy and that of the Western powers. Meanwhile the ideology of the socialist movement served well as protection. The socialist origin of Bolshevism made it particularly fitted for the state-capitalist reconstruction of Russia. Its organisational principles, which had turned the party into a well-functioning institution, would re-establish order in the country as well.

The Bolsheviks of course were convinced that what they were building in Russia was, if not socialism, at least the next best thing to socialism, for they were completing the process which in the Western nations was still only the main *trend* of development. They had abolished the market-economy and had expropriated the bourgeoisie; they also had gained complete control over the government. For the Russian workers, however, nothing had changed; they were merely faced by another set of bosses, politicians and indoctrinators. Their position equalled the workers' position in all capitalist countries during times of war. State-capitalism is a war-economy, and all extra-Russian economic systems transformed themselves into war-economies, into state-capitalistic systems fitted to the imperialistic needs of modern capitalism. Other nations did not copy all the innovations of Russian state-capitalism but only those best suited to their specific needs. The Second World War led to the further unfolding of state-capitalism on a world wide scale. The peculiarities of the various nations and their special situations within the world-power frame provided a great variety of developmental processes towards state-capitalism.

The fact that state-capitalism and fascism did not, and do not grow everywhere in a uniform manner provided Trotsky with the argument of the basic difference between Bolshevism, fascism and capitalism plain and simple. This argument necessarily stresses superficialities of social development. In all essential aspects all three of these systems are identical and represent only various stages of the same development — a development which aims at manipulating the mass of the population by dictatorial governments in a more or less authoritarian fashion, in order to secure the government and the privileged social layers which support it and to enable those governments to participate in the international economy of today by preparing for war, waging war, and profiting by war.

Trotsky could not permit himself to recognise in Bolshevism one aspect of the world-wide trend towards a ‘fascist’ world economy. As late as 1940 he held the view that Bolshevism prevented the rise of Fascism in the Russia of 1917. It should have long since been clear, however, that all that Lenin and Trotsky prevented in Russia was the use of a non-Marxian ideology for the ‘fascist’ reconstruction of Russia. Because the Marxian ideology of Bolshevism merely served state-capitalistic ends, it, too, has been discredited. From any view that goes beyond the capitalist system of exploitation, Stalinism and Trotskyism are both relics of the past.

NOTES

1. *Stalin. An appraisal of the man and his influence.* Edited and translated from the Russian by Charles Malamuth. The first seven chapters and the appendix, that is, the bulk of the book, Trotsky wrote and revised himself. The last four chapters, consisting of notes, excerpts, documents and other raw materials, have been edited.

2. See for instance, L. Trotsky’s “Dictatorship vs. Democracy”, New York, 1922; particularly from page 135 to page 150.

Anti-Bolshevist Communism in Germany

Source: [Kurasje Archive](#);

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The process of the concentration of capital and political power forces any socially important movement to attempt either to destroy capitalism or to serve it consistently. The old German labor movement could not do the latter and was neither willing nor able to do the former. It functioned neither in accordance with its original ideology nor with its real immediate interests. For a time it served as a control instrument of the ruling classes. First losing its independence, it was soon to lose its very existence.

Essentially the history of this movement is the history of the capitalist market approached from a 'proletarian' point of view. The so-called market laws were to be utilized in favor of the commodity labor power. Collective actions should lead to the highest possible wages. 'Economic power' gained in this manner was to be secured by way of social reform. The capitalists, too, increased the organized control over the market. Both sides fostered the monopolistic reorganization of capitalist society though, to be sure, behind their consciously conceived activities there was finally nothing but the expansive need of capital itself. Their policies and aspirations, however much based on real considerations of facts and special needs, were still determined by the fetishistic character of their system of production.

Aside from commodity-fetishism, whatever meaning the market laws may have with regard to special fortunes and losses, and however they may be manipulated by one or another interest group, under no circumstances can they be used in favor of the working class as a whole. It is not the market which controls the people and determines the prevailing social relations but rather the fact that a separate group in society either owns or controls the means of production and the instruments of suppression.

To overcome capitalism, actions outside the labor-capital-market relations are necessary, actions that do away with both the market and with class relations. Restricted to actions *within* the framework of capitalism, the old labor movement was bound to destroy itself or be destroyed from without. It was destined either to be broken up internally by its own revolutionary opposition, which would give rise to new organizations, or doomed to be destroyed by the capitalistic change from a market- to a controlled-market economy and the accompanying political alterations.

I.

The first world war revealed more than anything else that the labor movement was part and parcel of bourgeois society. The various organizations in every nation proved that they had neither the intention nor the means to fight capitalism, that they were interested only in securing their own existence within the capitalist structure. In Germany this was especially obvious because within the international movement the German organizations were the largest and most unified. To hold onto what had been built up since Bismarck's anti-socialist laws, the oppositional minority within the Socialist Party displayed a self-restriction to an extent unknown in other countries. But then, the exiled Russian opposition had less to lose; it had, furthermore, split away from the reformists and class-collaborationists a decade before the outbreak of the war. And it is quite difficult to see in the meek pacifistic arguments of the Independent Labor Party any real opposition to the social patriotism that had saturated the British labor movement. But more had been expected of the German left-wing than of any other group in the International and its behavior at the outbreak of the war was therefore particularly disappointing. Apart from the psychological conditions of individuals, this behavior was the product of the organization-fetishism prevailing in the movement.

This fetishism demanded discipline and strict adherence to democratic formulas – the minority must submit to the will of the majority. And although it is clear that under capitalistic conditions these 'democratic' formulas merely hide facts to the contrary, the opposition failed to perceive that democracy within the labor movement did not differ from bourgeois democracy in general. A minority owned and controlled the organizations just as the capitalist minority owns and controls the means of production and the state apparatus. In both cases, the minorities by virtue of this control determine the behavior of the majorities. But by force of traditional procedures, in the name of discipline and unity,

uneasy and against its better knowledge, the anti-war minority supported Social-Democratic chauvinism. There was just one man in the German Reichstag of August 1914 – Fritz Kunert – who was not able to vote for war credits but who was also not able to vote against them and thus, to satisfy his conscience, abstained from voting altogether. In the spring of 1915 Liebknecht and Ruehle were the first to vote against the granting of war credits to the government. They remained alone for quite some time and found new companions only to the degree that the chances for a victorious peace disappeared in the military stalemate. After 1916 the radical anti-war attitude was supported and soon swallowed up by a bourgeois movement in search of a negotiated peace, a movement which, finally, was to inherit the bankrupt stock of German imperialism.

As violators of discipline Liebknecht and Ruehle were expelled from the Social-Democratic Reichstag fraction. Together with Rosa Luxemburg, Franz Mehring and others, more or less forgotten by now, they organized the group, *Internationale*, publishing a magazine of the same title in order to uphold the idea of internationalism in the warring world. In 1916 they organized the *Spartakusbund* which cooperated with other left-wing formations such as the *Internationale Sozialisten* with Julian Borchardt as their spokesman, and the group around Johann Knief and the radical Bremen paper, *Arbeiterpolitik*. In retrospect it seems that the last-named group was the most advanced, that is, advanced away from Social-Democratic traditions and toward a new approach to the proletarian class struggle. How much the *Spartakusbund* was still adhering to the organization and unity fetish that ruled the German labor movement came to light in their vacillating attitude toward the first attempts at re-orienting the international socialist movement in Zimmerwald and Kienthal. The Spartacists were not in favor of a clean break with the old labor movement in the direction of the earlier Bolshevik example. They still hoped to win the party over to their own position and carefully avoided irreconcilable policies. In April 1917 the *Spartakusbund* merged with the Independent Socialists which formed the center of the old labor movement but was no longer willing to cover up the chauvinism of the conservative majority-wing of the Social-Democratic Party. Relatively independent, yet still within the Independent Socialist Party, the *Spartakusbund* left this organization only at the end of the year 1918.

II.

Within the *Spartakusbund* Liebknecht's and Luxemburg's position had been attacked by the Bolsheviks as inconsistent. And inconsistent it was but for pertinent reasons. At first glance, the main reason seemed to be based on the illusion that the Social-Democratic Party could be reformed. With changing circumstances, it was hoped, the masses would cease to follow their conservative leaders and support the left-wing of the party. And although such illusions did exist, first with regard to the old party and later with regard to the Independent Socialists, they do not altogether explain the hesitancy on the part of the Spartacist leaders to adopt the ways of Bolshevism. Actually, the Spartacists faced a dilemma no matter in which direction they looked. By not trying – at the right time – to break resolutely with Social-Democracy, they forfeited their chance to form a strong organization capable of playing a decisive role in the expected social upheavals. Yet in view of the real situation in Germany, in view of the history of the German labor movement, it was quite difficult to believe in the possibility of quickly forming a counter-party to the dominant labor organizations. Of course, it might have been possible to form a party in the Leninist manner, a party of professional revolutionists, willing to usurp power, if necessary, against the will of the majority of the working class. But this was precisely what the people around Rosa Luxemburg did not

aspire to. Throughout the years of their opposition to reformism and revisionism, they had never narrowed their distance from the Russian 'left,' from Lenin's concept of organization and revolution. In sharp controversies, Rosa Luxemburg had pointed out that Lenin's concepts were of a Jacobin nature and inapplicable in Western Europe where not a bourgeois but a proletarian revolution was on the order of the day. Although she, too, spoke of the dictatorship of the proletariat it meant, to her, in distinction to Lenin, 'the manner in which democracy is employed, not in its abolition: – it was to be the work of the class, and not of a small minority in the name of the class.'

Enthusiastically as the Spartacists greeted the overthrow of Czarism, they did not lose their critical capacities, nor did they forget the character of the Bolshevik party, nor the historical limitations of the Russian Revolution. But regardless of the immediate realities and the final outcome of this revolution, it had to be supported as a first break in the imperialist phalanx and as the forerunner of the expected German revolution. Of the latter many signs had appeared in strikes, hunger riots, mutinies and all kinds of passive resistances. But the growing opposition to the war and to Ludendorff's dictatorship did not find organizational expression to any significant extent. Rather than going to the left, the masses followed their old organizations, which lined up with the liberal bourgeoisie. The upheavals in the German Navy and finally the November rebellion were carried on in the spirit of Social Democracy, that is, in the spirit of the defeated German bourgeoisie.

The German Revolution appeared to be more significant than it really was. The spontaneous enthusiasm of the worker was more for ending the war than for changing existing social relations. Their demands, expressed through workers' and soldiers' councils, did not transcend the possibilities of bourgeois society. Even the revolutionary minority, and here particularly the Spartakusbund, failed to develop a consistent revolutionary program. Its political and economic demands were of a two-fold nature: they were constructed to serve as demands to be agreed upon by the bourgeoisie and its Social-Democratic allies, and as slogans of a revolution which was to do away with both bourgeois society and its supporters.

Of course, within the ocean of political mediocrity that was the German revolution there were revolutionary streams which warmed the hearts of the radicals and induced them to undertake actions historically quite out of place. Partial successes, due to the temporary stunning of the ruling class and the general passivity of the broad masses – exhausted as they were by four years of hunger and war – nourished the hope that the revolution might end in a socialist society. Only no one really knew what a socialist society would be like, what steps ought to be taken to usher it into existence. "All power to the workers' and soldiers' councils," however attractive as a slogan, still left all essential questions open. The revolutionary struggles that followed November 1918 were thus not determined by the consciously concocted plans of the revolutionary minority but were thrust upon it by the slowly developing counter-revolution which was backed by a majority of the people. The fact was that the broad German masses inside and outside the labor movement did not look forward to the establishment of a new society, but backwards to the restoration of liberal capitalism without its bad aspects, its political inequalities, its militarism and imperialism. They merely desired the completion of the reforms started before the war which were designed to lead into a benevolent capitalistic system.

The ambiguity which characterized the policy of the *Spartakusbund* was largely the result of the conservatism of the masses. The Spartacist leaders were ready, on the one hand, to follow the clear revolutionary course desired by the so-called 'ultra-left' and on the other hand they felt sure that such a policy could not be successful in view of the prevailing mass attitude and the international situation.

The effect of the Russian Revolution upon Germany had hardly been noticeable. Nor was there any reason to expect that a radical turn in Germany would have any greater repercussions in France, England and America. If it had been difficult for the Allies to interfere decisively in Russia, they would face lesser difficulties in crushing a German communist uprising. Emerging from the war victorious, the capitalism of these nations had been enormously strengthened; there was no real indication that their patriotic masses would refuse to fight against a weaker revolutionary Germany. At any rate, aside from such considerations there was little reason to believe that the German masses, engaged in getting rid of their arms, would resume a war against foreign capitalism in order to get rid of their own. The policy which was apparently the most 'realistic' for dealing with the international situation and which was soon to be proposed by Wolfheim and Lauffenberg under the name of National-Bolshevism was still unrealistic in view of the real power relations after the war.

The plan to resume the war with Russia's help against Allied capitalism failed to consider that the Bolsheviks were neither ready nor able to participate in such a venture. Of course, the Bolsheviks were not adverse to Germany or any other nation making difficulties for the victorious imperialists, yet they did not encourage the idea of a new-scale war to carry on the 'world revolution.' They desired support for their own regime, whose permanency was still questioned by the Bolsheviks themselves, but they were not interested in supporting revolutions in other countries by military means. Both to follow a nationalistic course, independent of the question of alliances, and to unite Germany once more for a war of 'liberation' from foreign oppression was out of the question for the additional reason that those social layers which the 'national revolutionists' would have to win over to their cause were precisely the people who ended the war before the complete defeat of the German armies in order to prevent a further spreading of 'Bolshevism.' Unable to become the masters of international capitalism, they had preferred to maintain themselves as its best servants. Yet, there was no way of dealing with international German questions which did not involve a definite foreign policy. The radical German revolution was thus defeated even before it could arise both by its own and by world capitalism.

The need to consider seriously international relations never arose, however, for the German *Left*. Perhaps this was the clearest indication of its insignificance. Neither was the question as to what to do with political power, once it was captured, raised concretely. No one seemed to believe that these questions would have to be answered. Liebknecht and Luxemburg felt sure that a long period of class struggle was facing the German proletariat with no sign of an early victory. They wanted to make the best of it, suggesting a return to parliament and to trade-union work. However, in their previous activities they had already overstepped the boundaries of bourgeois politics; they could not return to the prisons of tradition. They had rallied around themselves the most radical element of the German proletariat which was now determined to consider any fight the final struggle against capitalism. These workers interpreted the Russian Revolution in accordance with their own needs and their own mentality; they cared less about difficulties lurking in the future than about destroying as much as possible the forces of the past. There were only two ways open for the revolutionists: either to go down with the forces whose cause was lost in advance, or to return to the fold of bourgeois democracy and perform social work for the ruling classes. For the real revolutionist there was, of course, only one way: to go down with the fighting workers. This is why Eugen Levine spoke of the revolutionist as a "dead person on furlough," and why Rosa Luxemburg and Karl Liebknecht went to their death almost somnambulistically.

III.

The fact that the international bourgeoisie could conclude its war with no more than the temporary loss of the Russian business determined the whole post-war history down to the Second World War. In retrospect, the struggle of the German proletariat from 1912 to 1923 appeared as minor frictions that accompanied the capitalistic re-organization process which followed the war-crisis. But there has always been a tendency to consider the by-products of violent changes in the capitalistic structure as expressions of the revolutionary will of the proletariat. The radical optimists, however, were merely whistling in the dark. The darkness was real, to be sure, and the noise was encouraging, yet at this late hour there is no need to take it seriously. As exciting as it is to recall the days of proletarian actions in Germany – the mass meetings, demonstrations, strikes, street fights, the heated discussions, the hopes, fears, and disappointments, the bitterness of defeat and the pain of prison and death – yet no lessons but negative ones can now be drawn from all these undertakings. All the energy and all the enthusiasm were not enough to bring about a social change or to alter the contemporary mind. The lesson learned was how not to proceed. How to realize the revolutionary needs of the proletariat was not discovered.

The emotional upheavals provided a never-ending incentive for research. Revolution, which for so long had been a mere theory and a vague hope, had appeared for a moment as a practical possibility. The chance had been missed, no doubt, but it would return to be better utilized next time. If not the people, at least the ‘times’ were revolutionary and the prevailing crisis conditions would sooner or later revolutionize the minds of the workers. If actions had been brought to an end by the firing-squads of Social-Democratic police, if the workers’ initiative was once more destroyed through the emasculation of their councils by way of legislation, if their leaders were again acting not with the class but ‘in behalf of the class’ in the various capitalistic institutions – nevertheless the war had revealed that the fundamental capitalistic contradictions could not be solved and that crisis conditions were now the ‘normal’ conditions of capitalism. New revolutionary actions were probable and would find the revolutionists better prepared.

Although the revolutions in Germany, Austria and Hungary had failed, there was still the Russian Revolution to remind the world of the reality of the proletarian claims. All discussions circled around this revolution, and rightly so, for this revolution was to determine the future course of the German *Left*. In December 1919 the Communist Party of Germany was formed. After the murder of Liebknecht and Luxemburg it was led by Paul Levi and Karl Radek. This new leadership was at once attacked by a left opposition because of its tendency to advocate a return to parliamentary activities. At the foundation of the party its radical elements had succeeded in giving it an antiparliamentarian character and a wide democratic control in distinction to the Leninist type of organization. An anti-trade union policy had also been adopted. Liebknecht and Luxemburg subordinated their own divergent views to those of the radical majority. Not so Levi and Radek. Already in the summer of 1919 they made it clear that they would split the party in order to participate in parliamentary elections. Simultaneously they began to propagandize for a return to trade-union work despite the fact that the party was already engaged in the formation of new organizations no longer based on trades or even industries, but on factories. These factory organizations were combined into one class organization, the General Labor Union. At the Heidelberg convention in October 1919 all delegates who disagreed with the new central committee and maintained the position taken at the founding of the Communist Party were expelled. The following February the

central committee decided to get rid of all districts controlled by the left opposition. The opposition had the Amsterdam bureau of the Communist International on its side, which led to the dissolution of that bureau by the International in order to support the Levi-Radek combination. And finally in April 1920 the left wing founded the Communist Workers Party.

The Communist Workers Party (KAPD) did not as yet realize that its struggle against the groups around Levi and Radek was the resumption of the old fight of the German Left against Bolshevism, and in a larger sense against the new structure of world capitalism which was slowly taking shape. It decided to enter the Communist International. It seemed more Bolshevik than the Bolsheviks. But the Communist International did not need to decide anew against the 'ultra-left'; its leaders had made their decision twenty years before. Nevertheless, the executive committee of the Communist International still tried to keep in contact with the Communist Workers Party not only because it still contained the majority of the old Communist Party, but also because both Levi and Radek, although doing the work of the Bolsheviks in Germany, had been the closest disciples not of Lenin but of Rosa Luxemburg.

At the second world congress of the Third International in 1920 the Russian Bolsheviks were already in a position to dictate the policy of the International. The Communist Workers Party's reactions were summed up in Herman Gorter's 'Open Letter to Lenin,' which answered Lenin's 'Left-Wing Communism – An Infantile Disorder.' The actions of the International against the 'ultra-left' were the first attempts to interfere with and control all the various national sections. The pressure upon the Communist Workers Party to return to parliamentarianism and trade unionism was constantly increased, but the Communist Workers Party withdrew from the International after its third congress.

IV.

At the second world congress the Bolshevik leaders, in order to secure control over the International, proposed twenty-one conditions of admission to the Communist International. Since they controlled the congress they had no difficulty getting these conditions adopted. Thereupon the struggle on questions of organization which, twenty years previously, had caused the controversies between Luxemburg and Lenin were openly resumed. Behind the debated organizational questions were, of course, the fundamental differences between the Bolshevik revolution and the Western workers.

These twenty-one conditions endowed the executive of the International, that is, the leaders of the Russian party, with complete control and authority over all national sections. In Lenin's opinion, it was not possible to realize dictatorship on an international scale "without a strictly centralized, disciplined party, capable of leading and managing every branch, every sphere, every variety of political and cultural work." This attitude – which insisted on applying the Russian experience to Western Europe where entirely different conditions prevailed – appeared to the left opposition as an error, a political mistake, a lack of understanding of the peculiarities of Western capitalism and the result of Lenin's fanatical preoccupation with Russian problems. Lenin's policy seemed to be determined by the backwardness of Russian capitalistic development, and though it had to be fought in Western Europe since it tended to support the capitalist restoration, it could not be called an outright counter-revolutionary force. This benevolent view towards the Bolshevik revolution was soon to be destroyed by the further activities of the Bolsheviks themselves.

The Bolsheviks went from small 'mistakes' to always greater 'mistakes.' Although the German Communist Party which was affiliated with the Third international grew steadily, particularly after its unification with the Independent Socialists, the proletarian class, already on the defensive, lost one position after another to the forces of capitalist reaction. Competing with the Social Democratic Party, which represented parts of the middle class and the so-called trade-unionist labor aristocracy, the Communist Party could not help growing as these layers became pauperized in the permanent depression in which German capitalism found itself. With the steady growth of unemployment, dissatisfaction with the status quo and its staunchest supporters, the German Social Democrats, also increased.

Only the heroic side of the Russian Revolution was popularized; the real everyday character of the Bolshevik regime was hidden by both its friends and foes. For, at this time, the state capitalism that was unfolding in Russia was still as foreign to the bourgeoisie, indoctrinated with laissez faire ideology, as was socialism proper. And socialism was conceived by most socialists as a kind of state control of industry and natural resources. The Russian Revolution became a powerful and skillfully fostered myth, accepted by the impoverished sections of the German proletariat to compensate for their increasing misery. The myth was bolstered by the reactionaries to increase their followers' hatred for the German workers and for all revolutionary tendencies generally.

Against the myth, against the powerful propaganda apparatus of the Communist International that built up the myth, which was accompanied and supported by a general onslaught of capital against labor all over the world – against all this, reason could not prevail. All radical groups to the left of the Communist Party went from stagnation to disintegration. It did not help that these groups had the 'right' policy and the Communist Party the 'wrong' one, for no questions of revolutionary strategy were here involved. What was taking place was that world capitalism was going through a stabilization process and ridding itself of the disturbing proletarian elements which under the crisis conditions of war and military collapse had tried to assert themselves.

Russia, which of all nations was most in need of stabilization, was the first country to destroy its labor movement by way of the Bolshevik party dictatorship. Under conditions of imperialism, however, internal stabilization is possible only by external power politics. The character of Russia's foreign policy under the Bolsheviks was determined by the peculiarities of the European postwar situation. Modern imperialism is no longer content with merely asserting itself by means of military pressure and actual warfare; the 'fifth column' is the recognized weapon of all nations. Yet the imperialistic virtue of today was still a sheer necessity for the Bolsheviks who were trying to hold their own in a world of imperialist competition. There was nothing contradictory in the Bolshevik policy of taking all power from the Russian workers, and, at the same time, attempting to build up strong labor organizations in other nations.

Of course, the Bolsheviks did not regard the various sections of their International as mere foreign legions in the service of the 'workers' fatherland;' they believed that what helped Russia was also serving progress elsewhere. They believed, and rightly so, that the Russian revolution had initiated a general and world-wide movement from monopoly capitalism to state capitalism, and they held that this new state of affairs was a step in the direction of socialism. In other words, if not in their tactics, then in their theory they were still Social-Democrats and from their point of view the Social-Democratic leaders were really traitors to their own cause when they helped preserve the laissez faire capitalism of yesterday. Against Social-Democracy they felt themselves to be true revolutionists; against the 'ultra-left' they felt they were realists, the true representatives of 'scientific socialism.'

But what they thought of themselves and what they really were are different things. Insofar as they continued to misunderstand their historical mission, they were continuously defeating their own cause; insofar as they were forced to live up to the objective needs of their revolution, they became the greatest counter-revolutionary force of modern capitalism. By fighting as true Social-Democrats for predominance in the socialist movement of the world, by identifying the narrow nationalistic interests of state-capitalistic Russia with the interests of the world proletariat, and by attempting to maintain at all costs the power position they had won in 1917, they were merely preparing their own downfall, which was dramatized in numerous factional struggles, reached its climax in the Moscow trials, and ended in the Stalinist Russia of today – one imperialist nation among others.

In view of this development, what was more important than criticism of the actual policies of the Bolsheviks in Germany and the world at large was the recognition of the real historical importance of the Bolshevik movement, that is, of militant Social-Democracy. What a conservative Social-Democratic movement was capable of doing and not doing, the parties in Germany, France, and England have revealed only too clearly. The Bolsheviks showed what they would have done had they still been a subversive movement. They would have attempted to organize unorganized capitalism and to replace individual entrepreneurs by bureaucrats. They had no other plans and even these were only extensions of the process of cartellization, trustification and centralization which was going on all over the capitalist world. In Western Europe, the socialist parties could no longer act bolshevistically, for their bourgeoisie was already instituting this kind of ‘socialization.’ All that the socialists could do was to lend them a hand; that is, to ‘grow slowly’ into the emerging socialist society.’

The meaning of Bolshevism was completely revealed only with the emergence of fascism. And in the light of the present, the ‘ultra-left’ groups in Germany and Holland must be considered the first anti-fascist organizations, anticipating in their struggle against the communist parties the future need of the working class to fight the fascist form of capitalism. The first theorists of anti-fascism are to be found among the spokesmen of the radical sects: Gorter and Pannekoek in Holland; Ruehle, Pfempfert, Broh and Fraenkel in Germany; and they can be considered as such by reason of their struggle against the concept of party-rule and state control, by their attempts to actualize the concepts of the council movement towards the direct determination of its destiny, and by their upholding the struggle of the German Left against both Social-Democracy and its Leninistic branch.

VI.

The Russian soviets and the German workers’ and soldiers’ councils represented the proletarian element in both the Russian and the German revolution. In both nations these movements were soon suppressed by military and judicial means. What remained of the Russian soviets after the firm entrenchment of the Bolshevik party dictatorship was merely the Russian version of the later Nazi labor-front. The legalized German council movement turned into an appendage of trade-unionism and soon into a capitalistic form of control. Even the spontaneously formed councils of 1918 were – the majority of them – far from revolutionary. Their form of organization, based on class needs and not on the various special interests resulting from the capitalistic division of labor, was all that was radical about them. But whatever their shortcomings, it must be said that there was nothing else on which to base revolutionary hopes. Although they frequently turned against the *Left*, still it was expected that the objective needs of this movement would

bring it inevitably into conflict with the traditional powers. This form of organization was to be preserved in its original character and built up in preparation for coming struggles.

Thinking in terms of a continued German revolution, the 'ultra-left' was committed to a fight to the finish against trade-unions and against the existing parliamentary parties; in brief, against all forms of opportunism and compromise. Thinking in terms of the probability of a side-by-side existence with the old capitalist powers, the Russian Bolsheviks could not conceive a policy without compromise. Lenin's arguments in defense of the Bolshevik position in relation to trade-unions, parliamentarianism and opportunism in general elevated the particular needs of Bolshevism into false revolutionary principles. Yet it would not do to show the illogical character of the Bolshevik arguments, for as illogical as the arguments were from a revolutionary point of view, they emanated logically from the peculiar role of the Bolsheviks within the Russian capitalistic emancipation and from the Bolshevik international policy which supported Russia's national interests.

One part of the 'ultra-left' movement went one step beyond the anti-Bolshevism of the Communist Workers Party and its adherents in the General Labor Union (AAU). It thought that the history of the social democratic parties and the practices of the Bolshevik parties proved sufficiently that it was futile to attempt to replace reactionary parties for the reason that the party form of organization itself had become useless and even dangerous. The movement split: one section discarded the party form altogether, the other remained as the 'economic organization' of the Communist Workers Party. The former leaned toward the syndicalist and anarchist movements without, however, giving up its Marxian *Weltanschauung*. The other considered itself the heir to all that had been revolutionary in the Marxian movement of the past. It attempted to bring about a Fourth International but succeeded only in effecting a closer cooperation with similar groups in a few European countries.

History bypassed both groups; they argued in a vacuum. Neither the Communist Workers Party nor the anti-party section of the General Labor Union overcame their status of being 'ultra-left' sects. Their internal problems became quite artificial for, as regards activities, there was actually no difference between them.

These organizations – remnants of the proletarian attempt to play a role in the upheavals of 1918 – attempted to apply their experiences within a development which was consistently moving in the opposite direction from that in which these experiences originated. The Communist Party alone, by virtue of Russian control, could really grow within the trend toward fascism. But by representing Russian, not German fascism, it, too, had to succumb to the emerging Nazi-movement which, recognizing and accepting prevailing capitalist tendencies, finally inherited the old German labor movement in its entirety.

After 1923 the German 'ultra-left' movement ceased to be a serious political factor in the German labor movement. Its last attempt to force the trend of development in its direction was dissipated in the short-lived activity in March 1921 under the popular leadership of Max Hoelz. Its militant members, being forced into illegality, introduced methods of conspiracy and expropriation into the movement, thereby hastening its disintegration. Although organizationally the 'ultra-left' groups continued to exist up to the beginning of Hitler's dictatorship, their functions were restricted to that of discussion clubs trying to understand their own failures and that of the German revolution.

VI.

The decline of the 'ultra-left' movement, the changes in Russia and in the composition of the Bolshevik parties, the rise of fascism in Italy and Germany restored the old relationship between economics and politics that had been disturbed during and after the First World War. All over the world capitalism was now sufficiently stabilized to determine the main political trend. Fascism and Bolshevism, products of crisis conditions, were – like the crisis itself – also mediums for a new prosperity, a new expansion of capital and the resumption of the imperialist competitive struggles. But just as any major crisis appears as the 'final' crisis to those who suffer most, so the accompanying political changes appeared as expressions of the breakdown of capitalism. But the wide gap between appearance and reality sooner or later changes an exaggerated optimism into exaggerated pessimism with regard to revolutionary possibilities. Two ways, then, remain open for the revolutionist: he can capitulate to the dominant political processes, or he can retire into a life of contemplation and wait for the turn of events.

Until the final collapse of the German labor movement, the retreat of the 'ultra-left' appeared to be a return to theoretical work. The organizations existed in the form of weekly and monthly publications, pamphlets and books. The publications secured the organizations, the organizations the publications. While mass-organizations served small capitalistic minorities, the mass of the workers were represented by individuals. The contradiction between the theories of the 'ultra-left' and the prevailing conditions became unbearable. The more one thought in collective terms the more isolated one became. Capitalism, in its fascistic form, appeared as the only real collectivism, and anti-fascism as a return to an early bourgeois individualism. The mediocrity of capitalist man, and therefore of the revolutionist under capitalist conditions, became painfully obvious within the small stagnating organizations. More people, starting from the premise that the 'objective conditions' were ripe for revolution, explained its absence with such 'subjective factors' as lack of class consciousness and lack of understanding and character on the part of the workers. These lacks themselves had again to be explained by 'objective conditions,' for the shortcomings of the proletariat undoubtedly resulted from their special position within the social relations of capitalism. The necessity of restricting activity to educational work became a virtue: developing the class consciousness of the workers was regarded as the most essential of all revolutionary tasks. But the old social-democratic belief that 'knowledge is power' was no longer convincing for there is no direct connection between knowledge and its application.

The triumph of German fascism ended the long period of revolutionary discouragement, disillusionment and despair. Everything became once more extremely clear; the immediate future was outlined in all its brutality. The labor movement proved for the last time that the criticism directed against it by the revolutionists was more than justified. The fight of the 'ultra-left' against the official labor movement proved to have been the only consistent struggle against capitalism that had thus far been waged.

Obsessions of Berlin

(1948)

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As against the terror of the bombs, the actual conquest of Berlin was of lesser significance to its inhabitants. Nevertheless, the artillery tore new holes into the ruins, shot away parts of the surviving buildings, killed many people running for food and water. The spray of machine guns is visible almost on every house, every floor, every apartment door. The tanks ground down the streets and sidewalks. The battle was fought section by section, street by street, house by house. It is said that sixty thousand Russians died in the struggle for Berlin. The estimate may be incorrect, but it reveals the ferocity of the struggle. There are no guesses on the German losses. They lost everything – particularly, however, their illusions about the Russians.

The Russians are Berlin's second great obsession. The rape of the city is burned deep into the minds of its inhabitants because it is associated with their greatest disappointment. Long before the fall of the city, refugees from the East told horrible stories about the Russians' behavior. So did the radio. But wishful thinking discounted these stories as exaggerations and propaganda. At any rate, it could not get worse than it was. The same hope that welcomed Hitler in exchange for the depression welcomed now the Russians in exchange for the bombings.

Berliners who had once belonged to the Communist Party, or sympathized with it, looked upon the Russian conquerors as their liberators. Their disappointment was consequently greater than that experienced by the great mass of apolitical people and passive Nazis. Even the less exposed Nazis hoped for a quick fall of the city in order to escape a fight that no longer made sense. The more realistic among them killed their families and themselves.

And there were those who had welcomed the Allied bombers in the hope that the misery in their wake would lead to revolt. But the terror-machine of the Nazis proved to be stronger than the despair of the people. The atomization of the masses was sufficiently advanced to allow the organized terroristic minority to control all situations. But with the Russians at the gates of Berlin, defeatism became more widespread. With the Russians within the city, revolt became possible. But the Russians were not interested; they did not look for help but for loot.

The loot had been promised to the Russian troops – mostly made up of Mongolians – as the price for taking the city. The women were among the spoils. Despite the disaffection within the German ranks, the fight for Berlin took longer than was expected, the Russian losses were greater than contemplated. The barbarism of the Russian troops is now excused by the ferocity of the Nazi defense that enraged the Russian soldiers. Their rage, it is explained, could not be controlled; it took some time before the Commissars were able to bring order into the chaos and deprive the individual soldier of his right to rape, steal, and kill, in favor of the systematic expropriation executed by the army in the name of the state.

The Nazi stalwarts had the choice of dying fighting or committing suicide. They found it easier to get killed. They hated the Russians and they had no love for the Germans. Whoever was not with them in this last battle was their enemy. Unwilling adolescents and feeble old men were forced into the *Volkssturm*. Those who could not handle a gun, or manipulate a hand-grenade, were kept busy building barricades. Refusal to work or to fight led to immediate execution. Everywhere the defeatists were hanging on the lantern posts. Attempts to cut them down were again punished by death.

The luck of battle shifted from day to day, sometimes from hour to hour. The unwilling soldiers of the *Volkssturm* threw their guns away as soon as the Russians entered their street, only to pick them up again when they were driven back. They would be killed either way: by the Russians if found with a weapon in their hands, by the Nazis

if found without their guns. But in the final stages of the battle more and more Germans joined the Russians in the hunting down and killing of the Nazis. They tore down the barricades they had erected to slow the Russian advance. They helped take care of snipers. They recognized the Nazis who had shed their uniforms, and destroyed them. They improvised red flags, reorganized the Communist Party, occupied the apartments of Nazi party-members, plundered and killed on their own account.

However, the Russians refused to distinguish between Nazis and anti-Nazis; all Germans were fascists and capitalists. They even outlawed their own German Communist Party, only to allow its legal reorganization at a much later date – with the arrival of Wilhelm Pick and his Moscow-picked retinue – so as to have an additional weapon of control. It would not do in May 1945 to offer a Russian soldier a brotherly embrace. He needed just to see the “luxury” of a radio, watch, or couch to be convinced that he was not dealing with a *Tovarisch* but with a capitalist. At any rate, as he was out to loot, he was not interested in probing the personal history and social position of his victim.

The rape of Berlin was not the aftermath of the struggle but part of it. The fight was less a military affair than a gigantic raid of a million-fold army of bandits. Even the appearance of the Russian soldiers ceased to be military; they discarded filthy and torn parts of their uniforms for German civilian clothes. They wore two and three suits under the military blouses and pants. Hardly able to walk, they advanced from street to street, tommy-gun in one hand and a suitcase of loot in the other. The bayonet broke open closets and drawers; what was removable was taken, only to be lost again to the Commissars who organized the eastward track of the previously westward Nazi caravans of plunder.

In great demand, of course, were things that could be carried on the body, such as watches and jewelry of all descriptions. As the victory must be celebrated, schnapps and vodka were also in great demand. Every bottle of vinegar was opened and tasted before the Russians accepted their possessors’ protestation that they contained no alcohol. And with the schnapps the fighting and thievery gained in elan. Those who could not deliver quickly enough were shot down; women, not willing to give in at once, were thrown out of the windows with their throats slit. Fires were set to the houses that yielded too little, their occupants fleeing the basements into the deadly cross-fires of the streets.

During the battle, the interval between life and death is the occasion for love. Stopped for days at a particular spot, there was time for enjoyment before the sniper’s bullet found its mark. Women and girls dragged from their basements were lined up on the sidewalks. They tried to make themselves appear old and ugly by smearing their faces with soot and by dirtying the shabby rags they wore in the cellars. But a soldier’s hand would wipe away the filth and discover good looks behind the mask of fear. Children would follow their mothers and sisters, only to see them ordered to bend over and lift their skirts to make ready for love in daylight and collectivity, to be loved by drunken soldiers still able, however, to keep an eye on the rooftops so as not to be killed in the act of copulation. Long afterwards, the smaller of the children would play the newly-learned “game of raping.”

The end of the battle is the start of the clean-up period. Groups of Russians began looking for strayed German soldiers; systematically, house by house, block by block. Nights, they returned to be rewarded for their day’s troubles. The dead women, sprawling on the streets with their throats cut from ear to ear, served as a terrible reminder not to refuse the victors. The soldiers took what they found, regardless of age. Years without furloughs, years of war and nothing but war, had given them a great and indiscriminate appetite. Lucky the woman who aroused the fancy of an officer who would take charge of her and thus protect her from the mob. For others there was just the command “stay down

.... comrade comes.” It was like in an army brothel; only the experience was missing, and the husband looked on, and the children were not spared. And there was always the fear of death. If the lights suddenly went out, the Russian might start shooting. If the lights suddenly went on, he might also shoot, always suspicious of being trapped, of being tricked, of being surprised by a god-damned German swine.

Of course there are also other stories; stories of the kind Russian soldier who stopped in his fight just to help an old lady cross the street. Stories of the crying Russian soldier killing an old couple to end their useless and hopeless misery. Of the baby-lover, forcing a can of milk down the throat of a terrified child. Of those that took from one German to give to another. Of the Commissar killing the rapist on the spot, and the officer belaboring the plunderer with his saber. No doubt, these stories are as true as the cruel ones. But the unpredictability of the Russians’ behavior merely increased the fear. Life and death depended on their caprices; it gave the terror a particularly bitter flavor. And when all is said, there remains the fact that within two months Berlin was thoroughly plundered. What was not securely hidden had been taken, most of the women had been mishandled, and the majority of the population had been reduced to paupers.

II

Apparently it was true that the soldiers had lost their discipline. Long after the battle searching parties continued to look in the basements and ruins. They looked no longer for Nazis but for Russians. And they have been looking for deserters ever since; most of the *Razzias* that take place in Berlin have as their first objective the hunt for former Russian soldiers. Troops were shifted, the Mongolians retreated to the hinterland; new soldiers arrived. Too late for the great show they were now forced to buy their women with bread and their bicycles with worthless vouchers and German Marks they had picked up in banks and post-offices.

But the troops were still living with the Germans. What kind of people were these Russians? Had they been so totally demoralized by years of campaigning, that they forgot all the so-called civilized ways of behavior? Or did they come from Russian regions so backward that any comparison with Western standards was at once unfair and impossible? With surprise and contempt the Berliners watched the attempts of Russian soldiers to drill a hole in the wall in the hope that it would spout water just as the faucet did over the kitchen sink. They were amazed by the readiness of the Russian soldier to exchange an expensive wrist-watch for any old alarm clock just because it was so much bigger. They were disgusted to see their living-room changed into a butcher-shop as the Russians dragged animals up the stairs to be killed on the carpet. They did not understand their persistence of using the bathtub for a toilet and the toilet for washing their faces. They could not help laughing over the disappointment of the Russian who washed his potatoes in the toilet-bowl only to see them disappear as he pulled the lever. They saw with regret the wrecked automobiles and bicycles littering the streets, demonstrating the Russians’ great love and little aptitude for things mechanical. They learned to know the Russian’s great fear of his superiors: to make a misbehaving soldier run, it was only necessary to shout “Commissar” at the top of one’s lungs. They witnessed Russian soldiers marched off to prison, heavy ropes around their bodies, the point of the bayonet between their shoulder blades, like in an old war-picture of a hundred years back. They experienced day by day the wide gulf that still separates the East from the West, as yet unbridgeable by any ideology, crossable only by armed forces, and haphazardly kept together by the permanence of terror.

Order was re-established in Berlin. Russian soldiers had been buried where they had fallen, on the sidewalks, in the center of the streets. Their graves had been lovingly cared for. Little white fences had been placed around them. Flowers, and often the picture of the deceased, were planted on the heap of earth covering them. Their remains were now dug out to restore the streets to their original function, and were placed into mass-graves at more appropriate places. Barriers were placed on every important street corner. Smart Russian women in uniform, white gloves, their bosom pushed up to the neck, regulated traffic by lifting or lowering toll-bars for vehicles and individuals alike. Like other regulations modeled on the Russian village, these traffic disturbances disappeared with the entry of the Allied troops.

With order restored, pillage was now directed from headquarters. The factories lost their machinery, the warehouses all they contained. Even the tracks of the city railway were removed, but had to be brought back at a later date. The street-cars were moved to Russia. The Germans repaired previously discarded ones; but they, too, were taken. Only the oldest, most dilapidated ones were left to Berlin.

With the entering of the Allied troops about half of Berlin was freed of the Russians. The expropriations were legalized, the removals were now being called reparations. The Russian troops moved into barracks and bunkers formerly housing German troops. Their uniforms seemed cleaner and they began to let their hair grow. But the more well-mannered they became, the less could be seen of them. Their isolation is not complete, of course; they can still be observed guarding the factories and offices that work for them. They have their parades and patrols and also their time off. They still plant their machine-guns on railway stations to check the papers of all who pass. But there is no longer that one-sided "fraternization" of the first months of the occupation.

III

Russia has lost in Germany, most certainly in Berlin, notwithstanding all the apparent "good will" the people show toward the Socialist Unity Party, Russia's German instrument. It is not propaganda, nor a stubborn refusal to be disillusioned, which explains some of the Berliners' "enthusiasm" for Russia's German policy. Behind the "enthusiasm" hides fear, which is kept alive by an invisible terror that may at any day come into the open.

On May Day 1948 there were nearly three-quarters of a million people in the *Lustgarten* demonstration called by the Russian-sponsored Socialist Unity Party. Apparently more than the number of those who attended the Socialist demonstration at the Reichstag building. Only two Russians in mufti, and one in uniform, shared the tribune with Pieck and his staff. Few Russians were seen along the route. The slogans were all related to imagined German needs, and against the Marshall Plan. Hour by hour the demonstrators passed the reviewing stand. Their shoutings, however, had no spontaneity, but were directed by groups of claque near the loudspeaker-system. The Communist-controlled Berlin police formed part of the demonstration and received the loudest applause. Over and over again the loudspeakers burst forth with "Long live the German people's police." The Moscow-trained former Nazi officer, Markgraf, at that time Berlin's sole police president, smiled down to the masses, coquettishly waving a red carnation or clicking his heels in an earnest salute. Berlin's love for the police and the love of the police for the Berliners seemed boundless and all-embracing.

The shabby clothes, torn shoes, and hungry faces of the demonstrators made them appear like an army of desperate beggars, out to invade the reservoirs of the rich. But they yelled for the police, for the often-felt rubber truncheons, for the deadly order of the

party-state. Did the bottle of schnapps they received this morning go to their heads? Of course not, for it was sold at once to the black market. The schnapps was not a present but cost more than a weekly wage; by selling it they realized a profit big enough to buy four loaves of bread. Maybe the sight of the large brown sausages sold at various booths near the marching-route made them love the world and all it contained? But taking the sausage meant to part with precious ration-coupons and to face a meatless month. No, the enthusiasm for the police, for the Communist Party, for Russia, was not the result of bribery; it was given absolutely free, it came from the heart, a heart obsessed by fear.

The manipulated demonstrations of the “people’s will” are organized through a malignant net of organizations. It is not up to the individual to decide whether or not to go. With others he is assembled at the place of work or at his living-quarters. His trade-union functionary, factory-representative, party-comrade, or house-warden, will know if he missed the call, if he stayed away deliberately; and he may be reprimanded or reported. Reported to whom? That’s just it. Under the Nazis it was clear, but now one doesn’t really know. However, if the Russians should become the absolute rulers, it may be expected that a bad record or a deficiency of enthusiasm will reach the files of a new Gestapo. It is better to play safe, to act and talk as is expected, or not to talk, just nod, and follow the functionary.

Communist Party trustees, backed by the Red Army, control factories still working, supervise all available jobs whatever their nature, control the cooperatives and the municipal offices. Although rations are small they must be bought. To live, one must work, even if most work is of the make-believe kind. Some jobs qualify for ration-card Two, others for ration-card Three, the most important jobs, as evaluated by the Russian occupiers, for ration-card One. To get a ration-card a work-card is needed. To keep the work-card, one must not oppose the policy and ideology of the Socialist Unity Party.

In opposition to the planned installation of a Western German government the Party called for a German referendum on the question of national unity. That no one is against unity is clear, though there may be some who do not care to show concern. That this is not a German question at all is also clear. What will happen in Germany and Berlin depends on the conflicts or agreements, between the great competing powers. Nevertheless, the propaganda offices are busy on both sides and the referendum is part of the Russian program. And then it starts:— The house-warden knocks on the door: “Have you added your name to the list for the referendum?” He comes back next day with the same question, and the day thereafter. The question is asked at street corners, at the grocer’s, in the factories and offices, everywhere, by a great number of unpaid functionaries in search of ration-card One, until everybody feels sure that he is watched, that his indifference will not remain unnoticed. The list of names demanding the referendum may be kept, checked, and gone over again, as soon as the Allied powers have left, on the day of reckoning when the unreliaables are purged. Anyhow, it is not difficult to sign a name, and thus they sign — just in case.

Of course nobody is fooled by these expressions of the people’s will. The Party is not gauging its ideological success but the amount of fear it has been able to inspire. By means of the referendum, demonstrations, elections, declarations of all sorts, it measures the degree of its power over the people. It knows that ideological control is of small importance in an age which has devaluated all ideologies, where ideologies are merely labels for the controlling powers of one or another set of politicians who base their rule not on ideas but on an effective organization of terror.

Life in the Russian sector begins to resemble life under Nazi rule, including the arrests and disappearances of oppositionists in nightly raids. Although as yet without uniform and with restricted authority, a red “SS” is in formation. Discipline and the

leader principle are stressed, the party hierarchy and its system of privileges has returned. With the division of the people into ration-card categories an inexpensive army of functionaries and storm-troopers has been created. Being in possession of a number One ration-card means to keep on living; outside this category there is only slow starvation. The struggle for existence is a fight for the proper ration-card, for the privilege of being used as policeman, propagandist, informer, or executioner by the masters of the party-machine.

Russian expansion is based not on consent but on force. It is a military and police affair exclusively, notwithstanding all the doctrinaire concern with ideological issues, for these, too, perform police functions, leading, as they do, to the early discovery of deviations and nascent opposition. It is not the change in the economic structure the Russians may introduce in Germany that causes concern, but the political-social structure of their party-state. For the Berliners the "Iron Curtain" hides no secrets. They have traveled across it, their relatives are living there, visiting them from time to time, either legally or illegally. Uncensored letters reach Berlin. They know that the conditions in city and country do not differ from the miserable conditions in the Western Zones, that Berlin merely reflects the whole of the territory that was once Germany. Furthermore, some of them have been with the Nazi armies in Russia, some returned as prisoners of war, looking like the inmates of Belsen and Buchenwald in their last stages of development. Local experiences are not their only criteria. But because of these experiences all that is Russian takes on a particularly sinister character.

The immediate situation, however, calls for duplicity. As long as there is a chance to pledge allegiance to the West, the chance is taken in the illusory hope that this may influence the decision of the Western powers to stay in Berlin. Simultaneously, the Russians are supported wherever necessary, in order not to arouse their wrath, in case the city should be theirs completely. As there are no escapes for the masses, their attitudes change with their masters. Democratic Berlin will be even more "democratic" as soon as the basis for its current democracy – four power competition – is removed. Meanwhile, people can do no more than bewail their reluctance to follow suit at the first great exodus to the Western zones, at the earliest rumors of a possible Berlin crisis. Now they are trapped, to be sold out if so convenient, or to be used in a kind of test-case for the larger issues at stake. Those who do not live by politics will prefer to do as they are told, no matter who does the telling. The Western-oriented politicians will, at best, become refugees. In their majority they will probably crowd still more the already crowded Russian concentration camps. In any case, German preferences do not count; the present flood of brave slogans about the Berliners' valiant refusal to bow to the new dictatorship is only silly, facing, as Berlin does, an army judged able, in case of war, of overrunning the whole of Germany within a few days.

IV

The political issues that seemingly agitate the Berliners only indicate their own impotence. Their interest in politics is waning. They would, no doubt, support any power, and any cause, in exchange for bread and security. They would even try to forget their early experiences with the Russians. But no bread and no security is forthcoming. It is the obvious poverty of the Russians, their strange primitiveness, their crude terroristic methods, their inability to give, and their need to take where hardly anything is left to take, that makes the Germans prefer the West. Even if nothing is to be expected from either side, still there is a greater familiarity with the Western world. There is also the strong suspicion that the Bolshevik colossus rests upon feet of clay and that,

notwithstanding possible initial successes, it would not last in a prolonged war. It is not so much hunger for revenge, as the desire to escape the camp of the defeated, which motivates the German sympathies – such as they are – for the West.

However, no real turn to the West is possible. Victors behave as such; even where no great gains can be realized the victorious gestures will be maintained. These gestures alone confront the Berliners, removed as they are from the bargain-counter of international diplomacy, where special claims historically and otherwise, are framed in terms of coal and iron. France's anxiety over a possible German revival is not shared by her occupation troops, who recognize its baselessness merely by looking around. No fear-determined brutality accompanies their rule. Only the French officer behaves as arrogantly in Berlin as did the Nazi officer in Paris. And in the French desire to demonstrate their superiority the Germans may recognize their own behavior of better days. It is not a wise girl who refuses a French soldier a dance in the Amusement Park; she may very well get her face slapped. One must be careful in the use of one's language when facing the French interrogator, since a real or imagined lack of respect may lead to painful consequences. In general, however, the French behave toward the Germans in Berlin as they would if they met them in Paris. In their persistent enmity they are like all the other Western people who endured the Nazi occupation. Apparently, they are not as yet finished with the war and their previously suffered humiliation still looks for compensation.

Only the British soldiers attempt to make themselves inconspicuous, provided they are sober, and so long as they are on their own. But they are forced to do a lot of marching and shouting. Their officers stick to themselves in Germany as once in India. Barbed wire around their compounds, toll-gates, and many guards secure their isolation. They bring their wives and children to Berlin and live their English-way-of-life as if they were at home. The privates turn to German girls, which brings them into contact with the population. They are no longer feared but envied for their better food and happier outlook.

The presence of the French and British is largely ignored, however, as it is clear that only two great powers determine Berlin's status. America means many things to the Berliners. It means relatives and friendly organizations that send food and clothing. It means coffee and cigarettes on the black market. It means work and sales. It means a hamburger with a GI in the *Titania Palast*, and well-filled garbage cans for the scavengers. For some it provides the unfounded hope for social solidarity and for a turn away from the present trend of totalitarianism and war. For others it means effective opposition to the East and the certainty of war. For most, however, America is only the other side of the coin which, however thrown and however it will fall, spells doom for Europe in general and for Berlin in particular.

Although deeply involved in Germany and Berlin, the occupation army knows how to keep its distance from the defeated. The isolation of the Americans is perhaps even more complete than that of the British. They live their American way-of-life in heavily guarded compounds, comprising large territories in pleasant natural settings. They have their own churches, schools, and kindergartens; their own movies, concerts, lectures, restaurants and stores. No German foot is to set there, except on missions of service. As distinct from the British, no program of austerity interferes with the Americans' pleasures. All less desirable activities are performed by Germans; Polish guards watch over them, their unbombed quarters are inaccessible to all but those with proper papers. Security has been developed both into a great art and a great science. To judge by the weapons displayed and by the red tape employed, the life of each American seems to be in constant danger. Even the *Fräuleins* need a "social pass" attesting to their physical

health, which was in former times required only of prostitutes. From another view however, all this isolation seems not at all queer, for it corresponds to the division of rich and poor that sets up barriers everywhere. The Americans in Berlin may be looked upon as a kind of new bourgeoisie, more sharply divided from the slum-dwellers than the bourgeoisie of old.

Of course, business closes the gap; the coffee from the States must be sold, valuables which escaped the Russians must be bought, and the requirements of the elevated social position demand a great amount of German labor. But work is fantastically cheap. Prior to the currency reform the weekly pay for any category of work did not exceed the German Mark equivalent of ten American cigarettes, that is four cents, as the PX sells the carton for eighty cents.

Nevertheless, the USA feeds part of Berlin. The Americans never tire of pointing to their deliveries and to the fact that they themselves manage without German-produced foods. Like the nation as a whole, so her citizens separately feel like philanthropists, the more to be admired since it is the former enemy they benefit. The hungry beggars have no choice but to be grateful, and their excessive submissiveness supports the conqueror's illusion of generosity. But there is no Jove for the Americans. The block-busters are not forgotten. The Americans are preferred because of the crumbs that fall from their tables and because they are businesslike people. They buy where others steal, they sell where others give. And even if the end-result – absolute impoverishment and complete exploitation – should be the same, the process to this end, in terms of personal experiences, seems not as terrible as the lawless past.

American generosity brings a bitter smile to the lips of the Berliner. He knows quite well what his rations are, and he knows the black market prices. His bitterness on this point, however, does not differ from his feelings toward his own countrymen, the farmer for instance, or toward the Displaced Persons and the Western businessmen who are engaged in black market activities. He cannot find any satisfaction in the thought that the black market must find its end as soon as Germany is emptied of all the valuables that still command a price on the world-market, for he needs the black market and is by necessity a part of it. The temporary black market depression in the wake of the currency-reform did not help the Berliners much, as the “cold war” prevented them from profiting by the farmers' and store-keepers' new confidence in the freshly printed money.

The smile released by the propaganda for Democracy, however has no bitterness at all. It can even turn into a hearty laugh if the question of the re-education of the Germans is raised. It is understood, to be sure, that an army is exempt from democracy, otherwise it could not be an army, and that an occupation army in particular cannot serve a lesson in democracy. It is rather the propaganda in newspaper, newsreel, and radio, that is found so amusing. Every word uttered in favor of democracy is at once contradicted by the facts of life. It is not the Nazi education of the past, having lost its dubious meaning long before the occupation, which explains the Berliners' obvious reluctance to take the dealers in democracy seriously; it is the close resemblance of their present life to that under the Nazi dictatorship. Of course they are supposed to pay for their sins of the past before being allowed to enjoy the fullness of the democratic life. The propaganda merely contains the promise of rewards for present-day good behavior, just as the flesh-pots of the Nazis had to be earned first by countless sacrifices and terrible suffering. But for too long the Berliners have lived on promises, and no longer do they trust in words. They are not cynical and disillusioned, as the observers say; they are merely sick of phrases totally unrelated to their actual situation. They do not see a choice between democracy and dictatorship but merely hope for the lowest possible degree of the terroristic rule of which they have had so much.

It is found increasingly difficult to oppose the Nazi observation that power alone determines who is to rule and live, and who is to be ruled and destroyed. The anti-Nazi cannot help feeling that authoritarianism has survived the Nazi rule and that the difference between oppressor and liberator is rather small. Hate and disgust grows, and dissipates into despair. It cannot lead to a revival of nationalism, as the material base for the latter has been bombed away. To get out of the country, rather than to revive it, is the dream of its ambitious people. They are no longer able, however, to feel embarrassment over the long Nazi dictatorship, and they no longer brood over the atrocities committed. They have grown cold to all but their own misery; and to tell them, as is often done, that they "only got what they were asking for," causes no anger but only tired gestures of resignation. Whatever they were and whatever they have done, just now they only desire to live and to be left alone.

V

The desire to be left alone has nothing to do with the current issues of self-government, national unity, Western federation, constitutions, or the color of flags. It simply means to be left out of all activities concerned with such matters. It is the desire to escape the manipulations of politicians, profiteers, professional ideologists, and also the pressure of the enchanted minority defending traditional values. It is a vague longing for a new start, unaffected by the past, and an activity with no other issues than those of making bread and of eating it undisturbed. The desire is illusory but it indicates the prevailing state of mind. To be left alone implies also the wish to escape the war now in the making. The anti-war attitude is not based on theories but on direct experience in the bombed cities and on the battlefields of the world. They have learned to place life above all those considerations which are evoked in the justification of war. They are at any rate much too busy trying to keep alive, to be concerned with the larger problems of world politics. They do not really care about the changes of uniforms so long as they are able to use the night for sleep.

Sleep is important, undisturbed sleep of even greater importance, as the Berliners found out in the restless nights during the war. To go to bed with the careless assurance that they will rise again in the morning – this ordinary experience became the greatest desire of the bombed sleep walkers. To sleep without the constant fear of death meant more than victory or defeat. Sleep is not just the mind and body at rest, it shortens the days, it helps against the cold, it is a substitute for food, preserves energy, and is the hiding place of misery.

Food is another of the Berliners' great obsessions, and sleep overcomes it only partly and temporarily. The individual awake is the personification of hunger. His mind is occupied with food and the question how to get it. All other thoughts are secondary and rather meaningless as long as the primary need remains unsatisfied. The rationed food is no problem. It is so little, and is sold at stable prices, so that anyone who works can pay for it. The only question it arouses is whether to eat it all at once or to distribute it over the larger part of the week. The answer depends on the individual's connections on the black market and on his ability to pay its prices.

The search for food goes on relentlessly, in and outside of Berlin. For food anything expendable will be exchanged. For a few pounds of potatoes great hardships are endured; hours of standing in line for a railway ticket; the brutal rush for a front place at the gate; the struggle for a place inside the train or even for hanging on its sides; the dodging of the police, and the long marches from farm to farm. Whoever cannot leave the city is busy visiting the grocery stores and black market centers so as not to be late for the

last delivery of bread or butter. They are always on the run for food, always asking for information about food, always excited about food, always thinking in terms of food, and all the while hungry to the bones.

There are many types of hunger, and the Berliners have experienced them all. There is the hunger for specific commodities that disappear in times of war. There is the desire for a balanced and pleasant diet, instead of stuffing the belly with whatever is on hand. There were the rations during the Hitler regime, which were seldom sufficient, and became hunger rations toward the end of the war. And then came the absolute hunger with the collapse of the distribution system during the siege of Berlin. To survive this period meant to eat whatever was found on the streets, in the ruins, and during frantic searches in abandoned stores. Wounded horses were ripped apart as soon as they had fallen. Most of the people turned butchers; like ant-heaps they hovered over the carcasses. They hunted for dogs and cats, picking from the asphalt what was red and bloody, even the innards of men blown to bits by artillery fire. Only to live through this ordeal, to be alive when the war was over, to enjoy once more a normal life, and to eat as much as one liked.

But the hunger remained; it was now organized and categorized. Former class divisions lost their meaning before the food-commissions, only to have their illegal comeback on the black market. The law made new classifications in terms of ration-cards with different numbers of calories, dividing the population into groups that were to live and function, Others that were to die off slowly, and still others destined to die quickly. The counting in calories may be good for the statistician and it may make easy the sociologist's comparative studies in living standards, but to the hungry it is merely the strangely expressed verdict determining their punishments down to the death-sentence. But the judges are not fair, the sentences are not clear. What does it mean, for instance, to speak of the calories of ten pounds of potatoes if half of them are inedible, or of the calory-content of one pound of sugar if half of it consists of an undefinable dust? What does the rationed meat mean, if week after week no meat at all reaches the market, or if it turns up in the form of ground intestines mixed with flour, or is substituted by a herring nobody knows how to fry for lack of fat?

Not even the highest ration covers human needs; it must be supplemented with black market food and self-raised garden products. All other categories are only names for various starvation levels. They not only create new classes but also split the families into feuding units. The permanence of hunger makes sharing impossible. All sociality disappears; everyone holds on to his own, or tries to hold on. Some eat their rations fast, others slowly; envy and hate develop merely by watching people eat. Some men ruin their health quickly so that their children may eat, others starve their wives and children to retain their own strength. Suspicion rules, extras are kept secret, food is eaten in hiding, dragged into a corner to be devoured in animal-fashion. People are nervous, ill-willed, ready to quarrel on the slightest pretext and more than often inclined to kill. Inequality within the setting of general want is the crudest form of inequality, the most corrupting, the ugliest, and the most vicious method of control.

If there were a sign that the hunger might end it would lose half of its terror. But the many years of repeated disappointments extinguished all hope. Even if the situation should change suddenly, the people would not believe in its permanence. They would merely eat themselves sick, would hoard what they could not get down, accumulate enormous quantities of food; it would take a long time before food would cease to be an obsession. Abundance, however, occurs only in their dreams; the recalling of the far-off past seems like a fairy-tale of well being. Lucky are the children born into this misery. They do not know about other than the meager rations, the substitutes, the skimmed milk

if any, and the black dry bread. They do not know about candies, chocolates and fruits, and often refuse these strange things if they are offered to them. The world of hunger, cold, and want is the only world they know about. With their toes blue in the sharp wind, they run about laughingly like other children. With their bare feet in wooden soles they play their games undisturbed. Their carefree attitude misleads the well-fed visitors to consider the claims of misery to be grossly exaggerated. The doctors know differently, of course; they measure, weigh, and keep records and offer proof that these children are not like other children, for they weigh less, grow to lesser heights, and die sooner when sick.

The older children are realists in the world of hunger. Their early life belonged to Adolf Hitler; no other ideas but those of the Nazis entered their minds. No one contradicted their childish empty talk. Theirs was the future – supposedly. And then all this collapsed. What was good became bad, what was once laudable was now cursed; if no one dared to oppose their childish arrogance, now no one seemed to care for them at all. They were either a burden, or a source for additional food, which they gathered by becoming small-time operators on the black market. Some no longer had parents; others who had, no longer cared for them. They needed help which no one could provide; so they tried to help themselves and sometimes they succeeded.

Disregarding the ever-present propaganda for the prevention of diseases, girls look for soldiers. They have been raped, why shouldn't they sell? What is all this talk about morals anyway? Of course, syphilis is not worth a pack of cigarettes. But neither is it good to be healthy and hungry. All is a gamble anyway, the good often die quicker than the bad. There is no love and no romance, it is all business on the barter level. There is little prostitution in the old sense of the word although there are still prostitutes around the *Alexanderplatz*. If enough buyers were at hand, prostitution would be general. Sex is a way of getting food as good as any other, and often the only way. The escapades of wife and daughter in search of food are disregarded; love completely disarmed, faces hunger.

The adolescents are frightfully realistic about the new relationship of hunger and love, of existence and sociality. No values other than material ones arouse their interest. They are practitioners of the empty life. The immediate personal gain in terms of things – edible, usable – is their only concern. Narrow-minded, without scruples, they turn their cold egotistical eyes upon the world of rubble in search for plunder left by the plunderers of yesterday. And since so little is left their selfishness is miserly; not even toward themselves do they know generosity. They calculate, count, ration, hoard, to secure their mere existence in spite of everything and everybody.

Hunger shows; it drives the smiles from the faces and tightens the skin on the bones. The flesh turns yellowish-brown and eyes sink into their sockets. There is an irritated tired look in the eyes, and sadness and anger around the mouth. The backs are bent and the steps are unsure as if in hesitation before the grave. When hunger comes, it appears publicly only in its early stages and in some cases not at all. Permanent hunger makes one indifferent, even to the self. The hungry hide like wounded animals in their caves. Starvation is not a street-sight; it doesn't offer itself to curious visitors. The people on the streets, and particularly on the still comfortable streets, frequented by the even more comfortable visitors, are still struggling against starvation with all the weapons at their command. If they are hungry, they rush about not to get hungrier. They still care about their appearance, dress up brush, wash and mend not to add moral humiliation to the physical dilemma. The starving rush no longer. They do not clutter the streets; they have no shoes to walk in and no reason to be seen. They stay at home, in their rooms, live in their beds, or in the wards of hospitals, apathetically awaiting either a miracle or death. Their peaceful withering away is the triumph of the rationing system. It is always a minority that succumbs first, to make room for another minority, recruited from the large

mass of people lighting for their place in the majority. But in the end the various minorities represent a previous majority. This prospect, however, only intensifies the struggle for life and gives the hunger-obsession first place in the minds of the obsessed.

Note on the Text

Shortly after the end of the Second World War Paul Mattick renewed contacts and correspondence with his previous comrades from the German/Dutch or Council Communist current of the 30s.

One of these was Reinhold Klingenberg, whom Mattick had know personally from his youth and who – still living in Berlin – could tell many details from the actual scene of the German capital captured and managed by the victorious Great Powers.

In 1948 Mattick himself managed to go to Europe and visit Berlin. There he met his old contacts and was able also to participate in some of the gatherings of the Group of International Socialists, GIS, around Alfred Weiland. From this trip he collected very detailed information about the situation in Berlin – information that was afterwards expressed and communicated in this article on the *Obsessions of Berlin*.

Spontaneity and Organisation

1949

The question of organisation and spontaneity was approached in the labour movement as a problem of class consciousness, involving the relations of the revolutionary minority to the mass of the capitalistically-indoctrinated proletariat. It was considered unlikely that more than a minority would accept, and, by organising itself, maintain and apply a revolutionary consciousness. The mass of the workers would act as revolutionaries only by force of circumstances. Lenin accepted this situation optimistically. Others, like Rosa Luxemburg, thought differently about it. In order to realise a party dictatorship, Lenin concerned himself first of all with questions of organisation. In order to escape the danger of a new dictatorship over the workers, Rosa Luxemburg stressed spontaneity. Both, however, held that just as under certain conditions the bourgeoisie determined the ideas and activities of the labouring masses, so under different conditions a revolutionary minority could do likewise. At the same time that Lenin saw this as a chance to usher in the socialist society, Rosa Luxemburg feared that any minority, placed in the position of a ruling class, might soon think and act just like the bourgeoisie of old.

Behind these attitudes there was the conviction that the economic development of capitalism would force its proletarian masses into anti-capitalistic activities. Although Lenin counted on, he simultaneously feared, spontaneous movements. He justified the need for conscious interferences in spontaneously-arising revolutions by citing the backwardness of the masses and saw in spontaneity an important destructive but not constructive element. In Lenin's view, the more forceful the spontaneous movement, the greater would be the need to supplement and direct it with organised, planned party-activity. The workers had to be guarded against themselves, so to speak, or they might defeat their own cause through ignorance, and, by dissipating their powers, open the way for counter-revolution.

Rosa Luxemburg thought differently because she saw the counter-revolution not only lurking in the traditional powers and organisations but capable of developing within the revolutionary movement itself. She hoped that spontaneous movements would delimit the influence of those organisations that aspired to centralise power in their own hands. Although both Luxemburg and Lenin saw the accumulation of capital as a process that spawned crises, Luxemburg conceived the crisis as more catastrophic than did Lenin. The more devastating a crisis, the more embracing would be the expected spontaneous actions, the less the need for conscious direction and centralistic control, and the greater the chance for the proletariat to learn to think and act in ways appropriate to its own needs. Organisations, in Luxemburg's view, should merely help release the creative forces inherent in mass actions and should integrate themselves in the independent proletarian attempts to organise a new society. This approach presupposed not a clear, comprehending revolutionary consciousness but a highly-developed working class, capable of discovering by its own efforts ways and means of utilising the productive apparatus and its own capacities for a socialist society.

There was still another approach to the question of organisation and spontaneity. Georges Sorel and the syndicalists were not only convinced that the proletariat could emancipate itself without the guidance of the intelligentsia, but that it has to emancipate itself from the middle-class elements that control political organisations. In Sorel's view, a government of socialists would in no sense alter the social position of the workers. In order to be free, the workers themselves would have to resort to actions and weapons exclusively their own. Capitalism, he thought, had already organised the whole proletariat in its industries. All that was left to do was to suppress the state and property. To accomplish this, the proletariat was not so much in need of a so-called scientific insight into necessary social trends as of a kind of intuitive conviction that revolution and socialism were the inevitable outcome of their own continuous struggles. The strike was seen as the workers' revolutionary apprenticeship. The growing number of strikes, the extension of strikes, and their increasing duration pointed towards a possible general strike, that is, to the impending social revolution. Each particular strike was a reduced facsimile of the general strike and a preparation for this final upheaval. The growing revolutionary will could not be gauged by the successes of political parties, but by the frequency of strikes and the elan therein displayed. Organisation was preparation for direct action and the latter, in turn, formed the character of the organisation. The spontaneously-occurring strikes were the organisational forms of revolt and were also part of the social organisation of the future in which the producers themselves control their production. The revolution proceeded from action to action in a continuous merging of spontaneous and organisational aspects of the proletarian fight for emancipation.

By stressing spontaneity, labour organisations admitted their own weakness. Since they did not know how to change society, they indulged in the hope that the future would solve the problem. This hope, to be sure, was based on the recognition of some actual trends such as the further development of technology, the continuation of the concentration and centralisation processes accompanying capitalistic development, the increase of social frictions, etc. It was nevertheless a mere hope which compensated for the lack of organisational power and the inability to act effectively. Spontaneity had to lend 'reality' to their apparently hopeless tasks, to excuse an enforced inactivity and justify consistency.

Strong organisations, on the other hand, were inclined to disregard spontaneity. Their optimism was based on their own successes not on the probability of spontaneous movements coming to their aid at some later date. They advocated either that organised force must be defeated by organised force, or held to the view that the school of practical

every-day activity as carried on by party and trade union would lead more and more workers to recognise the inescapable necessity of changing existing social relations. In the steady growth of their own organisations, they saw the development of proletarian class consciousness and at times they dreamed that these organisations would comprise the whole of the working class.

All organisations, however, fit into the general social structure. They have no absolute 'independence'; in one way or another all are determined by society and help determine society in turn. None of the organisations in capitalism can consistently be anti-capitalistic. 'Consistency' refers merely to a limited ideological activity and is the privilege of sects and individuals. To attain social importance, organisations must be opportunistic in order to affect the social processes and to serve their own ends simultaneously.

Apparently opportunism and 'realism' are the same thing. The former cannot be defeated by a radical ideology which opposes the whole of the existing social relations. It is not possible to slowly assemble revolutionary forces into powerful organisations ready to act at favourable moments. All attempts in this respect have failed. Only those organisations that did not disturb the prevailing basic social relationships grew to any importance. If they started out with a revolutionary ideology, their growth implied a subsequent discrepancy between their ideology and their functions. Opposed to capitalism, but also organised within it, they' could not help supporting their opponents. Those organisations not destroyed by competitive adversaries finally succumbed to the forces of capitalism by virtue of their own successful activity.

In the matter of organisation this, then is the dilemma of the radical: in order to do something of social significance, actions must be organised. Organised actions, however, turn into capitalistic channels. It seems that in order to do something now, one can do only the wrong thing and in order to avoid false steps, one should undertake none at all. The political mind of the radical is destined to be miserable; it is aware of its utopianism and it experiences nothing but failures. In mere self-defence, the radical stresses spontaneity always, unless he is a mystic, with the secretly-held thought that he is talking nonsense. But his persistence seems to prove that he never ceases to see some sense in the nonsense.

Taking refuge in the idea of spontaneity is indicative of an actual or imagined inability to form effective organisations and a refusal to fight existing organisations in a 'realistic' manner. For to fight them successfully would necessitate the formation of counter-organisations, which, by themselves, would defeat the reason for their existence. 'Spontaneity' is thus a negative approach to the problem of social change and only in a purely ideological sense may it also be considered positive as it involves a mental divorce from those activities that favour the prevailing society. It sharpens critical faculty and leads to disassociation from futile activities and hopeless organisations. It looks for indications of social disintegration and for the limitations of class control. It results in a sharper distinction between appearance and reality and is, in brief, the trade mark of a revolutionary attitude. Since it is clear that some social forces, relations and organisations tend to disappear and others tend to take hold, those interested in the future, in the new forces in the making, will emphasise spontaneity; those more intimately connected with the old ones will stress the need for organisation.

Even a superficial study of organised activity reveals that all important organisations, no matter what their ideology, support the status quo, or, at best, foster a limited development within the general conditions characteristic of a particular society in a particular historical period. The term status quo is helpful in clarifying the concept of rest within the concept of change. It must be regarded as is any theory or practical tool,

and it has its uses quite apart from all its philosophical implications. It is clear, of course, that pre-capitalistic conditions, however transformed, are incorporated in capitalistic conditions and that, likewise, post-capitalistic conditions, in one form or another, are appearing within capitalistic conditions. But this refers to general development and though the specific cannot really be divorced from the general, it is continuously separated by the practical activities of men.

Status quo, as here applied to capitalism, means a period of social history in which the workers, within the conditions of a complex social interdependence, are divorced from the means of production and are thereby controlled by a ruling class. The particulars of political control are based on the particulars of economic control. So long as the capital-labour relationship determines social life, so long shall we find society basically 'unchanged', no matter how much it may appear to have changed otherwise. Laissez-faire, monopoly or state-capitalism are developmental stages within the status quo. While not denying differences between these stages, we must stress their basic identity and by opposing what they have in common oppose not only one or another but all of them simultaneously.

Development or merely change within the status quo may be 'good' or 'bad' from the time-conditioned point of view of the controlled. An example of the first would be the workers' successful fight for better living conditions and greater political freedom; of the second, the loss of both with the ascendancy of fascism — quite apart from the question of whether or not the first is a partial cause of the second. Participation in organisations that foster development within the status quo is often an inescapable necessity. It is therefore of no avail to oppose such organisations with a maximum programme realisable only outside the status quo. Nevertheless, before entering or remaining in 'realistic' organisations, it is necessary to inquire in what direction changes within the status quo may go and how they may affect the working population.

For a long time now trade unions and political labour parties have ceased to act in accordance with their original radical intentions. 'Problems of the day' transformed these movements and led to a situation in which there are no 'real' labour organisations despite the numerous pseudo-organisations still at large. Even the socialist wing of the movement conceives of reform not as a transition to socialism but as the means to a better, more agreeable capitalism, despite the fact that its literature often continues to employ socialistic terms. The fight for better living conditions within the market economy, because it was a fight over the price of labour power, transformed the labour movement into a capitalistic movement of labourers. The greater the proletarian pressure, the greater became the capitalistic need to increase the productivity of labour by technological and organisational procedures and by the national and international extension of business activities. Like competition in general, the proletarian struggle, too, served as an instrument for increasing the pace of capital accumulation, for pushing society from one production level to another. Not only the leaders of labour but the rank and file, too, lost their early revolutionary aspirations as the rising productivity of labour accelerated capital expansion and allowed for both higher profits and better wages. Although wages diminished in relation to production, they increased in absolute terms and raised the living standards of great masses of industrial workers in the leading capitalist countries. Profits were augmented and capital formation was further hastened by foreign trade and colonial exploitation. This helped to stabilise the conditions of a rising so-called labour aristocracy. Periodically the process was interrupted by crises and depressions which acted, although blindly, as co-ordinating factors in the capitalistic re-organisation process. In the long run, however, the double-barrelled support of capital expansion by both

working class and capitalistic competition led to a complete fusion of interests between labour organisations and the controllers of capital.

There were, of course, organisations that fought against the integration of the labour movement into the capitalistic structure. They interpreted reform as a step towards revolution and tried to engage in capitalistic activities and at the same time maintain a revolutionary goal. They saw the fusion of capital and labour as a temporary affair, to be suffered or utilised while it lasted. Their half-heartedness in matters of collaboration prevented their attaining organisational significance; and this, in turn, led them to emphasise spontaneity. Left wing socialists and revolutionary syndicalists belong in this category.

Some countries have higher living standards than others, the high wages of some labouring groups imply low wages for others. Equalising tendencies operating in competitive capitalism with regard to productivity, profit-rates and wage levels, tend to eliminate special interests and particular privileges. Just as the capitalists try to escape this levelling process through monopolisation, so organised labour groups try to secure their special positions despite the class-needs of the proletariat as a whole. These special interests are bound to become 'rational' interests. By defending their political and economic organisations in order to retain the socio-economic privileges secured through them, the workers defend not only that particular stage of capitalistic development which guarantees their special position but also their nations' imperialistic policies.

In order to maintain the status quo, basic social relations are more 'efficiently' organised and re-organised. Present-day re-organisation within the social class structure is totalitarian in character. Ideology, too, becomes totalitarian both as a precondition and as a result of this re-organisation. Non-totalitarian organisations turn totalitarian in an attempt to preserve themselves. In totalitarian nations the so-called labour organisations act exclusively on behalf of the ruling classes. They do so in 'democratic' countries too, although in a less obvious manner and with a partly different ideology. Apparently there is no way to replace these organisations with new ones of a revolutionary character — a hopeless situation for those who want to organise the new society within the shell of the old and for those still bent upon 'improvements' within the status quo, since all reforms would now require totalitarian means. Bourgeois democracy within the conditions of *laissez faire* — that is, the social situation in which labour organisations of the traditional type could form and develop — either no longer exists or is on the way out. The whole discussion around the question of organisation and spontaneity which agitated the old labour movement has now lost its meaning. Both types of organisations, those depending on spontaneity and those trying to master it, are disappearing. Propaganda for new organisations amounts to no more than the hope that they will spontaneously arise. Like the believers in spontaneity, the advocates of organisation, too, are now 'utopians' in face of the emerging totalitarian reality.

To some, however, the existence of Bolshevik Russia seems to contradict both the statement that the old labour movement has disappeared and the contention that discussion about organisation and spontaneity has become meaningless because of altered social conditions. After all, those who stressed organisation had their way in Russia and continue to exert their power in the name of socialism. They may regard their success as a verification of their theory and so may also those reformist organisations that became government parties as, for instance, the British Labour Party. They may regard their present position not as a transformation into totalitarian capitalism but as a step towards the socialisation of society.

The Labour Government and its supporting organisations merely demonstrate, however, that the old labour movement has been brought to an end by its organisational

success. It is quite obvious that the Labourites' sole concern is in maintaining the status quo. They are, of course, still engaged in re-organising the political and governmental structure, but the defence of capitalism has become the defence of their own existence. And to defend capitalism means to continue and to accelerate the concentration and centralisation of economic and political power camouflaged as the 'nationalisation' of key industries. It involves social changes which both increase and secure the manipulative and controlling powers of capital and government and which integrate the labour movement into a developing network of totalitarian organisations that serve none but the ruling classes.

If organisations such as those that dominate the British labour movement gain political influence and do not use it for revolutionary ends, it is not because their 'democratic ideology' forbids them to come to real, as distinct from governmental, power by means other than majority consent. Their own organisations, 'democratic' only in terminology, are determined by a bureaucracy and closely resemble the capitalistic democratic structure which presupposes the absolute rule of the owners and controllers of capital. Neither do they fear what strength remains in their capitalistic adversaries; their conservatism stems directly from their own organisational interests which are bound up with the pre-totalitarian stage of capitalistic development.

The totalitarian evolution of these organisations is a small-scale repetition of the transformation of the liberal into the authoritarian society. It is a slow and contradictory process and implies an inter-organisational struggle as well as a fight against competing political movements. It takes place at a time when the international extension of the capitalistic concentration process turns monopolistic into nationalistic interests; when the world economy is the monopoly of a few nations or power blocs and the direct control over production and marketing that exists in each advanced nation is being realised on a world-wide scale. Under these conditions, the labour movement is no longer able to support capital expansion solely by fighting for its special group interests. It must become a national movement and must partake in the re-organisation of the world economy in accordance with changing power relationships. However, the labour movement, hampered by tradition and having vested interests of its own finds it difficult to turn from a mere supporter of nationalism into a driving force of imperialism. New political movements spring up to exploit this inflexibility and, where it persists, to replace the labour movement by a national-socialist movement.

To be sure, the national-socialist movement is 'national' only in order to be imperialistic. Bourgeois 'internationalism' that is, the free world market, was a fiction. It was 'free' only because it was free from competition against the leading industrial nations and the international trusts. Capital expansion while delimiting competition on the one hand spread competition on the other; old monopolistic positions were destroyed in favour of new monopolistic constellations. If monopolistic interferences in the 'free' world market hindered capitalistic expansion, at the same time they forced newly-developing nations, and arising private interests within them, to establish their own competitive monopolistic restrictions in order to secure for themselves a place within the world economy.

The fight to enter the 'free' world market, as well as the struggle to keep all newcomers out, hastened general capitalistic development at the price of a growing disproportionality of the economy as a whole. The discrepancy between the total social forces of production thereby released and the privately- and nationally-determined organisation of world-production and trade became the wider the more capitalistic progress was made. Unable to arrest the growth of the productive forces because of the competitive situation, re-organisations of the world economy in accordance with the

changing distribution of economic power proceeded by way of crises and wars. This led, in turn, to a renewed emphasis on nationalism although all political and economic issues are determined by the capitalistic nature of the world economy. Nationalism is merely the instrument for large-scale competition; it is the 'internationalism' of capitalist society.

Proletarian internationalism was based on an acceptance of the fictitious 'free-trade' principle of the bourgeoisie. It conceived of international development as a mere quantitative extension of the familiar national development. Just as capitalist enterprise broke through national boundaries, so the labour movement gained an international base without changing its form or activities. The only qualitative change that could be expected in the wake of the quantitative changes was the proletarian revolution, and this because of the idea of the polarisation of society: which means that an always smaller number of rulers would face an always growing mass of the ruled. Logically, this process could lead either into absurdity or to the social expropriation of individual expropriators.

If the fight over the price of labour power was regarded as resulting in the steady growth of proletarian class consciousness and the creation of an objective base for socialism, the whole of the capitalist concentration process was also welcomed as a necessary developmental step in the direction of the new society. Large-scale business, cartellisation, trustification, financial control, state-interferences, nationalism, and even imperialism were held to be signposts of the 'ripening' of capitalist society toward social revolution. If it encouraged the reformists to envision the legally-won control of government as a sufficient requirement for social change, it also made it possible for revolutionaries to hope that even under less 'ripe' conditions socialism could be instituted through the capture of governmental powers. The quarrels between socialists and Bolsheviks were over tactical issues and did not affect their basic agreement that capitalism's 'last stage' could be transformed to socialism by governmental actions. If the socialists seemed to wait for 'progress' to run its course and hand the government over to them, the Bolsheviks were out to make progress and make it faster.

The Russian defeat in the first world war and the widely-supported need to 'modernise' Russia in order to secure her national independence led to the collapse of Czarism and to a revolution that brought the 'progressive elements' to power. The more aggressive wing of the socialist movement soon concentrated power into its own hands. To hasten the socialisation process, the Bolsheviks forced the population to act in strict accordance with their political programme. From their point of view it did not matter whether their decisions were still of a capitalistic character so long as they were in line with the general capitalistic development towards state-capitalism and so long as they increased production and maintained the Bolshevik government which was seen as a guarantee that in the end, despite all inconsistencies, compromises and concessions to capitalistic principles and capitalist powers, a state of socialism could be decreed from above. The point was to keep the government revolutionary, that is, in Bolshevik hands and to preserve its revolutionary character through rigid indoctrination of its members with a basically unchanging ideology. By fostering a fanaticism able to oppose all deviations the Bolsheviks attempted to keep the organisational machine more powerful than all its enemies. Government dictatorship, supported by a dictatorially-directed party and a hierarchical system of privileges, was regarded as the inescapable first step in the actualisation of socialism.

Beyond the growth of monopolistic organisation, state interferences in the economy and the organisational requirements of modern imperialism a tendency towards totalitarian control operated in all countries, particularly in those suffering under more or less 'permanent' crisis conditions. If the capitalist crisis, like its economy, is international, it does not hit all countries equally hard nor in identical ways. There are 'richer' and

'poorer' countries with regard to material, human and capitalistic resources. Crises and wars lead to a re-shuffling of power positions and to new trends in economic and political development. They may be expressions of power relocations already actualised or of instruments for bringing them about. In either case the capitalistic world finds itself decisively changed and differently organised. New organisational innovations become general, though not necessarily similar, by way of the competitive struggles. In some countries new forms of social control, ushered in by a high capital concentration, may be predominantly of an economic character, in others they will take on political appearance. Actually there may be more advanced centralistic control in the former than in the latter. But if this is the case, it only forces the less centralistically-determined nations to increase their political control capacities. A fascistic regime results from the social struggles that accompany internal difficulties and from the need to compensate, by way of organisation, for weaknesses not shared by capitalistically stronger nations. The political authoritarian regime is a substitute for the lack of a 'freely'-developed centralistic system of decision making.

If totalitarianism is a result of changes within the world economy, it is also responsible for the now world-wide tendency to supplement economic force by political-organisational means. In other words, the development of totalitarianism can be understood only in terms of the capitalist world situation. Bolshevism, Fascism and Nazism are not independent national products but national reactions to changed forms of world competition, just as the trend towards totalitarianism in 'democratic' nations is in part a reaction to the pressures for and against imperialistic activities. Of course, only the larger capitalistic countries are independent competitors for world control; numerous smaller nations, already out of the race, merely adapt themselves to the social structure of the dominating powers. Still, modern society's totalitarian structure developed first not where it was commonly to be expected — where there was high economic power concentration — but in the weaker capitalist nations. The western-trained Bolsheviks saw in state- capitalism, the last stage of capitalist development, an entrance to socialism. To reach the entrance by political means necessitated their dictatorship, and to make it effective meant to be totalitarian. The fascist regimes of Germany, Italy and Japan represented attempts through organisation to make up for what was lacking in terms of traditional capitalistic strength, to find a short-cut to large-scale competition, since the general economic development prevented them either from increasing or keeping their shares in world exploitation.

Approached from this point of view, the whole capitalist development has been moving toward totalitarianism. The trend became apparent with the beginning of the present century. The media for its realisation are crises, wars and revolutions. It restricts itself not to special classes and particular nations, but involves the population of the world. From this point of view, it may also be said that a 'fully- developed' capitalism would be a world-capitalism, centralistically controlled in totalitarian fashion. If realisable, it would correspond to the socialist and Bolshevik goal of world government, planning the whole of social life. It would correspond also to the limited 'internationalism' of capitalists, fascists, socialists and Bolsheviks who envision such partial organisations as Pan-Europe, Pan-Slavism, Latin-Bloc, numbered Internationals, Commonwealth, Monroe-Doctrine, Atlantic Charter, United Nations and so forth, as necessary steps towards world government.

In the light of today, nineteenth century capitalism appears to have been an 'undeveloped' capitalism, not fully emancipated from its feudalistic past. Capitalism, challenging not exploitation but only the monopolistic position of a particular form of exploitation, could truly unfold itself 'within the shell' of the old society. Its revolutionary

actions were aimed at governmental control merely in order to break through feudalism's restrictive borders and to secure capitalistic liberties. The capitalists were thoroughly occupied with and satisfied by their extension of world trade, their creation of the proletariat and industry and their accumulation of capital. 'Economic freedom' was their chief concern and as long as the state supported their exploitative social position, the state's composition and separateness were none of their concern.

The relative independence of the state was not a main characteristic of capitalism, however, but merely an expression of capitalistic growth within incomplete capitalistic conditions. The further development of capitalism implied the capitalisation of the state. What the state lost in 'independence' it gained in power; what the capitalists lost to the state they regained in increased social control. In time the interests of state and capital became identical, which indicated that the capitalist mode of production and its competitive practice were now generally accepted. State-wide, nationally-organised capitalism made it apparent once more that it had subdued all opposition, that the whole of society, including the labour movement — and no longer merely the capitalist entrepreneurs — had become capitalistic. That the capitalisation of the labour movement was an accomplished fact was manifest in its increasing interest in the state as the instrument of emancipation. To be 'revolutionary' meant escaping the narrow 'trade union consciousness' of the period of Manchester-capitalism, fighting for the control of the state and increasing the latter's importance by extending its powers over ever wider areas of social activity. The merging of state and capital was simultaneously the merging of both with the organised labour movement.

In Russian bolshevism we have the first system in which the merger of capital, labour and the state was accomplished through the political maneuver of the radical wing of the old labour movement. In Lenin's view, the bourgeoisie itself was no longer able to revolutionise society. The time for a capitalist revolution in the traditional sense had passed. In order to escape colonial status, the imperialistic stage of capitalism forced backward nations to adopt as their developmental starting point what, under laissez-faire conditions, had been considered the possible end of the competitive processes. Backward nations could liberate themselves not by traditional means of capital development but by political struggles in the Bolshevik pattern. Challenging not the capitalist system of exploitation but only its restriction to particular groups of entrepreneurs and financiers, the Bolshevik party usurped control over the means of production through control of the state. There was no need to submit to the historical scheme of money-making and capital-amassing in order to reach social control positions. Exploitation did not depend on laissez-faire conditions but on the control of the means of production. It should be even more profitable and secure with a unified and centralised control system than it had been in the past under the indirect control of the market and with sporadic interventions of the state.

If in Russia the totalitarian initiative came from the radical labour movement, it was because of its close proximity to Western Europe, where similar processes were under way, although they were dealt with in reformist, non-revolutionary fashion. In Japan the initiative was taken by the state and the process took on a different character with the old ruling classes being made the executors of state policies. In Western Europe the capitalisation of the old labour movement and its influence on the state had reached such a point, particularly during the war years, that this movement was drained of initiative with regard to social change. It could not overcome social stagnation (caused partly by its own existence and accentuated by the depressive results of the war), without first radically transforming itself. Attempts at bolshevisation failed, however. Unlike the Russian, the Western bourgeoisie possessed a greater flexibility within the 'progressive'

democratic institutions and operated upon a wider and more integrated social base. It was in Germany, capitalistically the strongest country of all the nations which were defeated in the first world war and neglected by the division of its spoils, in which fascism developed last. But bolshevism had pointed the way to power through party-activity. Totalitarian control by way of the party — the possibility of party- capitalism — was demonstrated in Russia. New political parties, partly bourgeois, partly proletarian, operating with nationalistic-imperialistic ideologies and with more or less consistent state-capitalistic programmes came into being to face the old organisations as new 'revolutionary' forces. With a mass-base of their own, fed by the insoluble crisis, with less respect for legality and traditional procedures and with the support of all the elements that were driving for an imperialistic solution of the crisis conditions, they were able first in Italy and later in Germany to defeat the old organisations. Even in America, the strongest capitalist nation, attempts were made during the Great Depression to secure the state's newly-won increased authority by the creation of mass-support for government-directed class collaboration policies.

The collapse of the fascist nations in the second world war did not alter the totalitarian trend. Although the independence of the defeated nations is at an end, their authoritarian structure remains. Only those aspects of their totalitarianism that were directly concerned with independent war-making have been destroyed or subordinated to the needs of the victorious powers. Although the seats of control have shifted and new methods have been invoked, there is more authoritarianism in the world today than there was prior to and even during the war. Moreover, 'victorious' nations like England and France find themselves in the same position today as the defeated nations after the first world war. It appears that the whole development of Central Europe between the two wars will be repeated in England and France.

Totalitarianism, however, is no longer restricted to the political ambitions of new organisations but is fostered by all active political forces. In order to compete internally against fascist and Bolshevik tendencies, the prevailing organisations must, themselves, adapt totalitarian methods. Because all internal struggles reflect imperialistic rivalries, war-preparations push society still further towards totalitarianism. Because the state controls more and more of the social and economic activities, the defence of private and monopolistic interests requires the strengthening of their own centralistic inclinations. In brief, the social forces that were released in two world wars and that are attempting to find solutions within the status quo, all tend to support and to develop a totalitarian capitalism.

Under these conditions, a revival of the labour movement as it has been known in the past and as it still exists in emasculated form in some countries is clearly out of the question. All successful movements, under whatever name, will try to adhere to authoritarian principles. Whether social control is exercised in the form of state-monopolistic alliances, fascism or party-capitalism the degree of power in the hands of the controllers signifies the end of laissez-faire and the extension of totalitarian capitalism. Of course, it is improbable that capitalism will ever reach an absolute totalitarian form; it had never been a laissez-faire system in the full sense of the term. All that these 'labels' designate are the dominant practices within a variety of social practices and differentiations in organisation in accordance with the ruling practice. It is clear, however, that the new powers of the state, highly- concentrated capitalism, modern technology, the control of the world economy, the period of imperialistic wars and so forth make necessary for the maintenance of the capitalistic status quo a social organisation without opposition, a comprehensive centralistic control of the socially-effective activities of men.

If the end of the old labour movement made the question of organisation and spontaneity meaningless, as seen by this movement and dealt with in its controversies, the question may still be meaningful in a wider sense quite apart from the specific problems of working class organisations of the past. Like revolutionary outbursts, crises and wars also have to be considered as spontaneous occurrences. More information exists and greater experience has been accumulated with regard to crises and wars, however, than with regard to revolution.

In capitalism, the ordering of society's fundamental requirements regarding production and the proportioning of social labour towards the satisfaction of social needs is largely left to the automatism of the market. Monopolistic practices disrupt the mechanism, but even without such interferences this form of socio-economic practice can serve only the peculiar 'social' needs of capitalism. The kind of indirect relation between supply and demand established by the market automatism refers to, and is determined by, the profitability of capital and its accumulation. The conscious 'ordering' aspects of the monopolies, concerned as they are with their own special interests only, increase the irrationality of the system as a whole. Even state-capitalistic planning first of all serves the particular needs and the security of its ruling and privileged groups, not the real needs of society. Because the actions of capitalists are determined by profit requirements and by special, not social interests, the actual results of their decisions may differ from their expectations; the social result of various decisions, individualistically-determined, may disturb social stability and defeat the intentions behind such decisions. Only some, not all, social consequences of individualistic actions are known in advance. Private interests forbid a social organisation which could provide a reasonable certainty about the main consequences of its actions. This implies a social development of growing frictions, disproportionalities, postponed re-organisations leading to violent clashes between old and new interests, to crises and depressions which seem to be spontaneous occurrences because of the lack of organisation to deal with society from a social, non-class point of view.

There is no possibility within the status quo of organising social activities in the interests of society as a whole. New organisations are only expressions of shifting class positions and leave the basic class relationship unaffected. Old ruling minorities are replaced by new ruling minorities, the proletarian class is broken up into various status groups, layers of the middle-class disappear, others rise to greater influence. Since all social practical, concrete activity, if it is social at all, is social only in effect and not by design — by 'accident' so to speak — there exists no force in society whose own continuous growth delimits the social 'anarchy' and develops a more complete awareness of social necessities and opportunities, which could lead to social self-determination and to a truly social society. In a way, then, it is the number and variety of organisations in capitalism which prevent the organising of society. This means that not only must all unco-ordinated and contradictory activities result in expected or unexpected crises, but also that the activities of all people, organised as well as unorganised, are more or less 'responsible' for spontaneous outbursts in the form of crisis or war.

There is no way, however, to retrace in all its important details the process that led to crisis or war, and thus explain, after the fact, what particular activities and their arrangements within the developmental processes determined the catastrophe. It is easier, and for capitalistic purposes sufficient, arbitrarily to select a starting point, such as that the war led to crisis and the crisis to war, or less sophisticatedly, to point to Hitler's idiosyncrasies or to Roosevelt's hunger for immortality. Wars appear both as spontaneous outbursts and as organised enterprises. The blame for their outbreak is laid at the doorsteps of particular nations, governments, pressure groups, monopolies, cartels and

trusts. Yet, to put the entire blame on specific organisations and particular policies for crises and wars means to overlook the real problem here involved and indicates an inability to meet it effectively. To point to the organisational elements involved without stressing their limitations within the 'anarchic' total social setting promulgates the illusion that possibly 'other organisations' and 'other policies' could have prevented such social catastrophes even within the status quo. The status quo, however, is only another term for crises and wars.

There was, to be sure, some kind of 'order' observable in capitalism and a definite developmental trend based on this 'order'. It was provided for by the growing productivity of labour. Increased productivity, starting in one or more spheres of production, led to a general modification of the productive level of society and to consequent alterations in all socio-economic relationships. The changes were reflected in altered political relations and led into a changed relationship, less or more contradictory, between the class structure and the productive forces of society.

What are the forces of production. Obviously, labour, technology, and organisation; less obviously, class frictions and therefore ideologies. In other words, productive forces are human actions, not something separate that determines human actions. Therefore, a previous line of development need not necessarily be followed. Social situations may be arrested or conditions may be created that destroy what has previously been built. But if the 'social goal' were the extension and continuation of a previous developmental tendency, history might indeed be the story of 'social progress' through the unfolding of its productive capacities.

That capitalism came into being presupposed a certain growth of the social productive forces, an increase in surplus labour and the capacity to support a growing non-producing class. To speak in terms of 'growing productive forces' as the determinant of the total social development was particularly apt under the commodity-fetishism of laissez-faire capitalism, for under its economic individualism it seemed as if 'productive forces' developed independently of capitalistic wishes and necessities. The insatiability for accumulation developed with productive forces rapidly and their enhancement allowed for continuous re-organisation of the socio-economic structure, and, in turn, the re-organisations acted as new incentives for a further raising of social productivity. It was said that capitalism, historically speaking, had justified itself because of its 'blind' but progressive development of the productive forces of society, among which the modern industrial proletariat was considered the greatest.

If it should appear that a full release of society's productive capacities would make possible the formation and maintenance of a classless society, it is perfectly clear that the immediately privileged classes will not give up their present-day control just because of the probability of a future socialist society. At any rate, on such an issue the owners and controllers of production cannot act as a 'class'; a 'revolution by consent' is nonsense. Accumulation for the sake of accumulation continues and leads to further capital and power concentration, that is, to capital destruction, to crises, depressions and wars. For capitalism simultaneously develops and retards the productive forces and widens the gap between actual and potential production. The contradiction between class structure and productive forces excludes the 'freezing' of the prevailing level of production as well as its expansion toward a real abundance.

If for no other reason than force of custom it appears probable that the immediate future, like the immediate past, will be characterised by further growth of the productive forces. This implies the sharpening of competition, despite all attempts at partial or complete control of production. Although larger capitalistic units have absorbed numerous smaller enterprises and secured temporary monopolistic conditions for the

whole industries and combinations of industries, this process has merely intensified international competition and the struggle between the remaining non-monopolistic enterprises. In state-capitalism competition takes on a different but most all-inclusive form, because of the complete atomisation by the terroristic state machine of the mass of the population and in the bureaucracy itself because of the hierarchical structure of its organisation.

The application of new technological and organisational forces of production necessitates additional social controls. The disorganisation of the proletariat marks the beginning of the process that leads to the total atomisation of the whole population and to the state monopoly of organisation. At one pole we find all organised force concentrated; at the other pole, an amorphous mass of people unable to combine for a fight in their own interests. In so far as they are organised, the masses are organised by their controllers; in so far as they are able to raise their voices, they speak with their masters' words. In all organisations, the atomised mass of people face always the same enemy, the totalitarian state.

The atomisation of society requires an all-encompassing state organisation. The socialists and Bolsheviks considered capitalist society inefficiently organised with regard to production and exchange and in other, extra-economic respects. The emphasis on organisation was emphasis on social control. Socialism was to be first of all the rational organisation of the whole of society. And an efficiently organised society excludes, of course, unforeseen activities capable of issuing into spontaneous occurrences. The spontaneous element in society was to disappear with the planning of production and the centralistically- determined distribution of goods. Not only the Bolsheviks, but the fascists, too, spoke of spontaneity only so long as their power was not absolute. When all existing social layers submitted to their authority, they became society's most thorough organisers. And it was precisely this organising activity that they designated with the term socialism.

The contradiction between class structure and productive forces remains, however, and therewith the inescapability of crisis and war. Although the inactivated masses can no longer resist totalitarianism in traditional organised fashion, and although they have not evolved new weapons and forms of action adequate to the new tasks, the contradictions of the social class structure remain unresolved. While giving temporary security, the terroristic authoritarian system also reflects the increasing insecurity of totalitarian capitalism. The defence of the status quo violates the status quo by releasing new, uncontrolled, or uncontrollable activities. The most powerful controls over men are really weak when compared with the tremendous contradictions that rend the world today. Though all contradictions now oppose one organisation, capitalist society was never so badly organised as it is now when it is completely organised.

If there is no guarantee that socialism must necessarily evolve in the course of further social development, neither is there any reason to assume that the world will come to an end in totalitarian barbarism. The organisation of the status quo cannot prevent its disintegration. As there is no absolute totalitarianism, openings for attack remain within its structure. The real social significance of its noticeable weaknesses is still obscure. Some points of disintegration, although theoretically conceivable, are still unobservable and can be described only in very general terms. Just as the modern class-struggle theory required for its formulation not only the capitalistic development but also the actual proletarian struggles within the capitalist system, so it is probably necessary first to observe actual attempts at revolt under totalitarianism in order to be able to formulate specific plans of action, to point to effective forms of resistance, and to find and exploit the weaknesses of the totalitarian system.

The apparent hopelessness and insignificance characteristic of all beginnings is no reason for despair. Neither pessimism nor optimism touch the real problem of social actions. Both attitudes do not decisively affect the individual's actions and reactions, determined as they are by social forces beyond his control. The interdependence of all social activity, while being a medium of control, also sets limits to all controlling activities. The labour process, in both its organisational and technological aspects, depending as it does simultaneously upon anonymous forces and direct decisions, possesses enough relative independence through its changeability to make centralistic manipulations difficult. The totalitarian manipulators cannot free themselves of specific forms of the division of labour which often delimit the powers of centralistic control. They cannot defy definite degrees of industrialisation without endangering their own rule.

Resistance will thus be exercised in manifold forms, some meaningless, some self-defeating, and others effective. While some present-day forms of action may be disregarded, older forms may be revived because of certain outward similarities in the totalitarian structure with former authoritarian regimes. If trade union policy no longer implies action 'on the point of production' but manipulations between governmental bodies, effective new ways of sabotage and struggle may be found in industry and in production generally. If political parties express the trend towards totalitarianism, a variety of organisational forms is still conceivable for assembling anti-capitalistic forces for concerted actions. If such actions are to be adapted to totalitarian reality as attempts to overcome that reality, stress must be laid upon self-determination, agreement, freedom and solidarity.

The search for ways and means to end totalitarian capitalism, to bring self-determination to the hitherto powerless, to end competitive struggles, exploitation and wars, to develop a rationality which does not set individuals against society but recognises their actual entity in social production and distribution and allows for human progress without social snuggles, will go on in the empirical, scientific manner dictated by seriousness. It seems clear, however, that for some time to come the results of all types of resistance and struggle will be described as spontaneous occurrences, though they are nothing but the planned actions or accepted inactivities of men. Spontaneity is a manner of speech, attesting to our inability to treat the social phenomena of capitalism in a scientific, empirical way. Social changes appear as climactic outbursts of periods of capital formation, disorganisation, competitive frictions and long-accumulated social grievances that finally find their organisational expression. Their spontaneity merely demonstrates the unsociality of capitalism's social organisation. The contrast between organisation and spontaneity will exist as long as there exists a class society and attempts to end it.

The Economics of War and Peace

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Any contraction of the Cold War and ensuing attempts to "normalize" international relations raise fresh hopes for a peaceful solution of the prevailing imperialist antagonisms. For the Western world this involves new evaluations of the Bolshevik

regimes and their aggressive aspirations, A new readiness to parley with the totalitarian world is then explained by a change of attitude on the part of the totalitarian. The new post-Stalinist policies would not alone, however, suffice for a real rapprochement between the East and the West. The Bolshevik quest for peaceful co-existence, interpreted as weakness, could actually strengthen Western anti-Bolshevik foreign policies. To maintain peace, it must be generally desired; and so it seems to be. Even the armaments race supposedly has no other object than safeguarding the peace of the world. The mounting stockpiles of atomic and thermonuclear weapons, the whole fantastic: paraphernalia of modern war, are: not to be employed in war. They are there to deter the enemy from making it.

In a way, of course, the Cold War itself is an instrument of peace, Although involving frequent policy changes for both sides, it secures the balance of power and prevents major changes in world conditions, since every gain for one side tends to be countermanded by the other. Thus it sustained the relatively static conditions of "co-existence." "Liquidation" of the Cold War, while it would signal relaxed political-military competition, would also mean an intensification of economic struggles for world supremacy.

At first glance we may appear to be entering a period of worldwide peaceful capital formation. Though possibly postponing war, this would not necessarily lower the probability of its occurrence, since capital expansion, by favoring some nations more than others, leads always to new imperialist frictions. It was not the Great Depression, for instance, which led to the second world war but the cumulative effect of the competitive capital production that preceded it. This cannot be admitted-it was not even seen-by all who profited during the journey to depression; they simply marched on in the belief that their prosperity was the surest guarantee for progress and peace. Yet by so doing they created a situation that escaped their control and war became "inevitable." The war itself, however, was made by social movements and ideas that had grown out of the depression. And though the people associated with these movements and ideas took the responsibility for war upon themselves, it was not a situation of their own making that enabled and required them to do so.

In this sense, wars, like crises, are inherent in uncontrolled capital accumulation even though their actual occurrence in time is not predictable. Just as a threatening crisis may be postponed through a sudden spurt, of economic and speculative activity set in motion by discoveries and innovations, so war may be postponed by a variety of circumstances that assure some sort of social stability despite the most intensive national competition in an international capital structure which is detrimental to the *general* expansion of capital. An economic crisis may be "consciously" postponed or mitigated by way of credit inflation and government intervention. This means simply that an existing crisis is prevented from running its course by "non-capitalist" methods of control-"non-capitalist" in the sense that *their persistent application would slowly alter the existing structure of the capitalist "mixed economy" in the direction of complete government, control.*

II

Private capital formation, involved in the production of marketable goods, finds its limitation in diminishing market-demand. In order not to reduce the marketability of privately-produced commodities still further, government-induced production is channeled into non-market fields-the production of non-competitive public works, armaments, superfluties and waste. Production is thus increased by both capital

competition and government intervention; the latter counteracts the trend toward stagnation that is implied in the former, This is celebrated as the capacity to produce both “guns and butter.” Such government-induced “prosperity” may last for a considerable time; as long, in fact, as the shilling emphasis from private to government-induced production and *vice versa* forms the common policy of government and business. It may even do better than traditional, strictly-market-determined capital expansion. In any case, recent history has demonstrated the possibility of a prosperous development of the “mixed economy” under conditions of a shrinking world-market and increased government control.

A second look, however, reveals the “artificiality” of this prosperity and its inherent tendency to change the very system to which it is credited. It is for this reason that, whenever possible, governments representing private capital try to pare down expenditures, to end deficit financing and to restore government-run industries to private exploitation. This happened in post-war America and in other capitalist nations. But nowhere did it succeed in re-establishing previously exist relations between the private and public sectors of the economics The ratio of government expenditures to the American gross national product, for instance, “which was 20 per cent in 1939 and rose to 52 per cent in 1944, was still about 35 per cent in 1946.”¹ Unless conditions should change radically in favor of a renewed market-determined expansion of capital, government-induced and therefore government-controlled production is bound to grow in peace as it grew in war. And so *long* as the principle of competitive capital production prevails, steadily growing production will in increasing measure be a “production for the sake of production,” benefiting neither private capital nor the population at large.

This process is somewhat obscured, it is true, by the apparent profitability of capital and the lack of large-scale unemployment. Like the state of prosperity, profitability, too, is now largely government-manipulated. Government spending and taxation are managed so as to strengthen big business at the expense of the economy as a whole. “Subsidy has become so all-pervasive that it can properly be said we live in an age of ‘government by subsidy,’ meaning that subsidy is a principal, or predominant, instrument for the effectuation of public purposes,”² Subsidies to other groups, to farmers, for instance, are merely a consequence of the subsidization of big business, which is unavoidable if economic decline is to be forestalled, Small producers do not share in government-induced “prosperity” and their spokesmen wonder why it is that “in a period characterized by three-shift industrial activity, tremendous sales volume and record-making profits, there is such a high rate of small business bankruptcies.”³ This is so because “the hundred biggest corporations accounted for 62.2 per cent of all prime defense contracts in the last live years,”⁴ because big business generally financed its expansion largely from federal funds, raised its profitability by way of interest-free loans, tax evasions, accelerated amortization schemes, etc.-and because it cannot be otherwise since modern armament production presupposes the technologies of big business, which, as the factor that determines the trend of the economy, must be kept going at any price. Even though it is true that the government has “an enormous power, the very existence of which is fatal to private enterprise,” that’ it “can choose the companies that are to survive,” and that “the designation of these ‘chosen instruments’ often takes place as haphazardly as blindfolded children at a birthday party pin the tail on a paper donkey,”⁵

¹ Arthur F. Burns, *The Frontiers of Economic Knowledge*, Princeton, 1954, p. 40.

² Walter Adams and Horace M. Gray, *Monopoly in America*, New York 1955, p. 98.

³ *The New York Times*, January 12, 1956.

⁴ *The New York Times*, April 3, 1955.

⁵ Blair Holies, *How to Get Rich in Washington*, New York, 1952, p. 31.

still, as with competition, the distribution of social surplus-value by way of government policies must serve the further expansion of capital and therewith its further concentration.

However much production may be government-induced, the “mixed economy,” to be such, presupposes that a substantial part of the social capital remains in private hands. Since government funds can come only from taxation and, perhaps, from government-owned enterprises, additional funds must come from non-governmental sources. In order to increase the scale of production and to accumulate capital, government creates “demand” by ordering the production of non-marketable goods, financed by government borrowings. This means that the government avails itself of productive resources belonging to private capital which would otherwise be idle. The borrowed funds are merely monetary expressions of the government’s power to set unemployed resources to work. The rising national debt indicates that this power has been granted only temporarily and for a price, i.e., the interest paid to the holders of government bonds. But as government-spending on non-profitable undertakings cannot yield interest, the national debt has to be serviced out of future profits by the creditors themselves.

The transfer of control over productive resources from private capital into the hands of government by way of deficit-financing which creates “demand” of a specific type, namely public works and armaments is, in part, an increase of the demand required for private Capital expansion, that is, for the production of additional capital. In this sense, deficit financing is the continuation of the accumulation process. But though government-induced expansion of production brings forth a larger productive apparatus, still nominally in the hands of private capital, it can be fully utilized only at the command of government. To the extent to which this is truer, private capital accumulation has reached the end. While production is still for private gain, economic expansion is a function of government. The growing national debt, or the continuous increase of government-induced production, implies an increasing nationalization of capital. Short of a reversal of this process, of a return to private, capital accumulation, there is no possibility of getting “the government out of business,” which is no longer business in the traditional sense, anyway.

III

To produce beyond the market demand under conditions of private capital accumulation made “sense” because of the concentration trend implied in capital competition. Stronger capital destroys weaker and prevents the rise of new competitors nationally and- with greater difficulty-internationally. “Over-production,” through the media of crisis and depression, destroys capital and enlarges the demand for the surviving bigger capitals, thus securing their profitability and further expansion. There would be less need for government manipulation of the economy if prolonged world-wide depressions were still a possibility, able to lead, by destroying capital, to a new international capital structure capable of further profitable accumulations. With this possibility eliminated because of nationally-directed economies, the improvement of conditions for private capital formation by holding back or cutting back existing amounts of government intervention are only a temporary possibility.

Accumulation in the private or still largely private capitalist economy continues to require, however, periodic capital destruction for the further expansion of more concentrated capital entities within an altered international capital structure. Because the economic crisis has lost its effectiveness in this respect, the function of the so-called business-cycle, which has been taken over by government, appears as an armament-

disarmament cycle, that is, as the increase or decrease of government spending in order to maintain and increase a given level of production. Its ideological expressions are periods of war- and peace-mongering, neither of which indicates a real drive towards war nor a real attempt to ward it off. It merely reflects the impasse in which capitalism finds itself, with no solution in war and none in peace. There is no "grand strategy" with regard to war or peace. There is only a drifting towards one or the other, determined not by conscious considerations of long-term interests nor by an insane commitment to some "historical mission," but by the economic impasse itself and the social inertia that is created by the ability to increase both productivity and waste-production.

Prior to the first world war, the relative stagnation of European capital was already mitigated by a government-fostered armaments race and America's slowing rate of capital expansion was reversed by the war itself. Her recovery of 1915 "was generated by the demand for war supplies emanating from European governments." Expansion of production "was derived in part from taxation and in part from the sale of securities to individuals and banking interests," so that the process of American recovery "was generated by an outpouring of purchasing power by way of government treasuries. It did not begin with either an expansion of ordinary consumption demand or an increase in the production of capital goods."⁶ Set in motion by the policies of governments engaged in or profiting from war, total world production rose to unprecedented heights. For the European nations it was a period not of real prosperity but a slow return to, and an insufficient enlargement of, their pre-war level of production at the price of increasing indebtedness to America. America prospered, however, and in 1929 her wealth was two-and-a-half times as great as in 1914. Measured by world production, economic activity had increased and capital had accumulated. Its seat of strength had shifted from Europe to America and as with all previous periods of depression, the war had touched off a new expansion of capital and had concentrated it in the strongest capitalist nations.

Though American production grew and her "national wealth increased, that portion utilized directly for the reproduction process of wealth continued to decline."⁷ In other words, there was a slackening of the rate of accumulation; the percentage of productive capital in relation to non-productive wealth became less instead of more. This was no longer the type of capital expansion that characterized the nineteenth century; it was a condition which Keynes later called "liquidity preference." The ratio of net investment to national income in the United States rose up to the turn of the century and declined from then on to nearly nothing in the 1929-1938 period.⁸ The state of "liquidity preference" indicated that capital expansion initiated by war and carried over into peace was not enough to lead to a general expansion of capital production under the conditions of a market-determined economy. After a decade of limited prosperity, restricted largely to the United States, a new collapse of the market system led to new state interventions. These, however, succeeded only in stabilizing depression conditions; the full utilization and further expansion of production had to await another war.

Vast devastations in the second world war weakened both Europe and Asia and assured America's supremacy within the world economy. War was now viewed "as a great new industry whose colossal demands stimulate economic activity in every nook and cranny of the economic system," even though "the expected yields which raise the marginal efficiency of government investments are mainly in terms of social and military

⁶ Harold G. Moulton, *The Formation of Capital*, Washington, D.C., 1935, pp. 65-66.

⁷ Robert R. Doane, *The Measurement of American Wealth*, New York, 1933, p. 16.

⁸ For statistical evidence see: Simon Kuznets, *National Income-A Summary of Findings*, National Bureau of Economic Research, New York, 1946, p. 53.

advantages rather than pecuniary profits."⁹ "The destruction of the European economy," Thurman Arnold pointed out, "has solved the problem of 'effective demand' for the American economy, ...and we are in a dawn of the greatest industrial era this country ever had." Destruction, he explained, "is sometimes necessary. When Hitler achieved power, the destruction seemed necessary. Now it is necessary to meet the threat of Russia... and perhaps a certain amount of destruction or dislocation may accompany the threat, but it is necessary to do it. And what has happened because of that necessity: we have gotten on our toes and we are going places."¹⁰

America has, in fact, maintained a state of virtually full employment by way of war, inflation and armament production. There was sufficient recovery in extra-American economies also, so that world production has risen over what it was before the second world war, but at the half-way station of reconstruction it became evident that the old pre-war contradictions had also been rebuilt. In the beginning of 1950, unemployment became once more a dominant issue and unsalable surpluses piled up in all capitalist nations. The Korean war ended the "recession" quickly. Not the marketability of goods in general but defense production was once more a prime concern.

The "business-cycle," appearing as the expansion and contraction of government-induced production, is characterized more by political struggle than economic competition. But attempts at disarmament in the Western world, however seriously contemplated, are limited by private capital formation. Any new business decline brings with it a new shift to government spending. Partial disarmament may then be regarded as a sign of stabilization, to be discarded as soon as the economy requires additional government-induced investments. This, however, narrows the expansive power of private capital still further. Although the profitability of private enterprise may not diminish or may even increase through the enhancement of capital concentration, with regard to the whole of the economy less capital accumulates to private account. This is a new situation. In the past, nonprofitable capital was absorbed in larger capital units. Now productive resources are losing their capital function altogether.

IV

American capital expansion was bound to a production for European markets, particularly during periods of war, and to the export of capital mainly to Western nations. Due to structural changes in the world economy-the break-up of the world-market through the extraordinary and all-around production of the American economy, the industrialization of hitherto economically-underdeveloped countries, the autarchic tendencies of state-capitalist¹¹ nations and the collapse of an international division of labor determined by nothing but the accumulation needs of Western capitalism-Europe teased to be a market which made possible the further expansion and extension of American capital, Western Europe's own export needs, as well as her inability competitively to meet American production, based, as it is, on a higher productivity, prevents a market integration of the economies of the free world." An all-out American effort to capture the markets of the "free world" is equally precluded by protectionist policies and the political necessity to maintain some sort of unity in the Western world.

⁹ Dudley Dillard, *The Economics of John Maynard Keynes*, New York, 1948, p. 243.

¹⁰ Proceedings of a Conference sponsored by the *Economic and Business Foundation*, New Wilmington, Pa., December 20, 1918, p. 18.

¹¹ By "state-capitalist" I refer to the social and economic systems of those countries that are described politically as Communist.

Capital expansion implies, however, its concentration nationally as well as internationally. Its center, having shifted from Europe to America, threatens to shift again from America, to the newly-developing, so-called "socialist," but actually state-capitalist, nations of the Eastern power bloc. Western superiority in production, though still a fact, is slowly declining. According to a study of the *United Nations Economic Commission*,¹² Russia accumulates industrial capital at a far higher rate than Western Europe, ...and is approaching the rate of the United States. To a somewhat lesser extent this is also true for the satellite countries. Even if trade relations between the East and West improve and develop, they will do so as by-products of the expansion of the new empires around which an increasing part of the world's economic activity begins to revolve.

The totalitarian threat to the economic supremacy of the "free world" is not immediate, however, despite the high accumulation rate. Total production and general productivity in the East are still behind those of Western capitalism. This relative backwardness does not, of course, prevent countries of the Eastern power block from offering markets for other nations' surplus products, for trade is not based on absolute surpluses. The fact that Eastern countries themselves stand in need of further industrialization does not hinder the export of industrial products if this appears advantageous for political or economic reasons, or both. There is nothing surprising about the fact "that the Russians have arranged to sell a million tons of steel to India or have undertaken to erect a new steel plant there or that they and the satellite countries are conducting an export drive in Middle East markets, with the accent on metals and engineering products. These are precisely the industries in which Soviet progress has been most rapid in recent years and in which investment has been particularly heavy."¹³

With lower wages and productivity in selected fields approaching that of Western Europe, Russia becomes a formidable competitor in even a strictly commercial struggle. And her opportunities in this respect are furthered by the greater inability of Western nations to support to any significant extent the industrialization of underdeveloped countries. Their own dependence on cheap raw materials and their unceasing need to export manufactured goods in increasing measure operates against the transition of the "backward" primary producing countries into modern industrial nations.

By introducing and developing the capitalist mode of production in other countries through colonization, trade or capital export, the advanced capitalist nations created the conditions of national revolution in all backward countries. These revolutions are still "capitalist revolutions"; but, being directed against both native backwardness and foreign control, they appear as anti-capitalist or anti-imperialist revolutions since they oppose the unity of interests of foreign capital and its native allies in the backward nations. This new "nationalism," which, on the one hand, disrupts the established international division of labor and, on the other, expresses how this division of labor (associated as it is with a particular constellation of accumulated capital) is inadequate for a further *general* capital expansion, affects the imperialist nations as well. The disintegration of the historically-developed world market, as well as the stagnation of capital at the base of this disintegration, leads them to always fresh attempts to solve national problems either by reshaping the world market or by gaining greater independence from it. The directing of economic policies by governments grows in both types of nations, those seeking expansion by freeing themselves from a controlled world market and those seeking expansion through such controls. The result of both these endeavors is a greater

¹² *The New York Times*, March 23, 1956.

¹³ *The Financial Times*, London, December 19, 1955.

international capital development. Expansion takes place, though not in conformity with the existing centralized and market-determined international capital structure.

Even though both in competitive capital accumulation is contradicted by America's own economic activity at home and abroad, deviation from that faith is held to be a temporary expediency. America's foreign economic policy is still concerned with the resurrection of a "free," that is, American-controlled world market and the resumption of "genuine" capital accumulation, i.e., for the augmentation of private capital. All "non-profitable" activities associated with the extra-market expansion of production are undertaken not for their own sake, but are regarded as expenditures to keep the world open to American capital expansion. In view of America's dominant position in world economy this would imply total re-organization of the world's capital structure and division of labor and subordination of all national economies to the accumulation requirements of American capital. But this is an impossible task and the sad conclusion follows that "the great era of economic growth which the Western world has experienced may finally come to an end-not because of technological limitations but rather because of market limitations ... for the political and ideological difficulties to be surmounted in bringing about the necessary expansion of world-trade may be greater than people are prepared to face."¹⁴

Whether it is warranted or not, such pessimism does not form policies. Even if capital concentration and centralization cannot embrace the world, there is still the choice between a larger or smaller slice of it. Although existing state-capitalist systems are irrevocably lost to private capital exploitation, (as George F. Kennan has said, "there is a finality for better or worse, about what has occurred in Eastern Europe."¹⁵) large parts of the world are still wavering between mixed and totalitarian systems of capital production. If the trend of the time favors the latter, that is only one more reason to combat the trend. It is the ostensible success of the state-capitalist systems in maintaining themselves and developing their economies which encourages underdeveloped and hitherto controlled nations to follow their example.

from a strictly private-enterprise point of view, containment of the state-capitalist systems would not be enough. The slowing-down and eventual destruction of all forms of "socialism" seems here a necessary prerequisite for the restriction of governmental economic power in the capitalist nations. From the ruling capitalist point of view, however, government investments in its own defense and in the defense of allied nations are not only a way of combating the external state-capitalist threat; they are a medium for maintaining a necessary level of economic activity at home. Further increases in government expenditures arouse no fear so long as they promise to create an economic situation in which the *absolutely* increased government spending is *relatively* smaller because of a much larger profitable private capital expansion. This, then, is the goal of investments for defense. If it succeeds in stopping the further spread and expansion of competitive social systems, it will secure a larger base of operation for private capital. The existence of such a base still does not guarantee successful capital accumulation, but without it, expansion has no chance at all.

Propaganda to the contrary notwithstanding, American economic foreign policy directs itself to the possible-that is, to attempting to maintain its present dominant position in world economy. This, of course, includes attempting to maintain, gain, or regain influence in and control over accessible parts of the world. Respect for the freedom and self-determination of other societies, it is said, does not "require the West to

¹⁴ Henry Grayson, *The Crisis of the Middle Class*, New York, 1955, p. 160.

¹⁵ *The New York Times*, May 7, 1956.

surrender its own security and its truly vital economic interests in the name of self-determination which insists upon expressing itself in a *national* form."¹⁶ Though little can be done about existing state-capitalist systems, new ones must not arise. The "free world" must not shrink nor must the nations comprising it contradict the economic interests of the West, i.e., American interests on which the economies of the Western world depend. In brief, the defense of the West is the defense of the *status quo*, fortified by the hope, if not the conviction, that even a divided world still offers opportunities for capital expansion.

"Coexistence," once an empty phrase, constitutes for the time being an acceptable basis for American foreign policy. The struggle for a "free world" has, however reluctantly, given way to the attempt to maintain Western capitalism in its present form. In all probability the turning point came with the Chinese revolution and Russia's possession of atomic weapons. There was also a purely internal movement away from the war-gear economy. Depression and war hasten the decline of private enterprise. And though armament production may forestall a depression, war, as it is now waged, may easily lead to the complete extinction of private enterprise economy. In any case, the degree of government control over the American economy, fostered by a decade of depression and the second world war, was out of all proportion to social power relations as they actually prevailed and the persistent individualistic ideology. The fear grew "that the larger intervention of government in the areas of what has been private business, undertaken in the hours of military danger and continued over a time whose end is not in sight, will become a permanent part of the American way of life."¹⁷ The reaction against this tendency is a reaction against economic militarization and war.

V

Production for defense involves far more than just armaments. The economy is constantly being reorganized to cope with frequent shifts of power positions due to political, economic, and strategic changes. The military apparatus, consisting of branches of the armed forces and the economic, scientific and administrative machinery behind them, becomes increasingly more expensive because of both quantitative growth and qualitative changes. Technological innovations are undertaken without regard to cost in order to gain advantages over the potential enemy. All this leads to intensive economic activity and the increasing productivity supports constantly growing non-productive efforts. But the previous trend of capital accumulation, the concentration of surplus-value as private capital, changes into concentration in the hands of government. // *constantly maintained, and even without war, this process must lead to a complete change of the capitalist system.* Since the trend is visible through social change as well as through the separate experiences of individual capitals, private-property interests must oppose it even if their immediate profit requirements force them to support it.

The capacity to produce an abundance of waste-matter is greater in some countries than in others; the capitalist nation most productive in this respect is also the strongest in military terms. It sets the standard for waste-production and induces such production in countries still capable of real capital formation. Russia, for instance, need not be faced with the problem of "over-production" even if there was a complete cessation of armament production. It is not only because of her general backwardness and need to expand production of both capital and consumption goods; it is also because-

¹⁶ *The Political Economy of American Foreign Policy.* The Woodrow Wilson Foundation and the National Planning Association, New York, 1955, p. 224.

¹⁷ Edwin G. Nourse, *The 1950's Come First*, New York, 1951, p. 152.

theoretically-her social organization allows for a nationally-planned determination of both the volume and the direction of production. The kind of planning actually undertaken is, of course, determined by the needs of the class-divided country within the setting of international power politics. All the possible advantages of complete government control can thus be only partly enjoyed. The fate of Russian economy remains bound to the fate of capitalism in general. In principle, however, and assuming that Russia existed in an unassailable state of isolation, she could for some time to come engage in "genuine" capital accumulation.

Even now Russia experiences an enhanced capital expansion, but this expansion is not of the type that spelled the rise of capitalism. It is the type characteristic of its decline. "Over-production," which hitherto arose out of over-accumulation and capita) stagnation, now accompanies as waste-production the very first stages of capital expansion and even that of primitive accumulation. In this way, ascending state-capitalism finds its way blocked by the descending private enterprise system. Private enterprise, still on top in terms of production and productivity, helps determine the character of state-capitalist production and its exploitative social relations. Waste-production is thus a form of competition between the "people's socialism" and the "people's capitalism," in which the advantages are still on the side of Western capitalism.

State-capitalist governments, representing the economic system in ascendancy, favor peace. They will, of course, go to war in defense of their existence or to hold their own and acquired territories and even perhaps when war appears to be a short-cut to imperialist goals-a convenience rather than a risk. Yet, being still behind leading capitalist nations economically, an all-out war would push them even farther back whether they were to emerge "victors" or "losers." Though born of war and revolution, they do not see them as necessary to expansion- at any rate, not at this juncture. Armaments production on its present scale, which to the Western world presents a temporary, if dubious, way out of an insoluble dilemma, is to them an even heavier burden that hinders their development and postpones the realization of their goal- to reach and over-reach Western capitalism.

"Economic interests" hitherto often made for war. Now they have apparently become a deterrent to war in spite of and because of armament production which, in size and destructiveness, has no counterpart in history. Neither the capitalists nor the state-capitalist nations are ready to drive their antagonisms to the point of war, not merely because of their mutual respect for the destructiveness of modern weapons, but also because of their concern with capital accumulation in both its traditional private and modern national form.

VI

The drive of private enterprise systems to keep on accumulating in the traditional way and ascending State-capitalisms are, so to speak, only the two main rivers of development. They are Hooded by many contributory streams of independent source. Rising nationalism in backward nations and social struggles in advanced countries, though often losing their identity by having to assert themselves within the larger conflict between traditional and totalitarian capitalisms, assert themselves nevertheless and turn the wider social struggles into something more than just a contest between two different, yet interlocked, systems of capital production. The amalgam of contradictory social trends prevents any stable partition of the world into two opposing unified camps and therewith a peace based on an understanding or compromise between the two great contenders for world rule, Russia and the United States.

The present line-up of opposing nations is as temporary and polymorphous as was the division of the world into fascist and anti-fascist powers during the second world war. It is, in fact, a mere, consequence of the last war, not the result of conscious efforts to unify part of the world behind one or another principle of social organization. Dependent nations will follow the policies of the great powers only so long as their power prevails, and a nation's power prevails only so long as it grows. Stagnation for one implies expansion for the other just because the world is not partitioned into two huge, unified camps. In order to avoid stagnation, each power must increase its economic strength and therewith maintain and enlarge its influence over other nations, for economic expansion is now coupled to imperialistic control in such a way that the one is a pre-condition of the other.

Without doubting the sincerity of the desire for peace among Eastern as well as Western nations, their unavoidable economic: expansion will necessarily re-open the question of crisis and war. "Co-existence" has no future, as it involves transforming capitalist mixed economy into complete government control. A failure to stop the further growth of state-capitalist systems must lead to the nationalization of capital in countries still largely dependent on a market-expansion of capital production. Economic crisis is no longer a solution because of its restriction in space and because of altered social conditions in which depression, no less than armament production, involves the further growth of the "public sector" of the economy.

Moreover, alternating between "toward" and "away from" government-induced production does not await the actual expansion or contraction of the economy. The "mixed economy," containing both friends and foes of governmental control, displays both tendencies simultaneously. Internal political struggles may determine which tendency is emphasized. But in a crisis, all capitalist governments resort to economic controls to save themselves and the system to which they are committed. Political groupings least concerned with prevailing property relations will go tardiest in applying government controls. And thus it comes about, in the "democracies," that is, that in a real or even manufactured "national emergency," governmental power will often go to those groups ready to extend governmental control. This explains the existence of political groups that favor "national emergencies" as a vehicle leading to their success.

Business activities relate to the present, not to the long-run trend towards nationalization; but as the former are only a part of the latter, they defeat their cause by serving it. At the same time that capitalists light the encroachment of government, they look for government protection and subsidies. For the immediate gain, they destroy their future; yet, to have a future presupposes immediate gain. Their inconsistencies make up political platforms: reduction of the government budget on the one hand and a rise in the debt-limit on the other. This ambiguity is all-pervading; in order to make secure as much as possible of the old property relations, policies are evolved which undermine the existing capital structure even more; the defense of the *status quo* hastens the social transformation process and the latter strengthens the desire to stop the metamorphosis of capitalism—a vicious circle which can be broken only by social catastrophe.

The nations of the Eastern power block, whether captive or free, see in their own existence the future of the world economy. As products of recent history, they do not believe in restoring past conditions and power relations. They are in any case determined to defend their new position in the world economy, that is to defend the newly-evolved ruling classes which are based on somewhat different property relations and changed ideologies while defending the nation. As all decisive social changes favor certain interests and suppress others, they cannot conceive of a peaceful abdication of power groups. As they see it, transforming a partly-controlled social system of capital

production into totalitarian state-capitalism involves social struggles and war and they find it necessary to prepare for war.

Though not "inevitable"-there is no force external to human activity which could unleash it-war remains highly probable as the prepared for, yet undesired result of relentless competition between East and West for economic and political advantages in the world economy, of national competition and competition for power positions within nations. Even so, war will occur only in the absence of social forces ready and strong enough to prevent it. Since such social forces may arise, the question of whether a third world war is "inevitable" may be answered by the simple procedure of looking around for trends and movements opposing it. Here, the picture is disappointing despite increasing agitation for peace and obvious inclinations to reduce armaments. For the desire for peace restricts itself to verbal statements which are unconnected with any activity able to turn the tide of history. No attempts are made or even suggested to alter social relations that require crisis, war and revolution to adapt themselves to changing economic circumstances. The hope for peace rests on nothing more than the "accidental" nature of major occurrences in capitalism, on the possibility that an uncontrolled shift of situations may postpone and prevent a violent solution of accumulating contradictions.

Economics of the War Economy

Source: *American Socialist*, April 1959;

Transcribed: by Adam Buick.

EVER since Lord Keynes' dictum that wars—like pyramid-building and earthquakes—may serve to increase wealth, it has been increasingly recognized that war and preparation for war are necessary aspects of the prevailing economy and a condition of its proper functioning. Because, in recent history, only inflation and war have resulted in full utilization of productive capacities, the question has been raised whether this association between war and full employment is an accident or a necessity. It is usually answered with the assurance that, although it is no accident, it is not a necessity, for government expenditures can lead to full employment whether they are geared to the needs of war or to the requirements of peace. With full employment as the sole goal of economic activity, even people opposed to war do not seriously object to the creation of 'wealth' in the form of armaments and military installation, even though they may prefer 'wealth' in the form of social welfare.

Quite independent of preferences, government spending includes an always growing amount for purposes of defense. The 'military wealth' of the United States is said to exceed \$124 billion. This 'Real and Personal Property of the Defense Department' does not include investments in atomic energy estimated at \$12.5 billion, nor the properties of the 'National Plant and Equipment Reserve,' nor the supplies and equipment in overseas depots, nor the military assistance to allied and favored nations. The great bulk of the inventory consists of things that can be used up, wasted, or that will become obsolete. The Defense Department is actually a tremendous business enterprise. In 1955, for instance, it spent more than \$42 billion, or about one-seventh of the national income. It was directly responsible for the employment of close to 4.5 million people, or about 7 percent of the national labor force.

As always, so now, too, there is much talk of cutting government spending and reducing the budget deficit. This economy talk, however, does not include spending for military purposes. On this point both 'savers' and 'spenders' think alike. The 'defense establishment,' as the President made clear recently, 'is an exception to the general desire of living within the amounts set by the Budget Bureau after it had cut the spending requests.' Opposing all cuts and arguing for increased government spending, Truman's former chief economist Leon H. Keyserling found it necessary to complain that 'we remain content with a defense strength far below the minimum judged essential by most experts.' But then, spending for defense loses its sinister implications when it is referred to as 'rising cost of peace.'

Increased control of the economy by way of government spending seems to worry nobody, particularly because far more than half of it is thought to serve national defense. Despite a high rate of government spending there are still millions of unemployed and it was only under conditions of actual warfare, in which nearly half of the national product served the needs of war, that there was full employment and full use of productive capacities. Organized labor will certainly not object to increased government spending for whatever purposes, as this means jobs and a better position at the bargaining table. Neither big corporations nor small entrepreneurs oppose increased defense expenditures, no matter how much they may object to taxation and social welfare, since spending for defense does not restrict general market demand. Although government-financed social welfare schemes may interfere with private business interests, in military expenditures government provides both supply and demand simultaneously and takes part of the social product out of the marketing process.

Since government funds proper can come only from taxation, additional funds must be borrowed from private sources. Deficit financing, which covers government expenditures that exceed government income, is resorted to by the government in buying goods and services that would otherwise not be bought. This increases economic activity and even the profitability of enterprises filling govern demand. The increase of the national debt is limited by national productive resources. Deficit financing simply means that the government avails itself of part of- means of production that belong to private capital. Increased production through government initiative is a kind of temporary 'expropriation' of private capital deficit financing, as the means to this end, gives the 'expropriation' its temporary character. The funds borrowed by government are only monetary expressions of its power to set unemployed resources to work. The rising national debt indicates that this power has been granted only temporarily and for a price, i.e., interest paid to the bond-holders. And because the 'nation as a whole' stands behind the national debt, there arises the possibility that interests will be paid and bonds will be redeemed if the national income rises faster than the national debt. All that this means is that enough new wealth must be created to care of old obligations. New wealth has to come out new private production; what the bondholders get back from the government, they will themselves have to provide either by paying more taxes or by subscribing to new loans.

This situation explains the reluctance of private enterprise systems to engage in deficit financing, and of their governments to live beyond the budget. Funds going to government cannot be accumulated to private account and it is, therefore, not 'policy' but necessity which induces free enterprise systems to increase the 'public sector' of the economy in any direction. Of all directions, however, that of increased armaments appears the least obnoxious because of the traditional association of capital expansion with military might and because it supports 'genuine' capital formation in so far as it

subsidizes the suppliers of government demand at the expense of the national economy as a whole.

The 'defense establishment' is an exception to the general desire to live within the government budget because it is the least obnoxious of all public endeavors. But it is subject not only to national decisions but is determined by international power struggles. This, of course, is equally true for all competing nations, or power blocs, and enables each to blame the other for the armaments race. Jobs — International competition contradicts 'planning tendencies' in free enterprise systems—or 'mixed economies' rather—as well as state planning in totalitarian countries. For it is the competitive process itself which determines the character and extent of the various 'defense establishments.' To expand or contract armaments production is then not a question of choice, but is determined by the apparent impossibility of reaching international cooperation under conditions of national and social antagonisms and, of course, by the armaments technology which determines the size of the defense budgets.

Speculation regarding future relationships between defense requirements and national production seems rather idle, as the determining factor with regard to defense cannot be ascertained in advance. Moreover, at any time now preparation for war may turn into war, despite a general desire for peace. The assumption that peace will prevail rests on the certainty that the armaments race will also prevail if only to safeguard the existing armed peace. This, in turn, safeguards the status quo in international power relations and therewith the status quo of social relationships within the great powers and within the nations under their control.

However, the 'permanent war economy' has lost some of the horror previously associated with it, at any rate in America. For America's capacity to produce is such that it could support war production and a high defense budget without lowering the living standards of the broad masses. This is not true for other nations which need American support to maintain their defense programs, and it has not been true for totalitarian countries still forced to accumulate capital at a faster rate than they can improve living standards. And because, from a material-technical point of view, there is nothing to hinder a further growth of American productivity, a steady increase of defense expenditures need not necessarily lead to a future lowering of living standards. This is possible with a general economic expansion which allows for both sufficient capital formation and increased government budgets.

In a profit producing economy, however, the material-technical possibility for further expansion is not enough to make this expansion a certainty. If, for example, a profitable capital formation should require foreign expansion and if the areas in question should be under the control of competing social systems or nations, capital formation would be possible only in violation of the profit principle. It is for this reason that the future growth of the American economy is envisioned, to quote Keyserling once more, through 'private and public economic adjustments [which] constantly reinforce and supplement one another'; avoiding 'both 'the virtual merger of public and private action which necessarily occurred during wartime, and the opposite extreme which fails sufficiently to recognize that, while there are many segments in our economic life, there is in the final analysis only one America.'

It is true that there exists only one America. It is just as true that her 'many segments' represent an equal number of particularistic and contradictory interests which exclude a common economic policy by consent. When the rate of private capital formation is too low to guarantee stable social conditions, and when the latter are an inescapable necessity because of the United States' position within the world political situation, economic activity will be supported by government action with or without

general consent. Unless recent trends should be reversed, the need for government intervention will increase and therewith the government-controlled sector of the economy. To choose one example: government purchases of goods and services in 1929 accounted for 9 percent of the gross national product; in 1952 they accounted for 20 percent (the war-time high was 45 percent). Although slow, the rise was persistent and the probability of the trend continuing is far greater than for its arrest or reversal.

The end product of capitalist production is an enlarged capital. The end product of a government-fostered expansion of production is also a larger productive apparatus. But though nominally in the hands of private capital, it can be fully utilized only at the command of government. From the free enterprise point of view, production which the government commands, whether in the form of public works or armaments, falls into the sphere of 'consumption,' for like consumption proper, public works and armaments do not constitute, and do not add to, the accumulated capitalist wealth. Yet from the free enterprise point of view this is still better than government-sponsored production for personal means of consumption which would alter not only the volume but also the direction of production. More of the total social effort would disappear in direct consumption instead of in additional means of production and military strength. And since it is the function of government to maintain itself by maintaining the existing social system, its economic policy must serve the latter and must therefore -be so designed in order to do the least damage to the private enterprise system. This it does by directing government-induced production in increasing measure into armament channels, into production for destructive purposes, into waste-production.

While government-induced production helps to overcome the harmful social consequences of an insufficient rate of private capital formation, it also makes it more difficult to overcome the relative stagnation of private investments. It reduces their profitability and hinders changes of the existing capital structure such as occur in prolonged periods of depression. At any rate, the very existence of the mixed economy' points to insurmountable difficulties in the way of private capital formation and to a relatively faster growth of the 'public' over the 'private' sector of the economy. And this, in turn, implies the permanent and steady growth of the economy as a war production economy.

But as stated before, so long as the growth of waste-production does not infringe upon customary living standards, it will have no directly perceptible effects other than the increasing militarization of social life—so pleasing to some and so obnoxious to others. Yet, the status quo it is intended to secure cannot really be maintained. While change is arrested in one direction, it occurs in another. The 'mixed economy,' in which the government attempts to safeguard private enterprise, changes into a government-controlled economy that tolerates private capital. The increasing role of government by way of armaments production brings into being new political forces interested in the maintenance and further expansion of government control. While some social interest groups are still best served in a purely private enterprise system, others have already little or nothing to lose from the extension of government controls, and still others may profit directly thereby. These groups are supported by social attitudes shared by large layers of the population who actual life may remain unaffected by whatever change takes place.

The concentration and centralization of economic power extends into the political sphere. There now exists relatively small group of capitalists, financiers, manage politicians, militarists, and labor leaders able to determine social activity by virtue of their overwhelming influence over the economy as a whole, including the defense establishment. The celebrated 'People's Capitalism' is an indication that people see themselves actually or potentially as members of the capitalist class; rather, it springs

from the growing realization that, under conditions as they are now emerging, the traditional capitalist is doomed to extinction. Individualism evaporates in the test of experience; privileges are sought for in increasing measure not so much for the amassing and possessing of capitalist property as for the control of key positions in industry, commerce, politics, or government. With government itself becoming the largest of all businesses, service to the state becomes more attractive and remunerative. Objectively then, the mass of the population is quite ready to accept a more radical change from the private enterprise to the state-controlled economy—to say nothing of the ambition-less and property-less layers of the population who have no real stake in the issue at all. In this objective readiness lies the danger for the ruling groups, for in any period of economic stress, it may find expression in political attitudes which would force the free enterprise system into further retreat and give new impetus to those social forces that are steering towards a state capitalist economy.

Nationalism and Socialism

Source: *American Socialist*, vol. 6, Sept. 1959, No 9, pp. 16-19;
Transcribed: by Thomas Schmidt.

Editors' Note : We are sure that our readers will find many valuable insights in the following article by the long-time socialist writer, Paul Mattick, whose contributions have previously appeared in the *American Socialist*. Mr. Mattick here argues strongly the thesis held by Rosa Luxemburg and others before the first World War, on the so-called "national question."

We do not, for our part, believe it is possible to dissociate the battle for socialism from the general revolutionary wave in the under-developed world, a Wave that is powered by aspirations for national independence and a better life. The two currents do not always and at every point coincide, and nationalism at times blocks off the path for socialism. It appears to us, however, that any attempt to avoid the complexities and illusions of living history in favor of an ideally un-marred socialist internationalism would necessarily restrict socialism to small groups of ideologists.

Nevertheless, it is valuable to be reminded of the doctrinal foundations of socialism and of its continued shining goal: the international brotherhood of man.

NATIONS, whether "knitted together" by ideology, by objective conditions, or by the usual combination of both, are products of social development. There is no more point in cherishing or damning nationalism in principle than in cherishing or damning tribalism or, for that matter, an ideal cosmopolitanism. The nation is a fact to be suffered or enjoyed, to be fought for or against according to historical circumstances and the implications of those circumstances for various populations and different classes within these populations.

The modern nation-state is both a product and a condition of capitalist development. Capitalism tends to destroy traditions and national peculiarities by spreading its mode of production all over the world. But though capital production controls world production and though the "true" capitalist market is the world market,

capitalism arose in some nations sooner than in others, found more favorable conditions here than there and was more successful in one than in another place, and thus combined special capital interests with particular national needs.

“Progressive nations” of the last century were those with a rapid capital development; “reactionary nations” were those in which social relationships hindered the unfolding of the capitalist mode of production. Because the “next future” belonged to capitalism and because capitalism is the precondition for socialism, non-utopian socialists favored capitalism as against older social production relations and welcomed nationalism in so far as it served to hasten capitalist development. Though reluctant to admit this, they were not disinclined to accept capitalist imperialism as a way of breaking the stagnation and backwardness of non-capitalist areas from without, and thus to direct their development into “progressive” channels. They also favored the disappearance of small nations unable to develop large-scale economies, and their incorporation into larger national entities capable of capitalist development. They would, however, side with small “progressive nations” as against larger reactionary countries and, when suppressed by the latter, would support the formers’ national liberation movements. At all times and on all occasions, however, nationalism was not a socialist goal but was accepted as a mere instrument of social advancement which, in turn, would come to its end in the internationalism of socialism. Western capitalism was the “capitalist world” of the last century. National issues were concerned with the unification of countries such as Germany and Italy, with the liberation of such oppressed nations as Ireland, Poland, Hungary, Greece, and with the consolidation of such “synthetic” nations as the United States. This was also the “world” of socialism; a small world indeed viewed from the twentieth century. While national questions that agitated the socialist movement in the middle of the nineteenth century had either been resolved, or were in the process of being resolved, and, in any case, had ceased to be of real importance to Western socialism, the world-wide revolutionary movement of the twentieth century opened the question of nationalism anew. Is this new nationalism, which sheds Western dominance and institutes capitalist production relations and modern industry in hitherto under-developed areas, still a “progressive” force as was the nationalism of old? Do these national aspirations coincide in some manner with those of socialism? Do they hasten the end of capitalism by weakening Western imperialism or do they inject new life into capitalism by extending its mode of production all over the globe?

THE position of nineteenth-century socialism on the question of nationalism involved more than preferring capitalism to more static social systems. Socialists operated within bourgeois-democratic revolutions which were also nationalist; they supported national liberation movements of oppressed people because they promised to take on bourgeois-democratic features, because in socialist eyes these national-bourgeois-democratic revolutions were no longer strictly capitalist revolutions. They could be utilized if not for the installation of socialism itself, then for furthering the growth of socialist movements and for bringing about conditions more favorable to the latter.

Imperialism, however, not nationalism, was the great issue around the turn of the century. German “national” interests were now imperialist interests competing with the imperialisms of other countries. France’s “national” interests were those of the French empire, as Britain’s were those of the British empire. Control of the world and the division of this control between the great imperialist powers -determined “national” policies. “National” wars were imperialist wars, culminating in world-wide wars.

It has often been pointed out that the Russian situation at the beginning of the twentieth century was in many respects similar to the revolutionary state of West Europe in the middle of the nineteenth century. The positive attitude towards national-bourgeois

revolutions on the part of the early socialists was based on the hope, if not the conviction, that the proletarian element within these revolutions might go beyond the restricted goals of the bourgeoisie. In Lenin's view, the Russian bourgeoisie was no longer able to carry through its own democratic revolution and thus the working class was destined to bring about the "bourgeois" and the "proletarian" revolutions in a series of social changes that constituted a "revolution in permanence." In a way, the new situation seemed to repeat, on a more grandiose scale, the revolutionary situation of 1848. Instead of the earlier limited and temporary alliances of bourgeois-democratic movements with proletarian internationalism, there now existed a world-wide amalgam of revolutionary forces both of a social and nationalist character which might be driven beyond their restricted goals in pursuit of proletarian ends.

Consistent international socialism as represented, for instance, by Rosa Luxemburg, opposed Bolshevik "national self-determination." For her, the existence of independent national governments did not alter the fact of their control by imperialist powers through the latter's control of world economy. Imperialist capitalism could neither be fought nor weakened through the creation of new nations but only by opposing capitalist supra-nationalism with proletarian internationalism. Of course, proletarian internationalism cannot prevent, nor has it reason to prevent, movements for national liberation from imperialist rule. These movements are part of capitalist society just as is imperialism. But "utilizing" these national movements for socialist ends, could only mean depriving them of their nationalist character and turning them into socialist, internationally-oriented movements.

THE first World War produced the Russian Revolution and, whatever its original intentions, it was and remained a national revolution. Although expecting help from abroad, it never extended help to outside revolutionary forces, except where such help was dictated by Russian national interests. The second World War and its aftermath brought independence to India and Pakistan, the Chinese Revolution, the liberation of Southeast Asia, and self-determination for some nations in Africa and the Middle East. At first glance, this "renaissance" of nationalism contradicts both Rosa Luxemburg's and Lenin's positions on the "national question." Apparently, the time for national emancipation has not come to an end, and obviously, the rising tide of anti-imperialism does not serve world-revolutionary socialist ends.

Actually, what this new nationalism indicates are some structural changes in capitalist world economy and the end of nineteenth-century colonialism. The "white man's burden" has become an actual burden instead of a blessing. The returns from colonial rule are dwindling while the costs of empire are rising. To be sure, individuals, corporations, and even governments, still enrich themselves by colonial exploitation. But, this is now due to special conditions—control of concentrated oil-resources, discovery of large uranium deposits, etc.—rather than the general ability to operate profitably in colonies and other dependent countries. What were once exceptional profit-rates now drop to the "normal" rate. Where they remain exceptional, it is in most cases due to a hidden form of government subsidy. Generally speaking, colonialism no longer pays, so that it is in part the principle of profitability itself which calls forth a new approach to imperialist rule.

Two world wars destroyed the old imperialist powers more or less. But this is not the end of imperialism, which, though it evolves new forms and expressions, still spells economic and political control of weaker by stronger nations. Imperialism by indirection appears more promising than nineteenth-century colonialism or its belated revival in Russia's satellite policies. Of course, the one does not exclude the other, as when real or imaginary strategic considerations require actual occupation, such as U.S. control of

Okinawa and British military rule in Cyprus. But generally, indirect control may be superior to direct control, as the system of wage labor proved superior to slave labor. Apart from the Western hemisphere, America has not been an imperialist power in the traditional sense. Even here it gained the benefits of imperial control more by “dollar-diplomacy” than by direct military intervention. As the strongest capitalist power, America may well expect to dominate in somewhat similar fashion the world’s non-Soviet regions.

NONE of the European nations is actually able to prevent the complete dissolution of its imperial rule except with America’s help. But this help subjects these nations as well as their foreign possessions to American penetration and control. In falling “heir” to what is left of the declining imperialism, the United States has no urgent need to rush to the defense of West European imperialism, except where such defense frustrates the Eastern power bloc. “Anti-colonialism” is not an American policy deliberately designed to weaken her Western allies-though it does so in fact-but is adopted in the belief that it will strengthen the “free world.” This comprehensive outlook, to be sure, includes numerous narrower special interests which give America’s “anti-imperialism” its hypocritical character and leads to the belief that by opposing the imperialism of other nations, America merely fosters her own. Deprived of imperialist potentialities, Germany, Italy, and Japan no longer have an independent policy. The progressive decline of the French and British Empires reduces these nations to secondary powers. At the same time, the national aspirations of less developed and weaker countries cannot be realized except as they fit into the power schemes of the dominating imperialist nations. Though Russia and the United States share world supremacy for the time being, lesser nations attempt, nevertheless, to assert their specific interests and to some degree affect the policies of the super powers. The enmities and international contradictions of the two great rivals also grant newly arising nations, as China and India, a degree of independence they would not otherwise possess. Under the guise of “neutrality,” a small nation like Yugoslavia, for instance, is even permitted to depart from one power bloc and return to the other. The independent but weaker countries can assert their independence – such as it is – only because of the larger conflict between Russia and the United States.

THE erosion of Western imperialism, it is said, creates a power vacuum in hitherto controlled areas of the world. If the vacuum is not filled by the West, it will be by Russia. Of course, neither the representatives of the “new nationalism” nor those of the “old imperialism” understand this kind of talk; since the former displaces the latter, no vacuum arises. What is meant, then, by “vacuum” is that “national self-determination” of underdeveloped countries leaves them open to internal and external “communist aggression,” unless the West guarantees their “independence.” In other words, national self-determination does not include a free choice of allies, although it does- at times-include preference with respect to “protecting” Western powers. “Independence” of Tunisia and Morocco, for instance, is all right so long as independence from France implies allegiance not to Russia but loyalty to the American-dominated Western power-bloc.

To the extent that it can still assert itself in the two-power-bloc world, national self-determination is an expression of the “cold war,” of the political-military stalemate. But the developmental trend does not point to a world of many nations, each independent and secure, but to the further disintegration of weaker nations, i.e. to their “integration” in either one or the other power bloc. Of course, the struggle for national emancipation within the setting of imperialist rivalries allows some countries to exploit the power competition between East and West. But this very fact points to the limitations of their national aspirations, as either agreement or war between the East and West would end

their ability to maneuver between the two power centers. Meanwhile, Russia, which does not hesitate to destroy any attempt at real national self-determination in countries under her direct control, is ready to support national self-determination wherever it is directed against Western domination. Likewise, America, demanding self-determination for Russia's satellites, has no hesitancy in practicing in the Middle East what she abhors in Eastern Europe. Despite national revolution and self-determination, the time for national emancipation is practically over. These nations may retain their newly won independence, yet their formal independence does not release them from Western economic and political rule. They can escape this overlordship only by accepting that of Russia-within the Eastern power-bloc.

NATIONAL revolutions in capitalistically retarded countries are attempts at modernization through industrialization whether they merely express opposition to foreign capital or are determined to change existing social relations. But whereas the nationalism of the nineteenth century was an instrument of private capital development, the nationalism of the twentieth century is predominately an instrument of state-capitalist development. And whereas the nationalism of the last century expanded the free world market and that degree of economic interdependency possible under private capital formation, present-day nationalism disrupts still further an already disintegrating world market and destroys that degree of "automatic" international integration provided by the free market mechanism.

Behind the nationalist drive is, of course, the pressure of poverty, which is growing more explosive as the discrepancy between poor and rich nations increases. The international division of labor as determined by private capital formation implied the exploitation of poorer by richer countries and the concentration of capital in the advanced capitalist nations. The new nationalism opposes the market determined concentration of capital so as to assure the further industrialization of the underdeveloped countries. Under present conditions, however, nationally organized capital production increases its disorganization on a worldwide scale. Private enterprise and government control operate now simultaneously in each capitalist country and also in the world at large. Side by side, there exist, then, the most ruthless general competition, the subordination of private to national competition, the most ruthless national competition, and the subordination of national competition to the supra-national requirements of power-bloc politics.

At the base of the current national aspirations and imperialist rivalries lies the actual need for world-wide organization of production and distribution beneficial to humanity as a whole. First, as the geologist K. F. Mather has pointed out, because "the earth is far better adapted for occupation by men organized on a world-wide scale, with maximum opportunity for free exchange of raw materials and finished products the world around, than by men who insist upon building barriers between regions even so inclusive as a large nation or an entire continent." Second, because social production can be fully developed and can free human society from want and misery only by international cooperation without regard to particularistic national interests. The compelling interdependency implied in further progressive industrial development if not accepted and utilized for Human ends, asserts itself as a never-ending struggle between nations and for imperialist control.

The inability to achieve on an international scale what has been achieved, or is in the process of being achieved, on the national level-partial or complete elimination of capital competition-permits the continuation of class antagonisms in all countries despite the elimination or restriction of private capital formation. To state it the other way around: because nationalization of capital leaves class relations intact, there is no way of escaping competition on the international scene. Just as control over the means of

production assures the maintenance of class divisions, so does control over the national state, which includes control over its means of production. The defense of the nation and its growing strength becomes the defense and reproduction of new ruling groups. The “love for the socialist fatherland” in Communist countries, the desire for a “stake in the country,” as exemplified in the existence of “socialist” governments in welfare-economies, as well as national self-determination in hitherto dominated countries, signifies the existence and rise of new ruling classes bound to the existence of the national state.

WHILE a positive attitude toward nationalism betrays a lack of interest in socialism, the socialist position on nationalism is obviously ineffective in countries fighting for national existence as well as in those countries oppressing other nations. If only by default, a consistent anti-nationalist position seems to support imperialism. However, imperialism functions for reasons of its own, quite independently of socialist attitudes toward nationalism. Furthermore, socialists are not required for the launching of struggles for national autonomy as the various “liberation” movements in the wake of the second World War have shown. Contrary to earlier expectations, nationalism could not be utilized to further socialist aims, nor was it a successful strategy to hasten the demise of capitalism. On the contrary, nationalism destroyed socialism by using it for nationalist ends.

It is not the function of socialism to support nationalism, even though the latter battles imperialism. But to fight imperialism without simultaneously discouraging nationalism means to fight some imperialists and to support others, for nationalism is necessarily imperialist-or illusory. To support Arab nationalism is to oppose Jewish nationalism, and to support the latter is to fight the former, for it is not possible to support nationalism without also supporting national rivalries, imperialism, and war. To be a good Indian nationalist is to combat Pakistan; to be a true Pakistani is to despise India. Both these newly “liberated” nations are readying themselves to fight over disputed territory and subject their development to the double distortion of capitalist war economies.

And so it goes on: the “liberation” of Cyprus from British rule only tends to open a new struggle for Cyprus between Greeks and Turks and does not lift Western control from either Turkey or Greece. Poland’s “liberation” from Russian rule may well spell war with Germany for the “liberation” of German provinces now ruled by Poland and this, again, to new Polish struggles for the “liberation” of territory lost to Germany. Real national independence of Czechoslovakia would, no doubt, reopen the fight for the Sudetenland and this, in turn, the struggle for Czechoslovakia’s independence and perhaps for that of the Slovaks from the Czechs. With whom to side? With the Algerians against the French? With the Jews? With the Arabs? With both? Where shall the Jews *go to* make room for the Arabs? What shall the Arab refugees do to cease being a “nuisance” to the Jews? What to do with a million French “colons” who face, when Algerian liberation is accomplished, expropriation and expulsion? Such questions can be raised with reference to every part of the world, and will generally be answered by Jews siding with Jews, Arabs with Arabs, Algerians with Algerians, French with French, Poles with Poles and so forth-and thus they will remain unanswered and unanswerable. However Utopian the quest for international solidarity may appear in this melee of national and imperialist antagonisms, no other road seems open to escape fratricidal struggles and to attain a rational world society.

ALTHOUGH socialists sympathies are with the oppressed, they relate not to emerging nationalism but to the particular plight of twice-oppressed people who face both a native and foreign ruling class. Their national aspirations are in part “socialist”

aspirations, as they include the illusory hope of impoverished populations that they can improve their conditions through national independence. Yet national self-determination has not emancipated the laboring classes in the advanced nations. It will not do so now in Asia and Africa. National revolutions, as in Algeria for instance, promise little for the lower classes save indulging on more equal terms in national prejudices. No doubt, this means something to the Algerians, who have suffered from a particularly arrogant colonial system. But the possible results of Algerian independence are deducible from those in Tunisia and Morocco, where existing social relations have not been changed and the conditions of the exploited classes have not improved to any significant extent.

Unless socialism is altogether a mirage, it will rise again as an international movement-or not at all. In any case, and on the basis of past experience, those interested in the rebirth of socialism must stress its internationalism most of all. While it is impossible for a socialist to become a nationalist, he is nevertheless an anti-colonialist and anti-imperialist. However, his fight against colonialism does not imply adherence to the principle of national self-determination, but expresses his desire for a non-exploitative, international socialist society. While socialists cannot identify themselves with national struggles, they can as socialists oppose both nationalism and imperialism. For example, it is not the function of French socialists to fight for Algerian independence but to turn France into a socialist society. And though struggles to this end would undoubtedly aid the liberation movement in Algeria and elsewhere, this would be a by-product of and not the reason for the socialist fight against nationalist imperialism. At the next stage, Algeria would have to be “de-nationalized” and integrated into an international socialist world.

Marxism and the New Physics

(1960)

Source: *Anti-Bolshevik Communism* Paul Mattick, published by Merlin Press, 1978;
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The conflict between the East and the West, although it involves different ideologies, has little to do with different concepts of physical reality. Ideologies differ because material and social interests differ; ‘physical reality’, on the other hand, is quite the same for all the combatants. Nevertheless, in both camps, the ideological struggle is carried into the natural sciences — in the East, in the form of a rearguard defence of dialectical materialism; in the West, in the assertion that dialectical materialism is “the real root of the conflict between East and West, because it is the basis of the fanatic belief of Marxists that the world is bound to fall to them spontaneously and inevitably”.¹

Both sides insist, of course, that their scientific interpretations of the external world are free of all ideological encumbrances. While for the Eastern scientists and philosophers the whole of modern physics seems to verify dialectical materialism, for those of the West Marxism appears completely outdated because the idea of determinism has disappeared. The very term ‘materialism’ is rejected as belonging to the last century. During Marx’s lifetime, it is pointed out, “nothing was known of today’s relativistic and

¹ Max Born, *The Concept of Reality in Physics*. *Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists*, Chicago, 1958. Vol. XIV, No. 8, p.320.

atomistic physics; matter was at that time what our senses conveyed it to be; physical measurement dealt with sensually perceivable properties of things,² which is no longer true.

Marx, of course, had only the natural science of his period to rely on; but the changes in science since then do not affect his theories. Marx did not coin the term *dialectical materialism* but used the word *material* to designate the basic and primary conditions of all human existence. Hegel's dialectic merely formed the point of departure for Marx's critique of capitalist society. It was important to Marx because of "the enormous historical sense upon which it was founded," and because "it dissolves all conceptions of final, absolute truth, and of a final, absolute state of humanity corresponding to it."³

The materialism which Marx encountered was not historical, and the dialectic then in vogue was not materialistic. By pitting Feuerbach against Hegel and Hegel against Feuerbach, Marx developed his own concept of social development, for which Friedrich Engels coined the term historical materialism. This materialistic conception of history did not stem from the "physical determinism derived from Newtonian mechanics".⁴ on the contrary, it developed, by way of dialectics, in direct opposition to the materialism based on Newtonian mechanics. It excluded the idea of human history being determined by over-riding 'natural laws', whether mechanical or dialectical. Although recognising the inter-relations between men, society and nature, it was, first of all, a theory of men and society.

Unfortunately, however, the persuasive power of historical or dialectical materialism — as it came to be known — was great enough to carry away even Engels, who spoke of its universal validity. While some tolerant critics found this merely amusing,⁵ the less well-disposed used this over-zealousness as an excuse to reject the whole of Marxism as just an oddity of German mysticism. But while the notion of the 'universality' of the dialectic process is not defensible, neither is it essential to Marxism, which loses none of its force by omitting it. Marx, at any rate, did not concern himself with the 'dialectics of nature'. However, it is not the ideas of Marx but 'Marxism', as the ideology of the rising European labour movement and of the self-declared 'socialist' states of the Eastern power bloc, that nourishes Western anti-Marxism. And it is for this reason that the struggle between the 'Marxist' East and the anti-Marxist West, however real, tells us nothing about the validity or invalidity of Marxism for our time.

Marxism as Ideology

The pre-capitalist world was agitated by the question of the primacy of spirit or nature. "Those who asserted the primacy of spirit to nature comprised the camp of idealism. The others, who regarded nature as primary, belonged to the various schools of materialism."⁶ In opposing both the conditions and the religious ideologies of the feudal past, the revolutionary middle class was materialistic. It considered nature as objectively-given reality and man as determined by natural laws. The natural sciences were to explain his life and actions and, with the function of his brain, his sensations and consciousness. Freed from religious superstitions, science devoted itself to the discovery of natural laws,

² *Ibid.*, p.319.

³ F. Engels, *Ludwig Feuerbach*, New York, 1945, p.22.

⁴ M. Born, *The Concept of Reality in Physics*, p.320.

⁵ B. Croce, *Lebendiges und Totes in Hegels Philosophie*, Heidelberg, 1909.

⁶ F. Engels, *Ludwig Feuerbach*, p. 31.

and Newtonian mechanics served as the basis for a growing conviction that all natural phenomena follow definite causal rules.

Radical middle class materialism lost its ideological urgency with the establishment of the bourgeoisie as the ruling class. The emancipation of natural science from theology could not be extended to the emancipation of society from religion. As Napoleon expressed it: "As far as I am concerned, religion is not the mystery of creation but the mystery of society. Religion connects the idea of equality with heaven and thus prevents the butchery of the rich by the poor. Society depends on the inequality of incomes, and the inequality of incomes, on the existence of religion."⁷ The co-existence of science and religion in the uneasy bourgeois world found ideological support in idealistic interpretations of the further results of scientific development.

The early materialists, or natural philosophers (Francis Bacon and Thomas Hobbes) were convinced that through sense experience and through intellectual activities derived therefrom, it would be possible to gain absolutely valid knowledge of the external world. This optimism vanished with John Locke, who saw this knowledge limited by the very intervention of ideas. He thought it valid only to the extent to which ideas were actually in conformity with things. Although sensations and ideas related to the external world, this world itself could not be really known. Immanuel Kant accepted the proposition that ultimates (the thing in itself) are not knowable and that empirical knowledge restricts itself to the subjective forms in which man becomes aware of the objective world. It was for this reason that he saw the need for a priori concepts which brought order into experience and made it intelligible. Concepts of time, space and causality were inventions of the human mind and, though not empirically verifiable, were nevertheless necessary to science, philosophy and effective human activity. In its essential structure, the world was, then, a product of the idea. And just as the materialist theory of knowledge became for many materialists the materialist theory of reality, so for many idealists the idealist theory of knowledge became an idealist theory of reality.

In an attempt to carry the materialist representation of the objective world into the process of knowledge itself, Ernst Mach opposed both the new idealism and the old materialism. He insisted "that we cannot make up properties of nature with the help of self-evident suppositions, but that these suppositions must be taken from experience".⁸ But, since all knowledge derives from sensations and cannot go beyond sensations, it cannot make statements about objective reality; it can merely fill out the gaps in experience by the ideas that experience suggests. Although he opposed the Kantian point of view, he also rejected mechanical materialism and regarded its objective world of matter, space, time and causality as artificial conceptions. Mach's critical empiricism supported, although unintentionally, a rising idealistic trend in the philosophy of science.

Marxist 'revisionism', i.e. the successful development of labour organisations within the confines of capitalism and the hope, connected therewith, of a purely evolutionary transition from capitalism to socialism, led to the loss of an earlier militant atheism and to an ambiguous acceptance of the rising idealist trend in the form of neo-Kantianism. Radical socialists began to defend the old materialism of the revolutionary bourgeoisie against the new idealism of the established capitalist class and its adherents in the labour movement. For Russian socialists this seemed of particular importance since the Russian revolutionary movement, still on the verge of the bourgeois revolution, waged its ideological struggles to a large extent with the arguments of the Western revolutionary bourgeoisie. The intelligentsia, largely from the middle class, formed the

⁷ Alphonse Aulard, *Histoire Politique de la Révolution Française; Origines et Développement de la Démocratie et de la République (1789-1804)*, Paris, 1901, p.734.

⁸ E. Mach, *The Science of Mechanics*, London, 1942, p.27.

spearhead of the movement and was quite naturally inclined to adopt Western middle class materialism for their own purposes, that is, for the task of opposing the religious ideology that supported Czarist feudalism.

Because, for Ernst Mach, science had its origin in the needs of life, his ideas had a certain appeal to socialists. Some Russian revolutionaries, Bogdanov in particular, tried to combine them with Marxism. They gained some influence in Russia's Socialist Party and Lenin set out to destroy this influence with his book, *Materialism and Empiriocriticism*. The subjective element in Mach's theory of knowledge became, in Lenin's mind, an idealist aberration and a deliberate attempt to revive religious obscurantism. It was Mach's insistence upon the derived, abstract character of the concept of matter which disturbed Lenin particularly, because for him, as for the early materialists, knowledge was only what reflects objective truth; truth, that is, about matter. He thought that reducing objective reality to matter was necessary for the unconditional recognition of nature's material existence outside the mind.

The independent existence of the external world was not denied by Mach. He merely pointed out that our knowledge in this respect 'is limited because it is limited to sense experience. But Lenin found it "unconditionally true that to every scientific theory there corresponds an objective truth, something absolutely so in nature".⁹ For him dialectical materialism had already discovered what nature is and does, if not as yet completely, at any rate approximately. "From the standpoint of modern materialism, or Marxism," he wrote, "the relative limits of our approximation to the cognition of the objective absolute truth are historically conditioned; but the existence of this truth is

unconditioned, as well as the fact that we are continually approaching it."¹⁰ With the discovery of the substance and motion of the universe, all that was left to do was to proceed in every separate field of knowledge in accordance with the principles established for nature as a whole. One could then not fail to have scientific practice conform with objective reality, just as the latter was bound to show up in every true scientific endeavour. The difficulty with this is, of course, that it is impossible to apply the criterion of practice to a theory of the universe, not to speak of the fact that nobody knows what nature as a whole is.

It was in this way that Lenin extended historical materialism into dialectical materialism. Nature has had a history and its dialectical pattern of development has been progressive in the sense that it has developed from the inorganic through the organic mind and consciousness. "Matter is not a product of mind," Lenin wrote, "but mind itself is only the highest product of matter."¹¹ The world was an "eternally moving and developing material mass which reflects a progressive human consciousness".¹² Human history is a product of universal history. In a certain sense, this is true and follows from the admission of the existence of the external world independent of human existence. And it is clear that consciousness presupposes the existence of the brain.

But it is also true, as Marx pointed out, "that the question whether objective truth can be attributed to human thinking is not a question of theory but is a practical question. In practice men must prove the truth, i.e. the reality and power, the 'this-sidedness' of their thinking. The dispute over the reality or non-reality of thinking which is isolated from practice is a purely scholastic question."¹³ The atomic theories of the ancient Greeks, for instance, were based not on experimental facts but were part of a speculative

⁹ *Materialism and Empiriocriticism*, New York, 1927, p.107.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, p.107.

¹¹ *Ibid.*, p.63.

¹² *Ibid.*, p.109.

¹³ Marx's Theses on Feuerbach in F. Engels, *Ludwig Feuerbach*, p.73.

cosmic philosophy and were opposed and defeated by other philosophical schools on purely philosophical grounds. This can no longer be repeated, for today's atomic theory is based on experiment and mathematical treatment, on a scientific practice in brief, able to verify the theory's validity. Not mere speculation but the work of chemists and physicists led from the atomic to the nuclear theory, to the new physics and the new philosophy associated with it. All real knowledge of the external world is the product of men's theoretical and practical activity in the actual world. But this knowledge produced by men can never be more than knowledge produced by men; it is not absolute truth. It is only truth about that part of the universe currently accessible to men, on which they can work and verify their theories. And as their knowledge accumulates with historical development, it leads to the continuous modification of knowledge by way of additional knowledge and sometimes to the discarding of theories made superfluous by theories referring to new discoveries.

The decline of the radical Western labour movement and the success of Russian bolshevism brought with it an almost complete identification of a specific Leninist version of Marxism with Marxism proper. Because the Russian Revolution was simultaneously a 'bourgeois' and a 'proletarian' revolution — in the sense that the preconditions for socialism were non-existent while *laissez faire* capitalism was no longer possible — it led to a form of state-capitalism which could be designated as 'socialism' only because it was something other than private-property capitalism. But the functions assigned to private enterprise and competition were now the functions of the bolshevik state. By appropriating part of the social product and allocating productive resources for the construction of a larger productive apparatus and a higher productivity, the bolshevik rulers turned into controllers of labour and capital.

While the capitalist's 'peace of mind' and the necessary acquiescence of the workers require some form of general agreement on the indispensability of capital and private initiative, the new Russian situation needed a different ideology that could make the interests of the controllers and the controlled appear identical. Marxism could somehow satisfy this need because it was formulated during capitalism's *laissez faire* stage. For there were no longer in Russia any capitalists in the traditional sense; and as to the government, it characterised itself as the executive of the ruling working class.

But since only the miserable are inclined to believe in an equal sharing of a miserable situation, the bolshevik 'elite' soon found that income differentiations, by serving as incentives for greater individual effort, could turn into a blessing for all. In order to improve the life of all in the long run, it was necessary to improve that of some immediately. Thus a new class came into being based on control of the state apparatus and nationalised means of production. To hasten productive developments, both the 'positive' incentives of power and income, as well as the 'negative' incentives of forced labour and terrorism were repeatedly advanced. Yet, the more the interests of the controllers and the controlled diverged, the more insistently did ideology proclaim their identity.

Under relatively stable social conditions ideological control may suffice to secure the social status quo. Under such conditions, designated as a 'free' or 'democratic' society, a struggle for ideas accompanies the social conflicts, and its class structure is simultaneously denied and admitted. Both the existence and non-existence of class relations, for instance, are incorporated in such concepts as 'social mobility' and 'equal opportunities'. Socialism would eliminate these ambiguities, for if there are no classes there is no way of moving from one class to another, and if there are no privileges there are no equal opportunities to partake of. Russian society, while supporting a privileged

minority, necessarily adheres to the concept of ‘equal opportunities’, but it cannot admit the existence of class relations without destroying its socialist label.

Even if, out of fear of utopianism, Marxian socialism never became explicit, one thing was clear nevertheless: socialism implies a classless, non-exploitative society, and not merely a modified class relationship in a modified capitalism. In Russia, ideology only can claim the absence of class relations. Yet, the ruled cannot help being aware of existing conditions and of their unrelatedness to the state-prescribed ideology. This ideology cannot serve as a substitute for, but is an aspect of, direct physical control — an instrument of police power. The enforced absence of social conflicts finds not support, but merely expression, in the apparent unanimity of ideas.

It was in the name of Marxism and socialism that the bolsheviks came into power, and in their name they destroyed all their enemies. Even their internal struggles for positions and influence within the controlling hierarchy must be expressed in Marxian terms — either as adherence to, or as an alleged deviation from, a once-established ‘orthodoxy’. The total unrelatedness of Marxian socialism to Russian conditions makes impossible any questioning or serious discussion of Marxian theory. Lenin’s dogmatised ‘Marxism’ must be accepted as an article of faith. only in this way can it be fitted into Russian conditions. And it is not only Lenin’s use of middle class materialism in defence of ‘Marxism’ which indicates the half-bourgeois, half-proletarian character of bolshevism and of the Russian Revolution itself. There is also the bolshevik state-capitalist concept of ‘socialism’, the authoritarian attitude toward organisation and spontaneity, the outdated and unrealisable principle of national self-determination and, finally, Lenin’s conviction that only the middle class intelligentsia is able to develop a revolutionary consciousness and is thus destined to lead the masses. The combination of bourgeois materialism and revolutionary Marxism which characterised early bolshevik philosophy reappears with victorious bolshevism as a combination of neo-capitalist practice and socialist ideology.¹⁴

Science and Society

“In social production,” Marx wrote, summing up his materialism, “men 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.”¹⁵

Marx did not concern himself with the dialectic or any other absolute law of nature because for him “nature fixed in isolation from men — is *nothing* for men”.¹⁶ He dealt with society as an “aggregate of the relations in which the producers live with regard to nature and to themselves”.¹⁷ Although nature exists independently of men, it exists actually for men only in so far as it can be sensed and comprehended. The labouring process in its various forms, including scientific labour, is the interaction and metabolism

¹⁴ A more extensive criticism of Lenin’s scientific and philosophical ideas is to be found in *Marxism and Philosophy*, by Karl Korsch, and *Lenin as Philosopher*, by Anton Pannekoek.

¹⁵ *Critique of Political Economy*, Chicago, 1904, p.11.

¹⁶ *Economic and Philosophical Manuscripts of 1844*, Moscow, p.169.

¹⁷ *Capital*, Chicago, Vol. III, p.952.

between men and nature; it dominates, exploits and alters nature, including the nature of man and society. 'Laws of nature' relate not to 'ultimate reality' but are descriptions of the behaviour and regularities of nature as perceived by men. Perceptions change with the change of knowledge and with social development which affects the state of knowledge. *Concepts* of physical reality relate then not only to nature and men but also indirectly to the structure of society and to social change and are therefore historical. Although specific social relationships, bound to specific forms of social production, may find ideological reflection in science and affect its activities in some measure; science, like the production process itself, is the result of all previous social development and in this respect is independent of any particular social structure. Concepts of physical reality may be shared by structurally different societies. And just as different technologies may evolve within a particular social structure as, for instance, the current so-called Second Industrial Revolution, so one concept of physical reality may be replaced by another without affecting existing social relationships. Yet, these new concepts are still historical in comparison with earlier concepts of physical reality associated with previous and different modes of production and previous and different social relationships.

Science in the modern sense developed simultaneously with modern industry and capitalism. The rapidity of scientific development parallels the relentless revolutionising of the production process by way of competitive capital accumulation. There is an obvious connection between science, its technological application and the prevailing social relationships. Although modern science is not only quantitatively but also qualitatively different from the rudimentary science of the past, it is a continuation of it nonetheless. Likewise, the science and technology of the hypothetical socialist future — no matter how altered — can only be based on all previous scientific and social development. There is no 'bourgeois science' to be replaced by 'proletarian science'. What a Marxist critique of science is directed against is the class-determined ideological interpretation and class-determined practical utilisation of science wherever and whenever it violates the needs and well-being of humanity.

Although science strives toward some hypothetical ideal objectivity, the application of science is guided by other considerations. Like the utilisation of other productive and human resources, it is subordinated to the requirements of class relations which turn the social production process into capital formation. The utilisation of science for prevailing profit and power principles may not affect internal scientific objectivity, but it affects the direction of scientific exploration. Because there is no 'end' to science and because its fields of exploration are unlimited, science can choose to concentrate upon one or another. The emphasis upon a specific field and a particular direction depends upon the needs, structure and superstructure of a particular society. There was, in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, an obvious connection between the concentration on astronomy and the development of world trade. There is an obvious connection between the present emphasis on atomic physics and the current imperialist military struggles.

In Marxist values, man is the measure of all things and science should be science for men. As socialism implies the further growth of the social forces of production, it also implies that of science. It intends to add to the principle of scientific objectivity that of social responsibility. And just as it rejects fetishistic capital accumulation, so it rejects 'science for the sake of science'. This fetishistic attitude towards science, supposedly based on an innate human need to search for ultimate reality, is actually only another expression of the lack of sociality in class society and the fierce competition among scientists themselves. The irresponsible, irrational and self-defeating disregard for humanity on the part of many scientists today, who defend their work in the name of

science even though it has often no other but destructive purposes, is possible only in a society that is able to subordinate science to the specific needs of a ruling class. The humanisation of science presupposes, however, the humanisation of society. Science and its development is thus a social problem.

Materialism and Determinism

Marxism, not being a theory of physical materialism and not bound to Newtonian determinism, is not affected by the new physics and microphysics. To be sure, Marx had no way of rejecting and no desire to reject the physics of the nineteenth century. What distinguished his historical materialism from middle class materialism was his rejection of the latter's direct confrontation of individual man and external reality and its inability to see society and social labour as an indivisible aspect of the whole of reality. What united Marxism with middle class materialism was the conviction that there is an external world independent of men and that science contributes to the knowledge of this objective reality.

While Marxists accept the positivist emphasis on experience, they reject the notion that sensations are the sole source of experience — a notion which led some people into the self-contradictory sterility of solipsism and others to idealism and the indirect justification of religious beliefs. Although sense perceptions are individuals' perceptions, men extended the range and amplified the powers of their senses in quality as well as quantity. Moreover the "knowledge of an orderly external world on which we can act rationally is derived almost entirely from society. The scraps disclosed in sense perceptions by themselves would make no pattern but fit into the pattern whose outlines society has taught us. Indeed what we perceive with our sense organs is conditioned very largely by our education — by what our elders and fellows have taught us to notice."¹⁸

The concept of matter now implies something different from what it did a hundred years ago. While for Lenin, and middle class materialism before him, matter, composed of atoms, was the very stuff of nature, and for Mach atoms were a mental artifice not susceptible to sense experience, matter is now regarded as something 'in-between' because matter as given by our senses appears as a secondary phenomenon, created by the interaction of our sense organs with processes whose nature can be discovered only indirectly, through theoretical interpretations of experimentally observed relationships; in other words, through a mental effort."¹⁹ Matter was once conceived as consisting of indivisible atoms. This concept lost its validity by newly discovered properties of matter such as radio-activity. It was found that "material particles are capable of disappearing while giving rise to radiation, whilst radiation is capable of condensing into matter and of creating particles."²⁰ Einstein formulated the transformation of mass into energy and now the term, *matter*, when it is used, includes all the physical phenomena of which men are aware. Experimental methods were devised which recorded the effects of atoms and of the elemental particles of which they are composed. These elemental particles may be considered the ultimate units of matter — "precisely those units into which matter decomposes under the impact of external forces. This state of affairs can be summed up thus: all elemental particles are made of the same stuff — namely, energy ... Matter exists because energy assumes the form of the elemental particles."²¹

¹⁸ V.G. Childe, *Society and Knowledge*, New York, 1956, p.97.

¹⁹ M. Born, *The Concept of Reality in Physics*, p.319.

²⁰ L. d. Broglie, *Physics and Microphysics*, New York, 1960, p.68.

²¹ W. Heisenberg, From Plato to Max Planck. *Atlantic Monthly*, Boston, November, 1959, p.113.

These discoveries do not deny the objective existence of physical reality, nor its manifestation in things considered to constitute matter. Whatever science may reveal as properties of nature, and whether or not matter is considered 'real' or 'unreal', as a 'primary' or as 'secondary' phenomena, it exists in its own right and without it no immaterialist would be there to deny its existence. The material world is the world of men, quite independent of the fact — scientifically or philosophically speaking — that the old *concept* of matter is insufficient to account for physical reality.

The equivalence of mass and energy, of light and matter, extended the wave-corpusele duality — at first discovered for light — to all matter. Like light, material particles can be pictured as either corpuscles or waves, and both pictures are necessary to explain their properties. According to Max Planck's quantum theory radiation is not continuous but, like matter, can be dealt with only in individual units. Emission and absorption of these units involves the principle of probability. The application of quantum mechanics to the problems of atomic structure by Niels Bohr and Werner Heisenberg led to the principle of uncertainty, of indeterminism, and to the concept of complementarity. According to the latter the description of micro-objects, such as electrons, requires both wave and corpuscle models; although mutually exclusive, they also complement one another. The uncertainty principle relates to the impossibility of ascertaining with accuracy both the position and the momentum of a particle simultaneously.

Because in their totality the elementary processes constitute physical reality, the indeterminist, statistical, probabilistic character of quantum physics led to a denial of causality. Not all scientists, however, are willing to recognise acausality as a fundamental aspect of nature. For Einstein, quantum theory in all its implications seemed only a temporary makeshift — an expression of our ignorance. Max Planck held that the quantum hypothesis will eventually find its exact expression in certain equations which will be a more exact formula of the law of causality. And Heisenberg speculates whether acausality is only a consequence of the separation of observer and observed and is not applicable to the universe as a whole.

However this may be, the problem can only be resolved, if at all, by further scientific work. While some scientists hold that behind the statistical laws of quantum physics there are hidden, but discernable, parameters obeying the laws of classical physics, others think that causality in macroscopic phenomena is itself based on probability laws. While for some, causality once ruled absolutely, now chance rules absolutely for others. Marxism, which does not think in absolutes, accepts the state of physics for what it is, convinced that like any other state previously it, too, is transitory and is not the final end of physical knowledge.

Newtonian mechanics worked well on the macroscopic and human scale of phenomena. The knowledge gained about objective reality through our sense organs and scientific instruments did not perceptibly affect external reality itself. In microphysics, however, the interaction between the observed and the observer affects the observed phenomenon. Sense impressions and instruments imply the transfer of energy (photons) which forms an integral part of the behaviour of the atomic objects under observation. This inescapable situation, deplored by some as the definite borderline to all understanding of objective reality, induced others to state "that science stands between man and nature", and though events in the world of nature do not depend on our observations of them, nevertheless, "in science we are not dealing with nature itself but with the science of nature — that is, with nature which has been thought through and described by man".²²

²² W. Heisenberg, *From Plato to Planck*, p.112.

While this aspect of quantum physics is used, more often than not, as an argument against philosophical materialism and as evidence in favour of idealism, in a way, and differently expressed, it rather suits Marxism quite well. What stands *between* men and nature also *connects* men and nature. Marxism, for which knowledge of objective reality implies the indivisible inter-relationship between man, society and nature, does not bother with an ‘objective reality’ apart from that recognisable by men. If there should be no way towards ‘absolute’ objectivity, that degree of objectivity attainable is the objective reality for men. The recognition that nature and the nature revealed through science may not be the same merely compels us to the largest possible degree of objectivity, quite apart from the question as to whether or not it will lead to an understanding of ‘ultimate reality’.

Microphysics is one of many human endeavours and though it led to new concepts of physical reality, it did not alter the human situation in the macroscopic world. The duality “between statistical and dynamic laws is ultimately associated with the duality between macrocosm and microcosm, and this we must regard as a fact substantiated by experiment. Whether satisfactory or not, facts cannot be created by theories, and there is no alternative but to concede their appointed places to dynamical as well as to statistical laws in the whole system of physical theories.”²³ Space, time, causality, derived from experience, remain dependable guides to most human activities, quite independently of the over-riding or under-lying relativistic and atomistic theories of reality. It is quite certain that classical mechanics will “remain the instrument best fitted to solve certain questions, questions which for us are of the highest importance, since they relate to our scale of magnitude”.²⁴

Nothing is altered in this situation if the deterministic interpretation of classical mechanics is also regarded as a fallacy.²⁵ For causality and determinism do not refer to nature in its totality but to our interrelationship with nature through which we discover rules and regularities that allow us to expect — and thus to predict — natural events with a degree of probability close to certainty. Although the early ideal of absolutely certain knowledge of the external world vanished in the very quest for scientific objectivity, ‘natural laws’ which allow for predictability retain their ‘absolute’ validity on the human scale of experience. And while the understanding of atomic processes implies probability and statistics, the utilisation of this knowledge leads to predictable activities as if based on cause-and-effect relationships. Likewise, “the notions of classical physics provide an a priori foundation for the investigations of quantum physics, since we can carry out experiments in the atomic field only with the aid of concepts from classical physics.”²⁶

Because indeterminism rules in quantum physics, and determination is out of the question “even in the simplest classical science, that of mechanics”, Max Born finds it “simply fantastic to apply the idea of determinism to historical events”.²⁷ However, historical materialism, in so far as it claims predictive powers, does not claim that these powers are derived from, or are analogous to, natural processes but that they are based on ‘social laws’ of development fortified by the evidence of history. To reject ‘social determinism’ it is necessary to demonstrate its impossibility in society and history, not by analogy with physical processes. By doing the latter, Born does exactly — only the other way around — what pseudo-Marxists were doing when they read ‘social laws’ of development into nature. If one analogy is bad, so is the other.

²³ M. Planck, *A Survey of Physical Theory*, New York, 1960, p.64.

²⁴ E. Borel, *Space & Time*, New York, 1960, p.182.

²⁵ See: M. Born, *Voraussagbarkeit in der klassischen Mechanik*. Physikalische Blätter, 1959, Heft 8.

²⁶ W. Heisenberg, *From Plato to Max Planck*, p.112.

²⁷ *The Concept of Reality in Physics*, p.320.

Society does not develop and function by chance but through human responses to definite necessities. Man must eat in order to live, and if he must work in order to eat, the work itself leads to a regulated behaviour on his own part and in connection with his obeying of, and his struggle against, natural phenomena and their regularities. When men work in groups and societies, new necessities and new regulations arise out of the social labour process. With the increase of productivity there develops social class relations and social regulations based on them. With the further growth of the productive powers of society the determination of human behaviour by external necessity diminishes while the determination by social arrangements increases. Determination is largely a social product; it is the social development itself which leads — with the recognition of the material and social requirements of production and reproduction — to predictability.

Because of the socially-produced character of social determination, Marx is neither a determinist nor an indeterminist in the usual sense of these terms. “In his opinion history is the product of human action, even while men are the products of history. Historical conditions determine the way man makes subsequent history, but these historical conditions are themselves the result of human actions ... The basic point of departure is never history, but man, his situation, and his responses.”²⁸

In known history stages of human and social existence are recognisable through changing tools, forms of production, and social relationships that alter the productivity of labour. Where social production stagnates, society stagnates; where the productivity of labour develops slowly, social change is also tardy. But all previous development is the result of progress made in the sphere of production and it is only reasonable to expect that the future will also depend on it.

This indicates little with regard to the actual transformation from capitalism to socialism anticipated by Marx. It merely predicts that socialism is the next step in the development of the social forces of production, which includes science and social consciousness. Every class structure, according to Marx, both fosters and retards the general development of social production. It fosters it in contrast to previously-existing social relations of production; it retards it by attempting to make existing social relations permanent. Definite social class relations are bound to definite levels of the expanding social forces of production — all the actual over-lapping of old and new forms of social relations and modes of production notwithstanding. In our time, it is the capital-labour relationship, the basis of all social antagonisms, which fetters further social development. But such development requires the abolition of social antagonisms. And since only those able to base their expectations on a classless society are likely to strive towards its realisation, Marx saw in the working class and its needs a force of human emancipation.

Although Marx was convinced of capitalism’s inevitable end, he did not commit himself as to the time of its departure. This depended on the actual class struggle and was certain only on the assumption of a continuation of the previous course of social development. Future events can only be based on present knowledge and predictions are possible only on the assumption that the known pattern of past development will also hold for the future. It may not; yet, all knowledge justifies some expectations and allows for actions which themselves will decide whether the expectations were justified or not. When Marx spoke of the end of capitalism, he also thought of the elements of a new society already present and unfolding in the ‘womb of the old’. Capitalism had no future because its transformation was already an observable phenomenon. As it developed, it enlarged all its contradictions so that its expansion was at the same time its decay when regarded from a revolutionary instead of from a conservative point of view.

²⁸ A.G. Meyer, *Marxism: The Unity of Theory and Practice*, Cambridge, 1954, p. 10.

The Ideological War

While there is no connection between Marxism and physical determinism or indeterminism, there is also no real connection between the cold war and the different concepts of physical reality in the East and the West. Indeed, what possible connection could there be between the indeterminacy of nuclear physics and all the social problems that beset the world and give rise to its political movements? These social struggles were disturbing the world before the rise of the new physics and they cannot be abated by either science or philosophy. Political relations between East and West will not improve simply because physicists abstain from ideological interpretations of their work. This work, and its practical application, is the same in the East and the West. Where there is disagreement, it does not matter, i.e. in speculations as to what the physical knowledge of the future may reveal. Some Eastern scientists do not bother to embroider their work with philosophical interpretations; others try to fit it into the scheme of dialectical materialism so as not to violate the state-prescribed ideology in which they may also actually believe, just as Western scientists accept almost generally the ruling ideologies of their own society.

At any rate, reality is always stronger than ideology, as is demonstrated by the recurrent need to incorporate the new findings of science and the advancements of technology into the prevailing ideologies. There was a time when Russian dialectical materialists denounced Einstein's relativity theory as bourgeois obscurantism, only, and rather quickly, to come to celebrate it as still another manifestation of dialectical materialism. Space-time, wave-mechanics, the structure of matter, in short, the whole of modern physics has been turned into so many revelations of the dialectics of nature and of its material substance. The principle of 'complementarity', i.e. the abandonment of a conceptually unitary picture of atomic phenomena, has been interpreted as yet another example of dialectical development by way of contradiction and reconciliation, that is, as a struggle between thesis and anti-thesis, bringing forth the synthesis.

As yet, however, the 'synthesis' is only philosophically anticipated by dialectical materialists to satisfy the Leninist criterion of absolute objective truth. Some Eastern physicists (not all) simply claim that the phenomena observed in microphysics with regard to both wave and particle are completely objective, whereas for some Western scientists (not all) they are in part subjective, because of the disturbing and altering interplay between observer and observed, and because wave has the character of a probability wave and is not regarded as an objective entity. Of course, the Russian physicists admit that the sheer objectivity of micro-objects is only partly recognisable but they believe that, in principle, it will be possible to establish their full objectivity by finding ways and means to discount the influence of the observer and his instruments upon the observed micro-objects. The application of atomic energy appears to them as proof of the objective character of atomic phenomena.

For Western physicists, all that matters presently is quantum theory in its present state and the problems to which it gives rise. This, of course, is also true for Russian scientists. And it can at once be admitted that their search for absolute objectivity, whether realisable or not, seems a better working-hypothesis than the subjectivistic resignation to an assumed absolute limit to the understanding of objective reality on the part of some Western physicists. However, atomic energy has been applied on both sides of the 'barricades'; the pragmatic truth of atomic theory has been revealed quite aside from dialectical materialism and bourgeois idealism.

Because Lenin insisted on the objectivity and universal validity of causality and because Leninism is the ruling ideology, it cannot very well be denied by Russian

physicists. There is also no real need to do so, for according to dialectical materialism causality does not exclude but implies chance. The indeterminacy in quantum physics, though recognised, is explained as due to experimental techniques and not to a fundamental law of nature. The differences between the Eastern and Western physicists may then be summed up as differences relating not to their work but to additional expectations on the part of Eastern physicists that their work will come to verify the assumptions of dialectical materialism.

These assumptions, however, relate not to the victory of socialism over capitalism, but merely to the re-establishment of causality for the whole of nature and to the re-acceptance of the concept of matter, in its present sense, as the sole basis of all existing phenomena including the human mind. Of course, in a certain sense, such expectations may be regarded as an expression of a general optimism associated with the rise, success and expected triumph of bolshevism and its ideological concomitant, Leninism. Still, it is difficult to see how dialectical materialism in physics could determine the political decisions of people one way or another or could be regarded an instrument of class struggle.

Ideologies are weapons, but in the age of the atom bomb they are no longer decisive or even very important weapons. As little as the Western nations trust in the 'rationality' and the 'naturalness' of their socioeconomic relations, just as little do the Eastern 'Marxists' put their trust in the dialectical course of history — not to speak of that in nature — as the means to final victory. Both sides rely, first of all, on their material might. It can only be to the good, of course, when material might finds ideological support, for which reason successful ideologists in both camps find themselves in comfortable income brackets. But their professional rating of the meaning and power of ideologies is only an over-rating of their own importance.

Anton Pannekoek

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Anton Pannekoek's life span coincided with what was almost the whole history of the modern labour movement; he experienced its rise as a movement of social protest, its transformation into a movement of social reform, and its eclipse as an independent class movement in the contemporary world. But Pannekoek also experienced its revolutionary potentialities in the spontaneous upheavals which, from time to time, interrupted the even flow of social evolution. He entered the labour movement a Marxist and he died a Marxist, still convinced that if there is a future, it will be a socialist future.

As have many prominent Dutch socialists, Pannekoek came from the middle class and his interest in socialism, as he once remarked, was due to a scientific bent strong enough to embrace both society and nature. To him, Marxism was the extension of science to social problems, and the humanisation of society. His great interest in social science was entirely compatible with his interest in natural science; he became not only one of the leading theoreticians of the radical labour movement but also an astronomer and mathematician of world renown.

This unifying attitude regarding natural and social science and philosophy determined the character of most of Pannekoek's work. One of his earliest publications, *Marxism and Darwinism*, elucidates the relationship between the two theories; one of his last, *Anthropogenesis*, deals with the origin of man. "The scientific importance of Marxism as well as of Darwinism," he wrote, "consists in their following out the theory

of evolution, the one upon the domain of the organic world, the other upon the domain of society.” What was so important in Darwin’s work was the recognition that “under certain circumstances some animal-kinds will necessarily develop into other animal-kinds.” There was a “mechanism,” a “natural law,” which explained the evolutionary process. That Darwin identified this “natural law” with a struggle for existence analogous to capitalist competition did not affect his theory, nor did capitalist competition become therewith a “natural law.”

It was Marx who formulated the propelling force for social development. “Historical materialism” referred to society; and though the world consists of both nature and society – as expressed in the need for man to eat in order to live – the laws of social development are not “laws of nature”. And, of course, all “laws,” whether of nature or society, are not absolute. But they are reliable enough, as verified by experience, to be considered “absolute” for purposes of human practise. At any rate, they deny sheer arbitrariness and free choice and relate to observed rules and regularities which allow for expectations that form the rationale for human activities.

With Marx Pannekoek held that it is “the production of the material necessities of life which forms the main structure of society and determines the political relations and social struggles.” It is by way of class struggle that decisive social changes have been brought about and these changes have led from a less to a more productive level of social production. Socialism, too, implies the further development of the social forces of production, which are now hampered by the prevailing class relations. And this can only be done by a labouring population able to base its expectations on the emergence of a classless society. In known history, stages of human and social existence are recognisable through changing tools and forms of production that alter the productivity of social labour. The “origin” of this process is lost in pre-history, but it is reasonable to assume that it is to be found in man’s struggle for existence in a natural setting which enabled and forced him to develop a capacity for work and social organisation. Since Friedrich Engels wrote *The Role of Labour in the Transformation of Ape into Man*, a whole literature has been built around the question of tools and human evolution.

In Anthropogenesis, Pannekoek returned to problems raised in his early Marxism and Darwinism. Just as there are “mechanisms” that account for social development and natural evolution, so there must be a “mechanism” that expels the rise of man in the animal world. Society, mutual aid, and even the use of “tools” are characteristic of other species besides man; what is specific to man is language, reason, and the making of tools. It is the last, the making of tools, which in all probability accounts for the simultaneous development of language and thought. Because the use of tools interposes itself between an organism and the outer world, between stimulus and action, it compels action, and hence thinking, to make a detour, from sense impressions by way of the tool, to the object.

Speech would be impossible without human thinking. The human mind has the capacity for abstract thought, of thinking in concepts. While mental life for both man and animal starts from sensations, which combine into images, the human mind differentiates between perceptions and actions by way of thought, just as the tool intervenes between man and that which he seeks to attain. The break between perceptions and actions, and the retention of past perceptions, allows for consciousness and thought, which establishes the inter connections of perceptions and formulates theories applicable to practical actions. Natural science is a living proof of the close connection that exists between tools and thinking. Because the tool is a separate and dead object which can be replaced when damaged, can be changed for a better one and differentiated into a multiplicity of forms for various uses, it assured man’s extraordinary and rapid development; its use, in turn,

assured the development of his brain. Labour, then, is the making and the “essence” of man, however much the worker may be despised and alienated. Work and the making of tools lifted man out of the animal world to the plane of social actions in order to cope with life’s necessities.

The change from animal to man must have been a very long process. But the change from primitive to modern man is relatively short. What distinguishes primitive from modern man is not a different brain capacity but a difference in the uses of this capacity. Where social production stagnates, society stagnates; where the productivity of labour develops slowly, social change is also tardy. In modern society social production developed rapidly, creating new and destroying old class relationships. Not the natural struggle for existence but the social struggle for one or another concept of social organisation has determined social development.

From its very beginning, socialism has been both theory and practise. It is thus not restricted to those who are thought to benefit by the transformation from capitalism to socialism. Being concerned with the classless society and the ending of social strife, and by attracting intelligent men from all layers of society, socialism demonstrated its possible realisation in advance. Already as a young student of the natural sciences, specialising in astronomy, Pannekoek entered the Sociaal Democratische Arbeiderspartij (SDAP) and found himself, at once, in its left wing, on the side of Herman Gorter and Henriette Roland-Holst.

This party had been preceded by the Sociaal-Democratische Bond (SDP) which under the influence of Dometa Nieuwenhuis dissociated itself from the Second International. Anti-militarism was its foremost concern and Nieuwenhuis advocated the use of the General Strike for the prevention of war. He could not get a majority for his proposals and he detected, quite early, the trend towards class collaboration within the International. He opposed the exclusion of the Anarchists from the International and his experiences as a member of Parliament led him to reject parliamentarism as a weapon of social emancipation. The “anarchist-syndicalist” tendencies, represented by Nieuwenhuis, split the organisation, and the new socialist party, more akin to the “model” German Social-Democracy, came into being. However, the radical ideology of the old party entered the traditions of the Dutch socialist movement.

This traditional radicalism found expression in the new party’s monthly, *De Nieuwe Tijd*, particularly in the contributions of Gorter and Pannekoek who fought the growing opportunism of the party leaders. In 1909 the left wing group around Gorter was expelled and established a new organisation, the Sozial-Demokratische Partij. Pannekoek had meanwhile gone to Germany. He lectured in the party schools of the German Sozial-Demokratische Partei, wrote for its theoretical publications and for various other papers, especially the *Bremer Bürgerzeitung*. He associated himself with Gorter’s new organisation which, years later, under the leadership of van Revesteyn, Wijnkoop, and Ceton became the Moscow oriented Communist Partij.

Though in the tradition of the “libertarian socialism” of Nieuwenhuis, Pannekoek’s opposition to reformism and social-democratic “revisionism” was a Marxist opposition to the “official Marxism” in both its “orthodox” and “revisionist” forms. In its “orthodox” form, Marxism served as an ideology that covered up a non-Marxian theory and practise. But Pannekoek’s defence of Marxism was not that of the doctrinaire; more than anyone else he recognised that Marxism is not a dogma but a method of thinking about social issues in the actual process of social transformation. Not only were certain aspects of Marxist theory superseded by the development of Marxism itself, but some of its theses, brought forth under definite conditions, would lose their validity when conditions changed.

The First World War brought Pannekoek back to Holland. Prior to the war, together with Radek, Paul Frohlich and Johann Knief, he had been active in Bremen. The Bremen group of left-radicals, the International Communists, later amalgamated with the Spartakus Bund, thus laying the foundation for the Communist Party of Germany. Anti-war groups in Germany found their leaders in Karl Liebknecht, Rosa Luxemburg and Franz Mehring; anti-war sentiment in Holland centred around Herman Gorter, Anton Pannekoek, and Henrietta Roland-Holst. In Zimmerwald and Kienthal these groups joined Lenin and his followers in condemning the imperialist war and advocating proletarian actions for either peace or revolution. The Russian Revolution of 1917, hailed as a possible beginning of a world-revolutionary movement, was supported by both Dutch and German radicals despite previous basic differences between them and the Leninists.

While still in prison, Rosa Luxemburg expressed misgivings about the authoritarian tendencies of bolshevism. She feared for the socialist content of the Russian Revolution unless it should find a rectifying support in a proletarian revolution in the West. Her position of critical support towards the bolshevik regime was shared by Gorter and Pannekoek. They worked nevertheless in the new Communist Party and towards the establishment of a new International. In their views, however, this International was to be new not only in name but also in outlook, and with regard to both the socialist goal and the way to reach it. The social-democratic concept of socialism is state socialism, to be won by way of democratic-parliamentary procedures. Universal suffrage and trade unionism were the instruments to accomplish a peaceful transition from capitalism to socialism. Lenin and the bolsheviks did not believe in a peaceful transformation and advocated the revolutionary overthrow of capitalism. But their concept of socialism was still that of social-democracy, and instrumentalities to this end still included parliamentarism and trade unionism.

However, Czarism was not overthrown by democratic processes and trade union activities. The Organisation of the Revolution was that of spontaneously-evolving soviets, of workers' and soldiers' councils, which soon gave way, however, to the bolshevik dictatorship. Just as Lenin was ready to make use of the soviet movement, so was he ready to utilise any other form of activity, including parliamentarism and trade unionism, to gain his end – dictatorial power for his party camouflaged as the “dictatorship of the proletariat.” Having reached his goal in Russia, he tried to consolidate his regime with the help of revolutionary movements in Western Europe and, should this fail, by trying to gain sufficient influence in the Western labour movement to secure at least its indirect support. Because of the immediate needs of the bolshevik regime, as well as the political ideas of its leaders, the Communist International was not the beginning of a new labour movement but merely an attempt to gain control of the old movement and use it to secure the bolshevik regime in Russia.

The social patriotism of the Western labour organisations and their policy of class collaboration during the war convinced the revolutionary workers of Western Europe that these organisations could not be used for revolutionary purposes. They had become institutions bound to the capitalist system and had to be destroyed together with capitalism. However unavoidable and necessary for the early development of socialism and the struggle for immediate needs, parliamentarism and trade unionism were no longer instruments of class struggle. When they did enter the basic social conflict, it was on the side of capital. For Pannekoek this was not a question of bad leadership, to be solved by a better one, but of changed social conditions wherein parliamentarism and trade unionism played no longer an emancipatory role. The capitalist crisis in the wake of the war posed the question of revolution and the old labour movement could not be turned into a

revolutionary force since socialism has no room for trade unions or formal bourgeois democracy.

Wherever, during the war, workers fought for immediate demands they had to do so against the trade unions, as in the mass-strikes in Holland, Germany, Austria and Scotland. They organised their activities by way of shop committees, shop stewards or workers' councils, independently of existing trade unions. In every truly revolutionary situation, in Russia in 1905 and again in 1917, as well as in the Germany and Austria of 1918, workers' and soldiers' councils (soviets) arose spontaneously and attempted to organise economic and political life by extending the council system on a national scale. The rule of workers' councils is the dictatorship of the proletariat, for the councils are elected at the point of production, thus leaving unrepresented all social layers not associated with production. In itself, this may not lead to socialism, and, in fact, the German workers' councils voted themselves out of existence by supporting the National Assembly. Yet, proletarian self-determination requires a social organisation which leaves the decision-making power over production and distribution in the hands of the workers.

In this council movement, Pannekoek recognised the beginnings of a new revolutionary labour movement which, at the same time, was the beginning of a socialist reorganisation of society. This movement could arise and maintain itself only in opposition to the old labour movement. Its principles attracted the most militant sector of the rebellious proletariat, much to the chagrin of Lenin who could not conceive of a movement not under the control of a party, or the state, and who was busy emasculating the soviets in Russia. But neither could he agree to an international communist movement not under the absolute control of his own party. At first by way of intrigue, and then openly, after 1920, the bolsheviks tried to get the communist movement away from its anti-parliamentary and anti-trade union course, under the pretext that it was necessary not to lose contact with the masses which still adhered to the old organisations. Lenin's "Left-Wing" Communism : An Infantile Disorder was directed first of all against Gorter and Pannekoek, the spokesmen of the communist council movement.

The Heidelberg Convention in 1919 split the German Communist Party into a Leninist minority and a majority adhering to the principles of anti-parliamentarism and anti-trade unionism on which the party had originally been based. But there was now a new dividing question, namely, that of party or class dictatorship. The non-Leninist communists adopted the name, Communist Workers Party of Germany (KAPD), and a similar organisation was later founded in Holland. Party communists opposed council communists and Pannekoek sided with the latter. The council communists attended the Second Congress of the Third International in the capacity of sympathisers. The conditions of admission to the International – complete subordination of the various national organisations to the will of the Russian Party – divorced the new council movement from the Communist International altogether.

The activities of the Communist International against the "ultra left" were the first direct Russian interventions in the life of communist organisations in other countries. The pattern of control never changed and subordinated, eventually, the whole world communist movement to the specific needs of Russia and the bolshevik state. Although the Russian dominated movement, as Pannekoek and Gorter had predicted, never "captured" the Western trade unions, nor dominated the old socialist organisations by divorcing their followers from their leaders, they did destroy the independence and radical character of the emerging new communist labour movement. With the enormous prestige of a successful political revolution on their side, and with the failure of the German revolution, they could not fail to win a large majority in the communist movement to the principles of Leninism. The ideas and the movement of council

communism declined steadily and practically disappeared altogether in the fascist reign of terror and the Second World War.

While Lenin's fight against the "ultra left" was the first indication of the "counter revolutionary" tendencies of bolshevism, Pannekoek's and Gorter's struggle against the Leninist corruption of the new labour movement was the beginning of anti-bolshevism from a proletarian point of view. And this, of course, is the only consistent anti-bolshevism there is. Bourgeois "anti-bolshevism" is the current ideology of imperialist capital competition, which waxes and wanes according to changing national power relations. The Weimar Republic, for instance, fought bolshevism on the one hand and on the other made secret deals with the Red Army and open business deals with bolshevism in order to bolster its own political and economic position within the world competitive process. There was the Hitler-Stalin pact and the invasion of Russia. The Western allies of yesterday are the cold-war enemies of today, to mention only the most obvious of "inconsistencies" which, in fact, are the "politics" of capitalism, determined as they are, by nothing but the profit and power principles.

Anti-bolshevism must presuppose anti-capitalism since bolshevik state capitalism is merely another type of capitalism. This was not as obvious, of course, in 1920 as it is now. It required experience with Russian bolshevism to learn how socialism cannot be realised. The transfer of control of the means of production from private owners to the state and the centralistic and antagonistic determination of production and distribution still leaves intact capital labour relations as a relation between exploiters and exploited, rulers and ruled. In its development, it merely leads to a more modern form of capitalism where capital is directly – and not indirectly, as it was previously – the collective property of a politically main tained ruling class. It is in this direction that all capitalist systems move, thus reducing capitalist "anti-bolshevism" to a mere imperialist struggle for world control

In retrospect it is easy to see that the differences between Pannekoek and Lenin could not be resolved by way of argument. In 1920, however, it was still possible to hope that the Western working class would take an independent course not towards a modified capitalism but towards its abolition. Answering Lenin's "Left-wing" Communism: An Infantile Disorder, Gorter still tried to convince the bolsheviks of the "errors" of their ways, by pointing to the differences in socio economic conditions between Russia and the West, and to the fact that the "tactics" which brought bolshevism to power in Russia could not possibly apply to a proletarian revolution in the West. The further development of bolshevism revealed, that the "bourgeois" elements in Leninism were due not to a "faulty theory," but had their source in the character of the Russian Revolution itself, which had been conceived and was carried out as a state capitalist revolution sustained by a pseudo-Marxian ideology.

In numerous articles in anti-bolshevik communist journals, and until the end of his life, Pannekoek elucidated upon the character of bolshevism and the Russian Revolution. Just as he did in his earlier criticism of Social Democracy, so here, too, he did not accuse the bolsheviks of a "betrayal" of working-class principles. He pointed out that the Russian Revolution, though an important episode in the development of the working-class movement, aspired only to a system of production which could be Called state socialism, or state capitalism, which are one and the same thing. It did not betray its own goal any more than trade unions "betray" trade unionism. Just as there cannot be any other type of trade unionism than the existing one, so one cannot expect state capitalism to be something other than itself.

The Russian Revolution, however, had been fought under the banner of Marxism, and the bolshevik state is almost generally considered a Marxist regime. Marxism, and

soon Marxism-Leninism-Stalinism, remained the ideology of Russian state capitalism. To show what the “Marxism” of Leninism really implied, Pannekoek undertook a critical examination of its philosophical basis, published under the title *Lenin as Philosopher*, in 1938.

Lenin’s philosophical ideas appeared in his work *Materialism and Empiriocriticism*, in Russian in 1908 and in German and English translations in 1927. Around 1904 certain Russian socialists, Bogdanov in particular, had taken an interest in modern Western natural philosophy, especially in the ideas of Ernst Mach, and tried to combine these with Marxism. They gained some influence within the Russian socialist party and Lenin set out to destroy this influence by attacking its apparent philosophical source.

Though not in a philosophical sense, Marx had called his system of thought materialism. It referred to the material base of all social existence and change and grew out of his rejection of both the philosophical materialism of Feuerbach and the philosophical idealism of Hegel. For bourgeois materialism, nature was objectively given reality and man was determined by natural laws. This direct confrontation of individual man and external nature, and the inability to see society and social labour as an indivisible aspect of the whole of reality, distinguished middle-class materialism from Historical Materialism.

Early bourgeois materialism, or natural philosophy, had held that through sense experience and the intellectual activity derived therefrom, it would be possible to gain absolute, valid knowledge of physical reality – thought to be made up of matter. In an attempt to carry the materialist representation of the objective world to the process of knowledge itself, Mach and the positivists denied the objective reality of matter, since physical concepts must be constructed from sense experience and thus retain their subjectivity. This disturbed Lenin greatly, because for him, knowledge was only what reflects objective truth, truth, that is, about matter. In Mach’s influence in socialist circles, he saw a corruption of Marxian materialism. The subjective element in Mach’s theory of knowledge became, in Lenin’s mind, an idealist aberration and a deliberate attempt to revive religious obscurantism.

It was true, of course, that the critical progress of science found idealistic interpreters who would give comfort to the religionists. Some Marxists began to defend the materialism of the once revolutionary bourgeoisie against the new idealism – and the new science as well – of the established capitalist class. To Lenin this seemed particularly important as the Russian revolutionary movement, still on the verge of the bourgeois revolution, waged its ideological struggle to a large extent with the scientific and philosophical arguments of the early Western bourgeoisie.

By confronting Lenin’s attack on “Empiriocriticism” with its real scientific content, Pannekoek not only revealed Lenin’s biased and distorted exposition of the ideas of Mach and Avenarius, but also his inability to criticise their work from a Marxian point of view. Lenin attacked Mach not from the point of view of historical materialism, but from that of an earlier and scientifically less developed bourgeois materialism. In this use of middle-class materialism in defence of “Marxism” Pannekoek saw an additional indication of the half-bourgeois, half-proletarian character of bolshevism and of the Russian Revolution itself. It went together with the state capitalist concept of “socialism”, with the authoritarian attitudes towards spontaneity and Organisation, with the out-dated and unrealisable principle of national self-determination, and with Lenin’s conviction that only the middle-class intelligentsia is able to develop a revolutionary consciousness and is thus destined to lead the masses. The combination of bourgeois materialism and

revolutionary Marxism which characterised Lenin's philosophy reappeared with the victorious bolshevism as the combination of neo-capitalist practise and socialist ideology.

However the Russian Revolution was a progressive event of enormous significance comparable to the French Revolution. It also revealed that a capitalist system of production is not restricted to the private property relations which dominated its laissez-faire period. With the subsiding feeble wave of revolutionary activities in the wake of the First World War, capitalism re-established itself, despite the prevailing crisis conditions, by way of increasing state interventions in its economy. In the weaker capitalist nations this took the form of fascism and led to the intensification of imperialist policies which, finally, led to the Second World War. Even more than the First, the Second World War showed clearly that the existing labour movement was no longer a class movement but part and parcel of contemporary capitalism.

In Occupied Holland, during the Second World War, Pannekoek began his work on Workers' Councils, which he completed in 1947. It was a summing-up of his life experience with the theory and practise of the international labour movement and the development and transformation of capitalism in various nations and as a whole. This history of capitalism, and of the struggle against capitalism, ends with the triumph of a revived, though changed, capitalism after the Second World War, and with the utter subjugation of working-class interests to the competitive needs of the two rival capitalist systems preparing for a new world war. While in the West, the still existing labour organisations aspire, at best, to no more than the replacement of monopoly by state-capitalism, the so-called communist world movement hopes for a world revolution after the model of the Russian Revolution. In either case, socialism is confounded with public ownership where the state is master of production and workers are still subjected to a ruling class.

The collapse of the capitalism of old was also the collapse of the old labour movement. What this movement considered to be socialism turns out to be a harsher form of capitalism. But unlike the ruling class, which adapts itself quickly to changed conditions, the working class, by still adhering to traditional ideas and activities, finds itself in a powerless and apparently hopeless situation. And as economic changes only gradually change ideas, it may still take considerable time before a new labour movement – fitted to the new conditions – will arise. For labour's task is still the same, that is, the abolition of the capitalist mode of production and the realisation of socialism. And this can be brought about only when the workers organise themselves and society in such a way as to assure a planned social production and distribution determined by the producers themselves. When such a labour movement arises, it will recognise its origins in the ideas of council communism and in those of one of its most consistent proponents – Anton Pannekoek.

Karl Korsch: His Contribution to Revolutionary Marxism

(1962)

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Karl Korsch was born in 1886 in Tostedt in the Luneburger Heath and died in Cambridge, Massachusetts, in 1961. The son of a middle-class family, he attended the *Gymnasium* in Meiningen and studied law, economics, sociology and philosophy in Jena, Munich, Berlin and Geneva. Becoming a Doctor Juris of the University of Jena in 1911, he spent the years from 1912 to 1914 in Great Britain in the study and practice of English and International Law. The First World War brought him back to Germany and into the German Army for the next four years. Twice wounded, demoted and promoted according to the shifting political scene, he expressed his own anti-war attitude by entering the Independent Socialist Party of Germany.

While studying law, Karl Korsch recognised the need to proceed to its underlying material base, to the study of society. A socialist before the war, he became a revolutionary socialist during the debacle. With the merger of the Independent Socialists with the Communist Party in 1921, Korsch became a communist representative in the Thuringian Diet, a Minister of justice in the short-lived Labour Government of the State of Thuringia and, finally, from 1924 to 1928, a member of the German Reichstag. During this period he wrote extensively on the current political and theoretical issues that agitated the radical post-war labour movement. He became the editor of the theoretical organ of the Communist Party, *Die Internationale*, and soon thereafter edited and wrote for the oppositional paper, *Kommunistische Politik*.

Dissatisfaction with the increasingly opportunistic course of the Communist International after 1921, and an acquaintance with, and understanding of Marxian theory superior to that of most of the prominent party theoreticians brought Korsch into early conflict with the official bolshevik party-ideology and led to a parting of ways in 1926. He now became the spokesman of the radical left-wing of the Communist Party (*Entschiedene Linke*) which was still within the party but, because of the character of this organisation, was already regarded as an enemy of the Third International. After 1928 Korsch continued his political activity outside any definite organisational frame. He went on to write for publications accessible to him, prepared a new edition of the first volume of Marx's *Capital*, travelled and lectured in various countries, and wrote a study of Karl Marx for a British publisher's series dealing with modern sociologists.¹

With Hitler's coming to power in 1933, Korsch was forced to leave Germany. He went to England, for a short period to Denmark and then emigrated, in 1936, to the United States. Aside from a teaching engagement in New Orleans, he spent his American years in the pursuit of Marxian theory. As in Germany, so in America, his main influence was that of the educator, of the *Lehrer*, as he was respectfully considered by his friends. An encyclopaedic knowledge and keenness of mind destined him for this particular role even though he would have preferred to be in the 'midst of things', in the actual struggles for the welfare and emancipation of the working class, with which he identified himself. The quality of his mind and his moral integrity set him apart, and excluded him from the opportunistic hustle for positions and prominence characteristic of both the academic world and the official labour movement. That his death remained almost unnoticed may be regarded as a final validation of his conviction that revolutionary Marxism can only exist in conjunction with a revolutionary movement of the working population.

¹ Chapman & Hall, 1938

A Critic of Kautsky

The impact of the First World War, and even more, the Russian Revolution brought the long-existing crisis of Marxism and the Western labour movements into violent eruption. Although split on theoretical lines into a so-called 'revisionist' wing, headed by Eduard Bernstein, and an 'orthodox' wing, represented by Karl Kautsky, the war revealed that both these social-democratic tendencies covered an identical reformistic, class-collaborationist and social-patriotic activity. The marginal left-wing elements of the international socialist movement and their most vocal representatives, Lenin in Russia and Rosa Luxemburg in Germany, ceased to operate within the shadow of Marxian 'orthodoxy' by demanding a renewal of the long-lost unity of socialist theory and practice.

Whereas 'revisionism', because of its total rejection of Marxism, was no problem for the radical socialist, Kautsky's 'orthodoxy' required a two-fold struggle against social-democracy and its apparent justification in Marxist terms. 'Back to Marx' became the slogan of this struggle in order to utilise socialism's radical tradition for the new endeavours of a revitalised labour movement. But 'What is Marxism' was also pertinent since both the disciples and the enemies of Kautsky's 'orthodoxy' appealed to the work of Marx. And how far, and in what respect, was the Marxism of Marx's time relevant under the changed conditions of the new century? The revolutionary conditions in the wake of the war brought with them a new interest in Marxian theory.

From 1922 to 1925, Korsch wrote a series of essays² against Kautsky's 'orthodoxy' and urged restoration of Marxism's revolutionary content. Korsch returned to a systematic, critical analysis³ of 'doctrinaire Marxism' on the publication of Kautsky's *The Materialistic Conception of History* in which the author himself abandoned his earlier 'orthodox' point of view. Although Kautsky's terminology remained largely unchanged, his interpretation of the Marxian text now openly aided the revisionist emasculation of the socialist movement. His ideas with regard to development, society, the state, the class struggle and revolution, as Korsch pointed out, served the bourgeoisie rather than the working class. This found its definite theoretical expression in Kautsky's attempt to represent the materialist conception of history as an independent 'science' which was not necessarily associated with the proletarian class struggle. For Korsch this implied the transformation of Marxism into a mere ideology which, by not recognising its own preconditions, imagines itself as a 'pure science'.

It was in this ideological form that the dialectical materialism of Marx came to dominate the socialist movement, and it was in this form that it lost its revolutionary meaning. Notwithstanding the designation 'scientific socialism' as against the utopian socialists, Marxism, according to Korsch, is not a 'science' and cannot become a 'science' in the bourgeois sense of the term. Marx's *Capital*, for instance, is not political economy but the 'critique of political economy' from the standpoint of the proletariat. Likewise, with regard to all other aspects of the Marxian system, it is concerned not with supplanting bourgeois philosophy, history or sociology with a new philosophy, history or sociology, but with the criticism of the whole of bourgeois theory and practice. It has no intention of becoming a 'pure science' but uncovers the 'impure' ideological and class-conditioned character of bourgeois science and philosophy.

In his youth Marx accepted a philosophical standpoint which he himself, in a later-developed terminology, characterised as an ideological position from which he had to free

² Collected under the title *Marxismus und Philosophie*, Leipzig, 1930. (*Marxism and Philosophy*, separately, was published first in 1923)

³ *Die Materialistische Geschichtsauffassung*, Eine Auseinandersetzung mit Karl Kautsky, Leipzig, 1929.

himself. From ideological criticism he proceeded to the 'criticism of ideology' and from there to the 'critique' of political economy. The materialistic conception of history, i.e. Marx's proposition that "the economic structure of society constitutes a real foundation on which rise legal and political superstructures and to which correspond definite forms of social consciousness", was gained not from a scientific or philosophical attempt to discover 'general laws of social change' but from the materialistic criticism of bourgeois society and its ideology.

Marxism, in Korsch's view, constitutes neither a positive materialistic philosophy nor a positive science; and all its propositions are specific, historical and concrete, including those that are apparently universal. Even the dialectical philosophy of Hegel, the criticism of which formed the starting point of Marx's own development, cannot properly be understood except in connection with social revolution and not then as a philosophy of revolution in general, but only as the conceptual expression of the bourgeois revolution. As such it does not reflect the entire process of this revolution, but only its closing phase, as indicated by its reconciliation with the immediately-given reality.

With the revolutionary process a thing of the past, the dialectical relationship between the real development and the development of ideas lost its meaning for the bourgeoisie; not so, however, for the proletarian class subjected to their rule and exploitation. Just as bourgeois theory cannot transcend the social practice of bourgeois society, except in idealist-ideological fashion, so it could not go beyond, but only away from Hegel's philosophy. It could not discover the rational kernel within its mystifying hull, nor subject it to a materialistic critique which would lay bare, with prevailing class relations, the historical limitations of bourgeois society.

This was possible only from the standpoint of the proletariat, from its actual opposition to bourgeois class society. The dialectical point of view, then, involved the whole historical process which started with the bourgeois revolution and culminated in the idealistic philosophy of Hegel, only to bring forth the revolutionary movement of the working class and its theoretical expression in Marxism. This was not the theory of a proletarian movement that had developed on its own basis, but a theory that had just emerged from the bourgeois revolution and which, therefore, in content and form, still carried the birthmarks of bourgeois-revolutionary theory.

Neither Marx nor Engels denied the historical connection between their materialistic theories and bourgeois philosophy, which also connects the bourgeois with the proletarian revolution. But this connection does not imply, so Korsch relates in *Marxism and Philosophy*, that socialist theory in its further independent development retains its philosophical character, nor that the *Jacobinism* of bourgeois-revolutionary theory remains an aspect of the proletarian revolution. In fact, Marx and Engels ceased to consider their materialistic position as a philosophical one and spoke of the end of all philosophy. But what they meant thereby, according to Korsch, was not a mere preference for the various positive sciences to philosophy. Rather, their own materialistic position was the theoretical expression of an actually-occurring revolutionary process which would abolish bourgeois science and philosophy by abolishing the material conditions and social relations which found their ideological expression in bourgeois science and philosophy.

Although one of Marx's *Theses on Feuerbach* states that "the philosophers have only interpreted the world in various ways; the point, however, is to change it", this change itself is both theoretical and practical. In Korsch's interpretation it is thus impossible to ignore philosophy and equally impossible to remove the philosophical elements of Marxism. The struggle against bourgeois society is also a philosophical

struggle, even if the revolutionary philosophy has no other function than that of partaking in the changing of the existing world. Korsch held that Marx's materialism, in contradistinction to Feuerbach's abstract natural materialism was and has always remained a historical, dialectical materialism, i.e. a materialism incorporating, comprehending and altering the totality of the historically-given social conditions. The relative neglect of philosophy on the part of the mature Marx does not affect his recognition that ideology and philosophy are real social forces which must be overcome both on their own grounds and by a change in the conditions that they relate to.

The Russian Revolution and its Aftermath

Karl Korsch's fresh concern with the relation between Marxism and philosophy sprang not from a specific interest in philosophy but rather from the need and desire to free the prevailing Marxism from its ideological and dogmatic encumbrances. It was a theoretical consequence of the new revolutionary trend released by war and revolution; for Marxism, which illuminates the dialectical relationship between social consciousness and its material base, is applicable to Marxism itself and to the labour movement. There was nothing surprising in the fact that the Marxism of 1848 and the *Communist Manifesto* was something other than the Marxist movement which developed together with an expanding capitalism — in a non-revolutionary period of long duration which came to its temporary end only with the revolutionary upheavals of the First World War. Marxist 'revisionism' was merely the theory of a non-revolutionary practice and Marxist 'orthodoxy' was a theory divorced from all practice, which thus served as an indirect, ideological support of bourgeois reformism.

The new revolutionary movement initiated by the Russian Revolution saw itself restoring original Marxism. In Korsch's view, this could only be an apparent and ideological restoration which would not eliminate the need for a further development of Marxist theory and practice in accordance with the specific historical situation in which the revolutionary movement found itself. Yet as a first attempt to combat the non-revolutionary and therefore counter-revolutionary practice of the reformist movement, the Marxism of Marx was an advance by raising anew the questions of revolution and the dictatorship of the proletariat.

The revolutionary movement fought under the slogan, 'All Power to the Workers' Councils'. However vague the ideas behind the slogan, it expressed the revolutionary will of the class-conscious proletariat to end capitalist society. Even if, with regard to Russia, there existed from the very beginning a wide and apparently unbridgeable gap between the soviet idea and the possibility of its realisation, this was no reason not to attempt a revolutionary solution in nations more fortunate in this respect. If the proletarian revolution in the West should succeed it would, perhaps, provide the very conditions for a socialist development in industrially less-advanced nations. Like all revolutionaries of the time, Korsch sided with the Bolshevik Revolution by siding with the revolutionary workers in Germany and elsewhere.

By 1921, however, the post-war revolutionary wave began to subside and with it the hope for world revolution. Counter-revolution in the West was bound to affect the character of the Russian Revolution whose national restrictions, whatever its early international aspirations, limited its revolutionary potentialities and turned it, finally, into one particular aspect of the international counter-revolution. The bolshevik regime in Russia could maintain itself only by doing concretely what it was ideologically obliged to deny, namely, to expand and extend the capitalist mode of production. Since this had not been the original goal of bolshevism, the goal itself now stood revealed as a mere

ideological one, unrelated to the country's economic structure and to the class forces within it, and as such it continued to exist. Marxism as ideology served the non-Marxian practice of transforming Russia into a modern capitalist state.

Under these circumstances it was no surprise that Korsch's *Marxism and Philosophy* should disturb not only Kautsky and his disciples but the bolshevik ideologists as well. To apply the materialist conception of history to Marxism itself was to unmask the differences between the theory and practice of the whole of the existing socialist movement. The quickly-established common front against Korsch's work revealed that the Leninist movement was still part and parcel of Kautsky's 'orthodoxy'. And just as Kautsky's ideological adherence to the 'final aims' of socialism only served Bernstein's 'aimless' reformism, so Lenin's dogmatism could only function as the false consciousness of a counter-revolutionary practice.

Ideologists of the Third International declared *Marxism and Philosophy* a 'revisionist heresy'. Since they accepted Lenin's and Kautsky's 'orthodoxy' as Marxism they were of course right. The debate⁴ around Korsch's work, which was apparently strictly theoretical, soon took on a more political character. Communist strategy in the post-war world, which embraced participation in socialist governments where possible and revolutionary uprisings when opportune, suffered a decisive defeat in the German political occurrences of 1923. This led to new internal crises in the communist movement. There were right and ultra-right, left and ultra-left tendencies, all vying for control of the various national organisations and of the Third International. Deviations from the official, even though shifting, party-line by one or another group, were attacked not only as tactical differences but as digressions from Marxism itself. Korsch's criticism of communist policies after the 1923 events was considered a consequence of the 'heretical' position displayed in *Marxism and Philosophy*. But not before 1926 were Korsch and his group actually expelled.

From the vantage point of 1926 the revolutionary upheavals of the First World War appeared as feeble as they actually had been. But capitalism was far from being stabilised and a new revolutionary wave remained a possibility. To prepare for it required, in Korsch's view⁵, a sharpening, not a softening, of the class struggle and a greater determination to win political power. But while the possibility of a new rising was not excluded, the counter-revolution gained strength. All the anti-communist forces from the reactionary *Right* to the reformist *Left* combined against a revolutionary solution of the existing crisis conditions. They found in the bolshevik need to maintain and consolidate the party's power in Russia and in the world at large an undesired but effective ally. The international communist movement became a political instrument of the Russian state and thus ceased being a revolutionary force in the Marxian sense. To subordinate international communism to Russia's national needs, so it appeared to Korsch, was to repeat the performance of the Second International on the eve of the First World War — sacrificing proletarian internationalism to national imperialism.

It now no longer made sense to criticise bolshevik policy in detail, for what determined this policy was not a mistaken reading of the real situation with respect to proletarian aspirations, or the absence of such aspirations; nor was it determined by a wrong theory which could be corrected by way of discussion. Rather, it found its direct source in the specific and concrete needs of the Russian state, its economy, its national interests, and in those of its new ruling class, the bolshevik decision-makers and their large bureaucratic retinue. Proletarian communism had to dissociate itself from Russia

⁴ The debate included George Lukacs' *History and Class Consciousness*, 1923, which, like Korsch's work, was considered an idealist deviation from Marxism.

⁵ K. Korsch, *Der Weg der Komintern*, Berlin, 1926.

and the Third International as, previously, it had to break away from social-reformism and the Second International. With this, of course, and for the time being, proletarian communism itself was doomed. The combined ideological and actual powers of traditional capitalism, its social-reformist supporters, and Russia's state-capitalism in Marxian disguise were more than enough to destroy a revolutionary minority not yet able to acknowledge defeat.

No attempt was made by Korsch or his new friends in the so-called ultra-left communist groupings⁶ to advocate the capture or the reform of the organisations of the Third International, or to line up with one or the other of the bolshevik factions fighting for control of the Russian state-apparatus in support of one or another tactical move to safeguard the bolshevik regime. What was important to Korsch, however, was an emerging proletarian opposition to the new bolshevik state-capitalist, or state-socialist, form of capital production. As regards Russia, it was the *workers opposition*, known under the name of one of its founders, Sapronov, with which Korsch established contact because it stressed the class character of the proletarian struggle against the Russian Communist Party. This group realised that its fight had to be waged outside the party, among the workers generally. But along with all other oppositional groups, the *workers opposition*, too, fell victim to the rising Stalinist terror.

Proletarian Self-determination

What the Second International failed to complete, namely, transforming the labour movement into organisations controlling the workers, was now completed by the Third International. Proletarian self-determination would have to assert itself against all existing labour organisations whether of an economic or a political character. The traditional political party of bourgeois democracy, as well as tradeunionism in its craft or industrial form, were now manipulative instruments in the hands of huge labour bureaucracies that identified their special interests with the social *status quo*, or were becoming government institutions of control and dependence. It was obvious that the organisational forms in which Marx and Engels, under entirely different conditions, had set their hopes for the development of proletarian class consciousness, could no longer be regarded as emancipatory forces. Rather, they had become new and additional forms of proletarian enslavement. However reluctantly — due to the absence of new and more adequate organisational forms of proletarian class struggle — Korsch now came to recognise that the ending of capitalism presupposes and involves ending traditional labour organisations. In so far as these organisations still enjoyed approbation by workers, this itself indicated to what extent proletarian class consciousness was lacking.

Manifestations of proletarian independence through direct actions for working class objectives, however fleeting and localised at first, Korsch now perceived as so many signs pointing to a revival of proletarian class consciousness within the totalitarian expansion of authoritarian controls over always larger spheres of the social life. Where independent working class actions were still to be found, revolutionary Marxism was not dead. Not ideological adherence to Marxist doctrine but actions by the working class on its own behalf was the decisive point for the rebirth of a revolutionary movement. This type of action was to some extent still the practice in the anarcho-syndicalist movement. Korsch turned to the anarchists without giving up his Marxist conceptions; not to the petty-bourgeois anarchists of *laissez faire* ideology, but to the anarchist workers and poor

⁶ Kommunistische Arbeiter Partei, Allgemeine Arbeiter Union, and the political groups associated with F. Pfempfert, O. Rühle, and the journal *Die Aktion*.

peasants of Spain who had not yet succumbed to the international counter-revolution which now counted among its symbols the name of Marx as well.

Anarchism found its place in Marxist doctrine, if only, as is sometimes claimed, to pacify the anarchist elements who shared in the formation of the First International. The anarchist emphasis on freedom and spontaneity, on self-determination, and, therefore, decentralisation, on action rather than ideology, on solidarity more than on economic interest were precisely the qualities that had been lost to the socialist movement in its rise to political influence and power in the expanding capitalist nations. It did not matter to Korsch whether his anarchistically-biased interpretation of revolutionary Marxism was true to Marx or not. What mattered, under the conditions of twentieth-century capitalism, was to recapture these anarchist attitudes in order to have a labour movement at all. There was the closest connection, Korsch pointed out, between Russian totalitarianism and Lenin's conviction that working class spontaneity had to be feared, not fostered — that it was the function of non-proletarian layers of society — the intelligentsia — to carry revolutionary awareness into the masses, which were unable to become class conscious on their own accord. But Lenin only spelled out, and adapted to Russian conditions, what had since been long, if silently, accepted in the socialist movement, i.e. the rule of the organisation over the organised and the control of the organisation by its leading hierarchy.

The Bourgeois and the Proletarian Revolutions

The ideas of the bourgeois revolution — freedom and independence, reason and democracy — could not be realised in bourgeois class society. Marx's critique of political economy was thus at once a programme of proletarian revolution towards the abolition of social class relations. It did not matter that the larger part of the world had still to experience, or found itself, in the throes of bourgeois revolutions. Where such revolutions had been successful they also created their own negation in the aspirations of the industrial proletariat. The bourgeois revolution was not the end but the beginning of a social revolution 'in permanence', that is, until it ceased to be an instrument of social development in the classless society. How long this process would take was not predictable. This depended on the growth of class awareness and the intensity of the actual struggles of the proletariat. Yet the existence of such awareness, and proletarian struggles for working class objectives even within the confines of the bourgeois revolution, justified the prediction of a proletarian revolution as the final product of capitalist development.

Meanwhile, however, the world belonged to the bourgeoisie and the revolutionary functions of the proletariat, with respect to both theory and practice, were strictly and exclusively critical — critical even of the shortcomings of the bourgeois revolution, for capitalism was considered the pre-condition of socialism. But the development of capitalism was hastened and its life-span shortened by the simultaneous growth of working class initiative and proletarian class actions. Whenever it was necessary to support bourgeois revolutions, it was only to gain a starting point for the proletarian revolution. And to do so without merely serving the bourgeoisie required a persistent and clear class consciousness which did not lose sight of the socialist goal. That Marx himself aided and abetted bourgeois movements of a national and democratic nature did not contradict his theory of proletarian revolution but merely indicated the still-existing gap between the bourgeois and the proletarian revolution, between the creation and the emancipation of the working class.

The failure of the revolutions of 1848 and the consequent capital development under counter-revolutionary auspices did not prevent the rise of the labour movement. This movement, which originated within the bourgeois revolution, adapted itself to the non-revolutionary conditions resulting from a compromise of the emerging capitalist class with the still semi-feudal state. But even in countries where the government was only the executive of the ruling capitalist class, the developing labour movement did not display a revolutionary character in accordance with Marx's expectations. The political programme of the Marx of 1848 had no real bearing upon capital-labour relations in an advanced bourgeois society. It made room for a social-reformist programme embellished with Marxian ideology wherever the traditions of 1848 were honoured.

Marx's support of bourgeois revolutions was not a tactical move to gain control of these revolutions and to transform them into proletarian revolutions and socialism, but was a real support of an upcoming class which, by its emergence, gave rise also to its counterpart, the proletarian class, and thus assured a new revolution by virtue of its own success. This support was bound to the conditions of continental Europe in 1848 and had no meaning outside these conditions. The Marx of Capital and of the First International no longer saw the working class as the spearhead of the bourgeois revolution but saw it as exclusively concerned with its own working class aims in its struggle against the bourgeoisie, which was no longer in opposition, but in control, of the feudal residue.

This was apparently not true for Russia. Here the social conditions seemed analogous to those prevailing in Western Europe in 1848. Both the bourgeoisie and the proletariat faced not only the semi-feudal conditions of Czarism but also the non-socialistic aspirations of the peasant masses. A social revolution was nonetheless at hand. But it was neither a proletarian revolution in the Marxian sense, nor a bourgeois revolution in the tradition of the French Revolution. Although it contained elements of both, it was, first of all, a peasant revolution in a nation capitalistically-backward but already under the control of the capitalist world market and thus embroiled in and partaking of all the capitalistic and imperialistic, as well as the socialistic activities and upheavals that constitute national and international politics.

Although Lenin conceived of the expected Russian Revolution as bourgeois-democratic, the actual revolution of 1917 was termed 'proletarian' because the bolsheviks succeeded in gaining control over the state; and the bolsheviks were a Marxist party. The slowly-established totalitarian rule of the party over the whole of society was presented as the 'dictatorship of the proletariat' even though the proletariat as a dominant class had first to be created by the forced transformation of backward Russia into a modern industrial state. The interval between the outbreak of revolution and the taking of power by the bolsheviks was viewed as the transition from the bourgeois-democratic to the proletarian revolution or, rather, as the compression of bourgeois and proletarian into one revolution, that is, as the elimination of a whole social developmental stage by political means, the creation of the proletariat and of the pre-conditions of socialism not through capitalist class relations but by way of Marxist ideology and the direct power of the state. This was an entirely non-Marxian position which, however, could be justified by conceiving the Russian Revolution not as a national affair but as part of a world-revolutionary process which, if successful, would embrace the less-developed regions of the world together with the socialist countries, just as previously, capitalism had brought all nations, despite all their variations, into a capitalistically-determined world economy.

So long, then, as there existed the possibility of its westward extension, the Leninist attempt to drive the Russian Revolution beyond its objective limitations was in conformity with the requirements of a Western proletarian revolution. Without this revolution, however, this was no longer true. But movements of the scope of the

bolshevik revolution may be destroyed but they cannot be re-called. Once in power, this power has to be secured at all costs, for the alternative is not retreat but death. And staying in power was to accept the Marxist truth that social productive forces determine social production relations and therewith political superstructures, not *vice versa*. What in other nations had been accomplished by the bourgeoisie had now to be done by the Russian Marxists, i.e. the creation of capital by way of 'primitive accumulation' and the exploitation of the proletariat. That this was done without giving up the Marxist ideology is nothing to be wondered at, for in capitalism, too, the ruling ideology does not reflect actually-existing conditions. It is the function of ideologies to cover up and to justify an unpalatable social practice.

The purpose of this digression is to condense Korsch's ideas and attitudes laid down in a number of articles on the relationship between the Russian, the bourgeois, and the proletarian revolution. Just as Marx had to adjust himself to the reality of the bourgeois revolution and its aftermath, even though he saw capitalism as only an intermediary stage in a revolutionary process which would find its solution in socialism, so Korsch, and everyone else, had to take a stand on the questions posed by the bolshevik revolution and by its peculiarly non-Marxian character. So long as conditions made it possible to hope for a revolution in the West — a period coinciding with the so-called 'heroic' period of the Russian Revolution, with war-communism and civil-war — the stand to take was obvious. To oppose the bolshevik regime under then-existing circumstances was to join the counter-revolution not only in Russia but everywhere. Whatever the mental reservations, the support of the Russian Revolution was a necessity for the German revolutionists. Only when the bolsheviks themselves turned against their own and the revolutionists of the West — and indirectly but effectively sued for peace with the capitalist world — was it possible to turn against the bolshevik regime without simultaneously aiding international counter-revolution.

Although Marxism could elucidate conditions such as existed in pre-bolshevik Russia and other capitalistically backward countries, it could not provide a programme of social reconstruction for their revolutionary movements. Its relevance was restricted to the proletarian revolution in capitalistically-advanced nations and here the revolution did not stir; where it did, it failed. But where a social revolution succeeded, though it was not of a proletarian character, it took its ideology from Marxism, for the idea of revolution was irretrievably associated with Marxian socialism. It thus became necessary to dissociate these revolutions from proletarian socialism and to that end circumscribe the true and limited meaning of Marxian doctrine.

Marxist Political Economy

All Marxist propositions, Korsch pointed out, "represent only an historical outline of the rise and development of capitalism in Western Europe and have universal validity beyond that only in the same way in which every thorough empirical knowledge of natural and historical⁷ form applies to more than the individual case considered. Marxism operates thus on "two levels of generality; as a general law of historical development in the form of so-called historical materialism, and as a particular law of development of the present-day capitalist mode of production and of the bourgeois society originating from it."⁸ And here it is not concerned with the "existing capitalist society in its affirmative

⁷ Introduction to *Das Kapital*, Berlin, 1933, p.33.

⁸ *Ibid.*

state, but with the declining capitalist society as revealed in the demonstrably operative tendencies of its breaking-up and decay.”⁹

By being an effective critique of political economy, Marx’s *Capital* was, of course, also a contribution to economic science. But in the light of historical materialism, political economy is not only a theoretical system of propositions, either false or true, but embodies a piece of historical reality, i.e. the totality and history of bourgeois society. Because this totality forms the subject matter of *Capital*, it is as much an historical and sociological as an economic theory.

Being subordinated to the competitive market mechanism and the exploitative capital-labour relations, the science of bourgeois economy has only descriptive and ideological functions. No matter how hard it may strive for practical applicability, its very structure as an ‘independent’ science deprives it of success. Despite its socio-economic character Marxist theory does not intend to enrich economic science but wants to destroy it through the destruction of the social relations which this science tries to justify and defend. Marxism wants to understand capitalist economy only in so far as such understanding aids in the destruction of capitalism; it is never ‘operational’ in the bourgeois sense of the term. Neither can this economic science “which the proletarian class inherited from the bourgeoisie, by a mere elimination of its inherent bourgeois bias and a consistent working out of its premises, be transformed into a theoretical weapon for the proletarian revolution”.¹⁰ To end the exploitation of labour “one must not apply a different interpretation of bourgeois economics but rather, through a real change in society, bring about a practical situation in which its economic laws will cease to hold good and thus the science of economics will become void of content and ultimately vanish altogether”.¹¹

According to Korsch, Marx’s economic analysis applies solely to bourgeois conditions. Capital production is not a relation between men and nature, “but a relation between men and men based on a relation between men and nature”. Marx’s economic and social research, which ultimately transcended all phases and forms of bourgeois economy, proved “the most general ideas and principles of Political Economy to be mere fetishes disguising actual social relations, prevailing between individuals and classes within a definite historical epoch of the socioeconomic formation”.¹² There was no way to reach the classless society short of overcoming the fetishistic social relation of capitalist production and a truly socialist society could not be based on the ‘law of value’. Korsch’s precise delineation of Marx’s social and economic theories opposes attempts to look upon Marxism as a mere phase in an unbroken continuity of economic theory, as well as endeavours to utilise ‘Marxian economics’ for socialism.

Marxian ‘Philosophy’

The principle of specification applies equally well to Marxian ‘philosophy’. Notwithstanding Marx’s unquestioned acceptance of the genetic priority of external nature to all historical and human events, Marxism, according to Korsch, is primarily interested only in the phenomena and inter-relation of historical and social life — where it can enter as a practical, influential force. The inflation of dialectical materialism into an eternal law of cosmic development, which Friedrich Engels initiated and Lenin completed, is entirely foreign to Marxism. But the fact that it was introduced by Engels

⁹ K. Korsch, *Why I am a Marxist*, Modern Monthly, New York, Vol. IX, No. 2, p.88.

¹⁰ K. Korsch, *Karl Marx*, London, 1938, p.90.

¹¹ *Ibid.*, p.91.

¹² *Ibid.*, p.114.

indicates the early transformation of the theory of proletarian revolution into a *Weltanschauung* independent of the proletarian class struggle. In this ideological form it could be used for other than strictly proletarian purposes and was so used by Lenin and the 'intelligentsia' in their struggle to modernise Russian society.

Moreover, because Marx's main interest at the time of his own revolutionary activity was centred on the creation of a political-revolutionary party, Lenin's emphasis on the party as against the proletariat appeared to be harmonious with revolutionary Marxism. And though Marx spoke of the ultimate destruction of fetishistic capital production by a fully conscious and direct social organisation of labour, his pronouncements in this respect remained opaque. They could be understood in various ways, particularly because Marx recognised the transformation from capitalism to socialism not as one revolutionary act but as a revolutionary process which, for some time, would still exhibit many characteristics of bourgeois society. The planned economy controlled from above, the new state-apparatus which realised party dictatorship — all this, when seen as transitory stages towards a stateless and self-determined socialist society, could well appear to conform to Marxian theory. For at this point Marx's scientific materialism changed into utopian expectations.

The fact that Lenin's 'orthodoxy' and its revolutionary application could be of service to a historically-modified but nevertheless capitalist revolution indicated that the Marxism evolved by Marx and Engels and the early labour movement had not been able to rid itself of its bourgeois inheritance. What in Marxian theory and practice often appeared as anti-bourgeois proved to be assimilable by the capitalist mode of production. What seemed to be a road to socialism led to a new type of capitalism. What in Marxian perspective seemed to transcend capitalism turned out to be a new way of perpetuating the capitalist system of exploitation. Korsch's criticism of Marxian 'orthodoxy', and of Leninism in particular, thus became a criticism of Marxism itself and therewith, of course, a self-criticism.

Generally, the reaction on the part of academic Marxists to the failure of Marxism was to cease being Marxists. Some comforted themselves by seeing in the disappearance of Marxism as a separate school of thought and the incorporation of its assimilable parts into the various bourgeois social sciences a great triumph of Marx's genius. Others merely declared Marxism *passé*, along with the *laissez faire* capitalism and all other aspects of the Victorian age. What they overlooked, of course, as Korsch pointed out, was that the Marxian analysis of the workings of the capitalist mode of production and of its historical development is as pertinent as ever, and that none of the social problems that beset Marx's world have ceased besetting the world of today and are visibly driving it towards its own destruction. They merely notice that at this juncture there is no evidence of a revolutionary proletariat in the Marxian sense and that, therefore, there will not be such a proletariat tomorrow.

But the proletariat not only exists but increases all over the globe with the capitalistic industrialisation of hitherto-under-developed nations. It grows with the further class polarisation in the advanced countries in the wake of the relentless and politically-enforced concentration and centralisation of capital. Even if, in some countries, and for the time being, the social consequences of this process may still be alleviated by an extraordinary increase of productivity, making for social stability, this increase of productivity is itself limited by prevailing class relations. In brief, all capitalistic contradictions remain intact and require other than capitalistic solutions. All that the present period of counter-revolution proves as far as Korsch was concerned is that the evolution of capitalist society had not reached its utter historical limits when liberal capitalism and reformist socialism reached the limits of their evolutionary possibilities.

For Korsch, all the imperfections of Marx's revolutionary theory which, in retrospect, are explainable by the circumstances out of which it arose, do not alter the fact that Marxism remains superior to all other social theories even today, despite its apparent failure as a social movement. It is this failure which demands not the rejection of Marxism but a Marxian critique of Marxism, that is, the further proletarianisation of the concept of social revolution. There was no doubt in Korsch's mind, that the period of counter-revolution is historically limited like everything else — that the new social productive forces embodied in a socialist revolution would re-assert themselves and find a revolutionary theory adequate to their practical tasks.

The Economics of Cybernation

Source: New Politics, Vol. 1, 1962, No. 4, pp. 19-33

Transcribed: by Thomas Schmidt;

Marxism is often understood as a "theory of underconsumption" and as such is easily disproved by the empirical evidence of rising living standards in capitalist nations. It is also seen as a theory of crises and depressions. The present possibility of overcoming, even preventing, crisis conditions seems to prove Marxism doubly wrong. However, although Marx did draw attention to the limited consuming power of the laboring population, his theory was not a theory of underconsumption; and although he saw capitalism beset with crises, he had no definite crisis theory. The absence of the business cycle would not have invalidated his theory of capital accumulation.

For the capitalism of Marx's own experience, his economic analysis was very much to the point and for this reason found such widespread adherence. This is now willingly admitted even by his critics who argue that Marxism, though dealing realistically with capitalism's unsavory past, is no longer valid because of recent changes of the capitalist system. Certain aspects of Marxian theory—the capital concentration and centralization process, for instance—have even been incorporated into modern *economic* theory by changing their negative connotations to positive ones. Also the need for an "industrial reserve army" to prevent wages from encroaching upon profit is still often stressed.

Although Marx experienced unemployment as a social fact and as a weapon within capital-labor relations, he believed that full employment was as possible as unemployment. It all depended on the rate of capital formation. The displacement of human labor by the machine was what capitalist industrialization was all about, and progress was measured by it. Indeed, Marx did not criticize capitalism so much for what it was and for what it could do as for its limitations and its basic inability to develop social production beyond the need to maintain social class relations. With regard to the past, capitalism was progressive; with regard to the future, it became an obstacle to the full development of production and thereby to the elimination of economic wants.

Marx addressed himself not to the capitalists but to the workers. In his opinion, they alone were able to end class relations by abolishing their own class position, thus clearing the way for a further unfolding of the social forces of production. This would result in further technological development leading toward the abolition of human labor or, at any rate, of unwanted and disagreeable human labor. Capitalism, by being socially

limited through specific class relationships, was regarded by Marx as economically limited and an obstacle to technological advance.

On this last issue, too, Marx appears to have been wrong because of the so-called second industrial revolution, characterized by atomic power and "automation." Strangely enough, however, this new triumph over Marx's gloomy prognostications is rarely celebrated as a solution to current social problems. Rather it is seen as the harbinger of new and perhaps insoluble difficulties. Suspicion, that there is a possible incompatibility between the new technology and the prevailing socio-economic relations runs through the growing literature on automation. While most of the difficulties of the capitalist system have seemingly been overcome, the problem Marx was least concerned with, i.e., permanent and large-scale unemployment, appears to be the last but also the most important of all capitalistic contradictions.

II

We are not concerned here with the far-flung ramifications of cybernetics, or the science of control, which affects natural processes as well as social and technological systems, but only with its current application to capitalist production and distribution. Although the type of economy defines the type of society, we will not deal with all the social implications of cybernetics but only with the narrower relationship between cybernetics and economics, that is to say, with the possible effects of the emerging technology upon existing economic and political relations.

From its very inception, the founder of cybernetics, Norbert Wiener, felt inclined to point to the social problems involved in its application to production processes. The automatic machine, he wrote, "is the precise economic equivalent of slave labor. Any labor which competes with slave labor must accept the economic conditions of slave labor. It is perfectly clear that this will produce an unemployment situation in comparison with which the present recession and even the depression of the thirties will seem a pleasant joke."¹ A decade later, concern with automaton was quite general. There were some, to be sure, who were certain that "guided by electronics, powered by atomic energy, geared to the smooth, effortless workings of automation, the magic carpet of our free economy heads for distant and undreamed horizons."² In reality, however, "the United States is advancing rapidly into a national economy in which there will not be enough jobs of the conventional kind to go around."³ President Kennedy himself declared that finding work for men must be considered "the major domestic challenge of the Sixties."⁴

There is no dearth of data on automation. Its changing statistics appear everywhere, in the daily press as well as in labor publications. These statistics simply indicate increasing productivity, production, and profitability through the reduction of the labor force. The impact of automation differs with different industries. It is particularly noticeable in textiles, coal mining, oil, steel, chemicals, railroading, and automobiles, but it affects in increasing measure all large-scale production as well as commercial and organizational activities and to some extent even agriculture. It does away with "white collar" and "blue collar" jobs—at present more of the latter than the former. But this may change in time.

¹ Norbert Wiener, *The Human Use of Human Beings*, New York, 1954, p. 162.

² *Calling all Jobs*, National Association of Manufacturers, New York, October, 1957, p. 21.

³ W. H. Ferry, *Caught on the Horn of Plenty*, Center for the Study of Democratic Institutions, January, 1962, p. 1.

⁴ *The New York Times*, February 16, 1962.

Nevertheless, automation is still in its infancy and the existing number of unemployed may not be traceable to labor displacements through automation, even though workers clearly lose their jobs because of it. That they can find no other employment may be the result of a declining rate of capital formation rather than automation. After all, there were sixteen million unemployed in America during the Great Depression. Displacement of labor by machinery has been continuous and has not prevented a steady growth of the work force. It is feared, however, that automation is so different in degree from previous technological development as to amount to a difference in kind. The social problem it poses is thought to be unique and unanswerable by analogy with past conditions.

III

Evaluating the previous impact of automation upon the American economy, Donald N. Michael⁵ has recently attempted a prognosis of its possible social consequences within the next two decades. His study is based on a number of assumptions, all of which imply that trends will largely remain what they are now and what they have been during the last ten years. Michael employs the term "cybernation" to account simultaneously for "automation" and "computers," which usually go together in the application of cybernetics to production processes. We will not concern ourselves with all the wondrous existing and potential capabilities of cybernation. A large and growing literature takes care of that. We merely indicate what Michael considers to be the advantages and problems of cybernation.

The advantages for both business firms and governments are plainly to "boost output and cut costs," in order to remain successful in private and national competition. Whatever other advantages Michael mentions, such as "reducing the magnitude of management's human relation tasks; greater rationalization of managerial activities; freeing management from petty distractions; greater freedom in locating facilities," and so forth, are all aspects of, or different expressions for, the cheapening of production. Expressed in Michael's genteel fashion: "If the criteria are control, understanding, and profits, there are strong reasons why government and business should want to, and indeed would have to, expand cybernation as rapidly as they can."⁶

The advantages of cybernation may, however, be offset by the problem of unemployment which will eventually affect all occupations; the unskilled *more* than the skilled-Negro workers, consequently, more than white workers. The previous relocation from production to service industries will come to an end. "If people cost more than machines-either in money or because of the managerial effort involved-there will be strong incentives to replace them in one way or another in most service activities where they perform routine, predefined tasks."⁷ As technology allows fewer people to do more work, many of the intermediary middle class management jobs will also disappear. All this while "the United States will need 13,500,000 more jobs in the Sixties merely to keep abreast of the expected growth of the labor force."⁸

There are, of course, answers to the projected dilemma, such as the retraining and upgrading of labor and the shortening of working hours for the same pay, or even price reductions leading to a larger consumers' demand and therewith to increased production and employment. But because all workers are affected by cybernation, Michael feels that

⁵ *Cybernation: The Silent Conquest*, Center for the Study of Democratic Institutions, 1962.

⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 13.

⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 16.

⁸ *The New York Times*, April 6, 1961, p. 18.

such proposals will not solve the problem. His own suggestion is a large public works program, for “although the proportion of workers needed for any particular task will be reduced through the use of cybernation, the total number of tasks that need to be done could equal or exceed the absolute number of people available to do them.”⁹ He thinks, however, that such a policy would run counter to the capitalist spirit. It may, therefore, be self-defeating for free enterprise to encourage cybernation.

While the consequences of cybernation may endanger the free enterprise system, the very continuance of this system compels increased cybernation. Michael sees the dilemma clearly: while the outlook is unfavorable *with* cybernation, it is just as bad *without* it. He sees only a partial solution in greater government control and national planning. Ideology and goals must change, and a required centralization of authority “would seem to imply a governing elite and a popular acceptance of such an elite.” If newly evolving behavioral standards do not complement the cybernated future, frustration and pointlessness “may will evoke a war of desperation—ostensibly against some external enemy but, in fact, a war to make the world safe for human beings by destroying most of society’s sophisticated technological base.”¹⁰ Obviously, it would be a war in which the sophisticated technology would serve to destroy most of mankind.

IV

“Nothing is eaten as hot as when it is cooked,” as the saying goes. Although it now appears that cybernation may be the end of us, some hope remains precisely because of its possible incompatibility with the capitalist system. If this system were to be changed, the curse of cybernation might well turn into a blessing. It has also occurred to Michael that the social system might be altered, but only to fit it to the facts of cybernation. Because an answer “must be found elsewhere than in a moratorium on its development,” he thinks that cybernation itself will determine what the answers will be. And this explains the pessimistic undertone of his report, which ends with the sad statement that the persistence of prevailing social attitudes is “driving us more and more inexorably into a contradictory world run by (and for?) ever more intelligent, ever more versatile slaves.”¹¹

Marx’s fetishistic world of capital production is here narrowed down to the fetishism of technology. But both technological development and capital formation correspond to underlying social relationships and may be altered by changing these relationships. Moreover, while cybernation enhances capital development it is also limited by capital-labor relations. This is a familiar phenomenon; monopolization, for instance, is both an instrument of capital expansion and of capital contraction and the drive for profits reduces the profitability of any given amount of capital. Without going into these rather intricate matters it should be clear that any prognosis with regard to the cybernation process must, first of all, raise the question as to how far this process is supportable by the existing economy. What is feasible technically may not be economically; and what may be feasible economically may not be socially. But this question is hardly ever raised, apparently on the assumption that capitalism has no inherent limits.

Such an assumption is justified by past developments. Even Lenin said that unless it is overthrown by political means, there is always a way out for capitalism. But this was before cybernation and the hydrogen bomb. Among various reasons for declaring

⁹ D. N. Michael, *Cybernation*, p. 26.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 46.

¹¹ *Ibid.*

capitalism the exclusive “open society” with an unlimited range of possibilities was the lack of relevant information. This lack still persists but no longer to the extent of total ignorance. Some economists begin to see society and its economy in flux and in real, instead of in symbolic, terms.

At the same time that Michael’s report on cybernation appeared Simon Kuznets’s *Capital in the American Economy*¹² was published. This work is of interest here because of Kuznets’s attempt to assay prospects for the next 25 years on the basis of past trends in population, national product, and in the formation and financing of capital. Where Michael’s emphasis is on technology, Kuznets’s is on economics. The latter distinguishes between potential and actual technological change. Although the “concept of potential technological change is difficult to define precisely, let alone measure,” Kuznets writes, “it is extremely useful, for it points to the fact that of the large flow of technological change offered, as it were, to society, only a part is embodied in the productive structure, mainly because of limitations of capital and of entrepreneurial ability.”¹³

Kuznets thinks, however, that the next three decades will witness an acceleration of the rate of technological change mainly because of a quickening in the pace of scientific research. It seems certain, he says, “that the development of nonmilitary applications to nuclear physics, of electronics in automation and communications will have an immense impact upon the productive system.”¹⁴ All this will give momentum to the demand for capital funds and Kuznets thinks it not unlikely that the new technology-at any rate initially-will require capital in an amount that can be brought forth only at the expense of the national product. In other words, installation of the new technology may require a larger part of total production for new material capital equipment and leave a correspondingly smaller part for immediate utilization and consumption.

So it has always been in the ascertainable past under conditions of rapid capital formation. And even though the material requirements of capital formation may be more formidable for the second industrial revolution than they have been for the first, they may be attainable, nevertheless. The more so as the new technology may, eventually, demand a smaller amount of capital to yield a greater product than has been true for the “conventional” technology. But new capital investments must be financed. The question is, then, “whether the savings patterns in the private sector [of the economy] suggest savings proportions that will match the prospective demand for capital.”

The concern is with the private sector of the economy alone, for “the government sector is not likely to have net savings in the long term prospect. Indeed, it may be forced to draw upon the savings of the private sector.”¹⁵ Because of an actual decline of the private sector’s savings propensity, Kuznets thinks that the previously experienced “pressure of the demand for goods upon the supply of savings will persist.” He suggests, cautiously, that “during the 1948-1957 decade a combination of high-level demand for consumers goods and continued high levels of government drafts for current consumption might have kept private savings and capital formation below the proportion required to increase productivity sufficiently to offset inflationary pressures.”¹⁶ Against this background, and in view of an expected growth of the non-productive population, rising government expenditures, and continued high levels of consumption, Kuznets fears that the supply of voluntary savings may not be adequate to the demand, for which reason “inflationary pressures may well continue, with the result that part of the savings needed

¹² National Bureau of Economic Research, Princeton, 1961.

¹³ S. Kuznets, *Capital in the American Economy*, p. 442.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 443.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 453.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 457.

for capital formation and government consumption will be extracted through this particular mechanism."¹⁷

This "particular mechanism" reduces total social consuming power to less than what it might have been were it absent, and the difference raises the profitability of capital and thereby the rate of its accumulation. This type of "forced savings" may, or may not, yield the capital required to increase productivity to the point where the demand for both goods and capital is fully matched by their supply-thus ending the inflationary pressure. The fact of inflation itself, however, indicates real difficulties in raising the rate of capital formation, which may-at least to some extent-arrest the cybernation process.

V

While a lack of investment capital may hamper cybernation, the same lack is also its *raison d'être*. The expected rise of profitability is supposed to lead to an extension of production sufficiently large to compensate for the technological displacement of labor. This is the idea behind the argument that all technological advancement, sooner or later, creates new and additional work opportunities. It is usually illustrated with reference to definite enterprises and particular situations as, for example, by Ritchie Calder, who pointed out that "in France the state-controlled Renault Company was able to undertake, after the war, the most intensive automation of any automobile factory in Europe," in consequence of which "three times as many workers are employed now as there were before the introduction of automation." Calder thinks that this is "a good example of the repercussive effects of modern technology."¹⁸

For the Renault Company this is no doubt true, at any rate for the time being. And it may well be true for many, or even all enterprises, in the expanding West European economy which has been experiencing the same process of growth that-for a variety of reasons-occurred in America a few decades earlier. But, while the rate of capital formation is now higher in Western Europe than in America, there is no guarantee that it will remain so indefinitely. Judging by past experiences, prosperity makes room for depression, and judging by more recent experiences, periods of expansion alternate with periods of stagnation, i.e., periods characterized by insufficient capital formation. Obviously, the effects of automation will be different under conditions of capital expansion than under conditions of capital stagnation. The present American situation may be, therefore, just as much "an example of the repercussive *effects* of modern technology" as Calder's experience with the Renault Company, or even with the whole of the West European economy.

As long as production expands and markets extend, increased automation may be accompanied by full employment. Automation may also lead to larger production and new markets despite growing unemployment. The application of automation may also require the elimination of what is called "excessive demand," i.e., wages supported by full employment which restrict the profitability of capital. It all depends on the particular situation in which an enterprise, a country, or a combination of nations find themselves. For this is a competitive world with changing opportunities. Presently, Western Europe automates with a rising, and the United States with a declining, labor force. In theory, this picture may be reversed when America arrives at a higher rate of capital formation and Europe reaches the limits of her profitable capital expansion. Or, what is more likely, here, too, Western Europe may come to emulate the United States and cybernate itself

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 460.

¹⁸ Ritchie Calder, *Technology: Europe's Needs and Resources*, New York, 1961, p. 789.

into increasing unemployment. At any rate, we may as well stick to the American scene, for as long as the West European economy does not basically differ from the American, it is bound to share the latter's difficulties with regard to cybernation and capital formation.

This is not true for the Eastern power bloc, or for economically underdeveloped nations. Although it has been asserted from time to time that backward countries "have the advantage of being able to adapt the latest equipment without having to scrap existing equipment and without being handicapped by the existence of obsolete buildings,"¹⁹ such an advantage does not really exist. The slowly increasing industrialization of underdeveloped countries rather widens the productivity gap between "rich" and "poor" countries for the very reason that developed nations enjoy the advantages of automation. It is true, of course, that automation finds application also in underdeveloped countries-in some extractive industries, for instance-but here it supports foreign capital rather than native development. Technological development in underdeveloped nations presupposes basic social changes which are only now beginning to determine their political movements.

In the developed nations of the Eastern power bloc, as in capitalist nations generally, automation is limited by the availability of the capital necessary to install it. In distinction to the competitive Western economies, however, the centralized economies of Russia and her satellites do not seem to fear the consequences of cybernation. Their productivity and total production are still below those of Western nations, and automation, to the degree possible under these conditions, could not lead to large-scale unemployment. Their problem is rather how to decrease human labor by a more productive capital structure. Roughly half of Russia's population, for instance, is still engaged in agriculture and-in view of the size of the country and its population-there exists a general lack of means of production, not to speak of consumers' durables or even plain consumer goods. To be sure, there also exist highly automated industries but not as yet to an extent where they can raise the social average productivity to the level of that prevailing in the West.

In principle, of course, the centralized nature of Russian capitalism allows for a wider application of cybernetics to social and production processes than is possible in the Western economies. And this, in turn, promises a quickening of automation concurrent with the general rise of productivity. Economic planning, for example, is one of the most important areas of application of cybernetics. But while in the competitive economies "planning" implies "counter-planning," in the centralized economies planning may be unitary, nation-wide, and all-comprehensive. This is why many of the Western advocates of abundance by way of cybernation emphasize the need for national planning of both production and distribution. But by this token, the Western economies would cease being capitalist economies in the traditional sense.

VI

The American economy is thought to be "affluent" because its living standards are higher than anywhere else. They are higher because of greater productivity. Compared with scarcity economies, it is an economy of "abundance"-but only in a relative, not in an absolute sense-for, generally, even in America no one's needs are satiated. Everybody wishes for more, if not for necessities, then for luxuries. The richer the people, the greater their wants, for security lies only in accumulation. The only real defense of well-being is greater well-being; to stay affluent, affluency must be constantly increased. But here we

¹⁹ P. Einzig, *The Economic Consequences of Automation*, New York, 1957, p. 65.

speak only of the capitalist class; for the majority of the population, apparent luxuries have become necessities, and for a large minority many necessities are still luxuries.

That this economy of “abundance” is simultaneously an economy of scarcity is indicated by the frantic efforts to raise the profitability of capital and to increase the rate of economic growth. But what is scarce in view of the always larger national product? The answer is obvious when the economy is recognized for what it is—a vehicle for production of profit. Production of commodities is merely the necessary medium for production of profits and the continuation of this process requires the accumulation of capital. Success or failure cannot be measured in terms of an abundance or a lack of commodities; they are revealed by the rate of capital formation which indicates the rate of profitability.

Most critics and well-wishers of the “affluent society” tend to disregard the nature of capitalism, i.e., the production of capital, even when they recognize its profit motive. They consider the profit incentive an instrument of production which has no other end than consumption. As this end can also be served by direct government decisions affecting the production process, they think that both these instrumentalities complement one another. And so it seems sheer stupidity to live in a society of abundance as if it were an economy of scarcity. It is, of course, beyond all reason and therefore difficult to understand that while surpluses of all kinds are rotting away for want of use, the economic emphasis should still be on more production by way of cybernation. It appears equally irrational that the “horn of plenty” is not utilized to liberate people from overwork, or to supply those who can no longer find work with decent living conditions.

In a capitalist economy of the Russian type, direct decisions (supposedly affecting the whole of society) are made with regard to the rate of expansion and the character of the material capital structure. Decisions are based on experience and if they go wrong they are rectified by new experience. Tempo and extent of industrial automation are determined by the available accumulation fund and the replacement requirements of the existing productive apparatus. This fund is known in a general way; it can be made smaller or larger in accordance with the decisions affecting the consumption fund. Although expressed in money terms, behind the monetary quantities are the arranged real relations of production, accumulation, and consumption.

In theory, and excluding natural and political catastrophes, the introduction and extension of cybernation could be an orderly process. Production could be increased to the point of abundance and labor time could be shortened, or both processes could be attended to simultaneously and thus slowed down. In practice, this is not possible given the fact that Russia is part of the world economy and competes with other nations striving for political and economic supremacy. But even though production and consumption cannot be geared to actual social needs exclusively, they are nonetheless subject to an over-all centralized control which also extends over the modifications necessitated by national competition. In brief, though subject to the vicissitudes of world politics which may alter or shatter all plans, Russia remains a state-controlled economy in so far as the internal scene is not affected by external occurrences. This is analogous to the single enterprise’s strict capitalist rationality within the anarchic *laissez-faire* system. /

It is different with the “mixed economy” of the United States. Responsibility for the state of society lies in the hands of government; private enterprise is responsible only to itself, i.e., to the profitability of the capital invested in it. There was a time when the government’s responsibilities were overwhelmingly political and economic only in the sense of its support of private capital. But now it is the main function of government to secure economic and social stability. This implies interventions in the economy to counteract the cyclical movement from prosperity to depression and to avoid large-scale

unemployment through government expenditures on welfare, public works, subsidies, armaments, and the expansion of government itself. The economic role of government divides the whole of the economy into a "public sector" and a "private sector."

To speak of the American economy as a two-sector economy is to speak in abstract terms. In reality, it is just one economy in which government intervenes with fiscal and monetary means. Although the government owns much real estate, a considerable amount of capital equipment, and employs a great number of workers in all kinds of occupations, it does not compete with private capital. Its considerations may be economic but they are not bound to the principle of profitability. Its enterprises do not end up in bankruptcies even though they may be discontinued when superfluous or for lack of efficiency. No matter how self supporting, or even profitable, some government undertakings are, government still requires an increasingly larger portion of the privately produced national product. The private sector differs from the public sector in that the former is profitable and expands on its own accord while the latter is non-profitable and expands at the expense of the private sector. When the private sector grows faster than the public sector, the profitability of private capital may not be affected. It is otherwise when the public sector experiences more rapid growth.

It can be argued that the government enters the economic sphere only when private capital begins to slacken and for that reason its profitability remains unaffected, for business would not be any better without government interventions. This may well be so. However, though government interference consists in putting idle resources to work, the funds for that end are themselves extracted from the private sector by way of inflation, taxation, borrowings, and deficit-financing which increases the national debt. The greater national product brought forth in this manner does not imply larger but smaller profits on the existing private capital, for it is this capital which must yield the taxes necessary to cover government created demand and to finance interest on the national debt.

Within recent decades the increased volume of government expenditures in America has involved a rising ratio of taxes to national product, and the increase of the federal debt from \$16 billion at the end of 1930 to \$297.7 billion at the beginning of 1962. Thus far, however, the expanding role of government, whose tax take is now about a quarter of the national product, has not led to a deceleration of the rate of overall economic growth. But neither has this rate been accelerated, even though acceleration is a pre-condition for the maintenance of a given rate of profit. Stagnation and the persistence of inflation point to the difficulty of satisfying both profitable capital formation and the growing needs of government.

Since 1955 there has been no significant expansion of capital, but because government expenditures have also remained static, the ensuing decline of profitability could be covered up by false, inflationary gains. Lack of profitability- can only be overcome by an increase in productivity. A mere increase in production will not do. American industry as a whole produces close to 20 per cent below capacity. It could increase production by almost one-fifth without additional capital equipment and without exhausting the labor supply. To that extent it could at once decrease the government share of the total national product. But this unused capacity is considered obsolete because it is not competitive and therefore not profitable.

VII

Automation in a competitive economy means unemployment if Michael's prognosis is right. The process may be slowed down by a lack of savings if recent tendencies in this respect, as noted by Kuznets, should prevail. There is also the hope for

new markets large enough to increase the number of employed despite automation, as has been true for some industries and even for some nations. But with industrialization fostered to some extent almost everywhere, with the return of Europe's competitive ability, and with the relative economic isolation of the Eastern power bloc, it cannot really be expected that greater productivity of American industry by way of automation will lead to significant enlargements of markets. Automation will go on and unemployment will grow though perhaps at a slower rate than the possible rate of technological change. The responsibilities of government will grow correspondingly.

In 1961, tax collections by all governments in the United States-federal, state, and local-amounted to \$143.6 billion, or 27.6 per cent of total national product. Government expenditures, in the same year, amounted to \$149.8 billion, of which \$41.2 billion went for unemployment and social welfare spending. A doubling of unemployment with its accompaniment of general misery could roughly double this sum. To that extent, profitability gained by greater productivity would be diminished. The same would be true if government expenditures for armaments, or for any other desired and politically feasible purpose could suddenly be doubled. To be sure, automation would also cheapen the products falling to government and to that extent again ease the burden of private capital. Yet this may be offset by a faster extension of government demands on the private sector of the economy.

But this, by itself, will rather hasten than hinder the automation process. As on all previous occasions of "national emergencies," the required increase in production and productivity will be brought about by government through more inflation, new borrowings, higher taxes and, perhaps, by simply commandeering the necessary improvements and enlargements of the productive apparatus. For the only real limits of production are always the actually existing productive resources. By disregarding the profitability of existing capital-if only temporarily-it is always possible to enlarge production beyond that level which suits private capital best, i.e., which is at any particular time the most profitable.

However, on its own accord, too, private capital will always try to increase its productivity in search for extra profits, or just to maintain a given profitability. No matter what the social consequences of cybernation, if it helps the single firm or corporation, it will be utilized. A declining rate of savings will not stop the cybernation process of corporations with sufficient reserves to finance their technological innovations. While the value of their capital may remain the same, their productivity will have been enhanced. But if this, in turn, does not lead to the enlargement of capital, the process has not been productive in a capitalist sense, because capital must lead, via the production process, to even larger capital. There must be net investments to speak of capital formation. Without net investments, i.e., investments over and above capital replacement through use and obsolescence, production has increased at the expense of accumulation. Permanently undistributed profits are no profits and production without accumulation has not produced capital. The absence or low rate of net capital investments, although not necessarily halting the increase of production and productivity, involves the displacement of labor which could have been avoided, at least to some extent, by a rapid capital formation in conjunction with cybernation.

It can be said, of course, that undistributed profits are a sign of super-profits and leave the shareholders' personal incomes unimpaired. This is largely true, as indicated by the existing "affluency" in the sphere of consumption. However, the apparent "super-profits" are such only by virtue of government created demand. They merely illustrate the fact that government favors big business. Subsidies through government contracts and a higher productivity combined with price stability or even price increases allow for

reserves of undistributed profits that find their way into more automation. Even so, the fact that there is not a sufficient rate of net investments shows that this is done at the expense of less privileged enterprises and of society as a whole.

All enterprises, whether small or big, clamor for lower taxes and higher depreciation quotas to increase their productivity and competitive ability through technological improvements. Automation speeds up obsolescence and smaller businesses, unable to introduce automatic machinery quickly enough, fall by the wayside. Thus cybernation is at the same time a capital concentration process-or, rather, it accentuates the concentration process inherent in capital competition. Capital concentration itself demands, and allows for, further extensions of automation. Short of an always increasing rate of capital formation, unemployment must grow. As the probability of such a rate is extremely low, the increase of profitability by way of cybernation may well be nullified, or at any rate significantly diminished, by the simultaneous and unavoidable increase of government expenditures to cope with cybernation's social consequences.

This may not be so, however, if the social conditions of the near future discourage both the growth of cybernation and that of the "public sector" of the economy-in other words, if society, by and large, "freezes" existing social conditions. But to do so necessitates a centralized control over the whole of the economy and all its various aspects which the government does not possess. If it had this control, it would no longer preside over a free-enterprise economy. Aside from internal difficulties of a static society, its external relations preclude the maintenance of the economic *status quo*. For automation, it is said, must overcome foreign wage advantages by enhancing America's productivity. But America must compete not only in the economic sphere but also in the military, and here weapons production already depends to a very large degree on automation technology. '4

Still, the process and the consequences of cybernation may not/be so dramatic as Michael envisions. Many enterprises that would like to automate may not be able to do so without necessarily ceasing to exist. Subsidies may be extended to these businesses such as have been granted to sections of agriculture. This is not less likely than, or different in principle from, sustaining the unemployed out of current production. In this way, part of private enterprise (in its technologically backward form) may become a part of the "public sector" of the economy. This has long been true for sections of big business. Unless the latter's privileges, such as government contracts, tax exemptions, and extraordinary depreciation charges are cut back, the shrinking profitable sector of the economy will have to give up a still larger share of its profits to the public sector. This would reach its "logical" end when the demands of government exceed the profit sharing capacity of private enterprise.

The actual course of developments, however, determined as it is by the interaction of diverse and contrary interests, is rarely, if ever, "logical." It may be both logically and economically possible to have a highly cybernated industry with, say, 20 million unemployed-yet, in practice this is quite improbable. Unless suppressed by terroristic measures, there would arise social movements to change this situation, either by altering the nature of society, or by varying the relationship between production and employment. Similarly, the accentuation of capital concentration by way of cybernation would most likely bring political forces into play which might well arrest this development. Against real necessities, fetishistic attitudes toward the production system and its technology will lose their sway, and people will try to change the social structure rather than accommodate themselves to it indefinitely. In the end, the question of cybernation in its degree of application will be resolved by political actions regardless of what, from the economic or technological point of view, is "logical."

But even on purely economic grounds, cybernation finds its limits where it begins to contradict the profitability of capital. Its full development would be a very long process, at any rate, as it requires the displacement of the whole existing production equipment. To throw out the whole of capital based on an old technology is to throw out the congealed labor of generations necessary for current production. To create the capital of a radically new technology also requires the work of generations. Cybernation can only be applied in piecemeal fashion regardless of the nature of society, but in capitalism it is doubly hindered because it can be applied only insofar as it safeguards and promotes the growth of existing capital. In some industries, chemicals for instance, automation has raised capital equipment per production worker five and even ten fold. Even if not all industries are able to automate to the same extent, capital investment per production worker is bound to rise and it will be this enlarged capital on which profits will be measured. If they are not equivalent to the new capital structure, there is no incentive for further automation. This will not stop specific industries and corporations from raising their productivity to gain competitive advantages, but as their profitability, too, is finally determined by that of society as a whole, their competitive advantages may still not insure their profitability.

Taking past developments into consideration, and judging present conditions realistically, the future of cybernation seems not at all promising except, perhaps, for selected industries, particularly those engaged in the production of armaments. Where entirely new installations are required that involve the application of the new sciences of nuclear physics, electronics, and cybernetics, these installations may, from the very start, and regardless of cost, exhibit the full meaning of cybernation. Indeed, it has been said that "those miraculous machines in which cybernetics could develop all its resources seem to be usable only as engines of death."²⁰

VIII

One method of dealing with increased productivity by way of cybernation would be to cut the number of hours of work and provide people with more leisure time. Almost uniformly, however, this method is questioned or totally rejected not because of its opposition to the capitalist mechanism, but because society has "failed to develop meaningful leisure." Boredom is considered a very serious and even dangerous problem because "it still remains-true that the happy man is very often the one who has insufficient time to worry about whether he is happy or not."²¹ All sorts of crimes and delinquencies are attributed to increased leisure, which, then, must first be "organized" by competent authorities before it can be granted.

This silly and insincere talk can be dismissed at once. The leisure class has always found the leisure of the lower classes obnoxious and dangerous to its own leisure. Looking at the wonders of the first industrial revolution, Delacroix mused about the "poor abused people, [who] will not find happiness in the disappearance of labor. Look at these idlers condemned to drag the burden of their days and not knowing what to do with their time, which the machines cut into still further."²² Yet, leisure is precisely what the majority of people need most and have the least of-that is, leisure without wants. The leisure of the starving, or the needy, is no leisure at all but a relentless activity aimed at staying alive or improving their situation. Without greater leisure there can be no betterment of the human condition.

²⁰ P. de Latie, *Thinking by Machine*, Boston, 1957, p. 284.

²¹ R. Theobald, *The Challenge of Abundance*, New York, 1962, p. 86.

²² *The Journal of Eugene Delacroix*, New York, 1961, p. 512.

This whole question cannot even arise under prevailing conditions. As an exception to the rule, and aided by special circumstances, one or another laboring group may succeed in cutting down its working time without diminishing its income. But to cut down working hours generally and maintain the same wage bill would turn cybernation into a senseless affair as far as the capitalists are concerned. The point of cybernation is precisely to reduce wage costs relative to overall costs of the "factors of production" and to recoup the higher capital costs by greater productivity. To be sure, real wages have increased and working hours have been cut, but always at a rate below that of the increasing productivity. Otherwise there would have been no capital formation. Theoretically, there is no reason why this process should not continue by way of cybernation. That it does not do so, in practice, is manifested by the low rate of capital formation and the fact that the decline of the labor force is not only relative to the mass of capital but also absolute.

It can be argued, of course, that there is no longer a need for extensive capital formation and that mere replacement and modernization of the existing productive apparatus suffices to satisfy all social needs. Any increase in productivity could then immediately be translated into higher wages, shorter hours, or both. While this is possible, it is *not* possible within the capitalist system, and those who seriously propose this solution must be prepared to change the system.

The capitalist "solution" to the problem of cybernation is to be found not in higher wages and a shorter work week for the laboring population but in higher profitability expressed in increased capital. If all these things coincide, so much the better; if not, capital will try to secure its profitability at the expense of labor. Each entrepreneur, or corporation, employs the minimum of labor relative to capital investment; each, of course, tries to increase this minimum by a correspondingly larger investment. They are interested-economically speaking-not in a larger or smaller labor force but in that labor force which proves most profitable. They are not, and cannot, be concerned with the national labor force; the unemployed are the government's responsibility, although it can sustain them only with funds extracted from the whole of society. To contribute least to this fund is thus another objective of the entrepreneur or the corporation.

Because society-with respect to production-is composed of numerous independently operating and competing enterprises, each following the dictates of profitability, there is no way of sharing the available work between the total labor force. There will be overwork for some, unemployment for others. Not only the employers but the more fortunate workers, too, will insist on working hours yielding wages adequate to their accustomed mode of living. Instead of shorter hours there will be growing unemployment, and the costs of unemployment must be paid by the employed. For, in the "last analysis," the total social product is divided between the owners of capital and the productive population, no matter how the owners, or controllers, of capital redivide, or are forced to redivide, their share for purposes of accumulation and the sustenance of the non-productive population. What falls to the unemployed must be subtracted from the total share falling to capital, and what falls to the unemployed cannot be given to the employed, thereby restricting, to that extent, any possible wage increases.

While wages do not rise significantly under conditions of growing unemployment, social pressures and rising productivity may prevent them from falling. If they could be lowered under conditions of rising productivity, the profitability of capital could expand at a faster rate-provided, of course, that markets would grow simultaneously, which is not necessarily the case. All that this implies-from the viewpoint of society as a whole-is that less is consumed and more is "saved," i.e., capital accumulates. To channel increased production via increased productivity into government created demand such as

armaments and space programs would have an opposite effect, as it would increase “consumption” at the expense of “savings.” This is not “consumption” in the ordinary sense, of course, but it has the same effect nevertheless. The government -being a government of private enterprise-in order not to destroy the marketability of private production any faster than has been done already, prefers to “consume” the increased production in the form of waste, rationalized as “national defense” or “scientific exploration.”

Living standards already reached are difficult to undo. Except under conditions of actual warfare, any general attempt to reduce incomes to a previously existing level may lead to social strife, which, in turn, may nullify any gains made in this direction. Moreover, today’s sensitive economic conditions, the dislocations of industrial production associated with a decisive shift from consumption goods to capital goods may be more detrimental to social stability than capital stagnation. This is one reason for choosing the more subtle method of gradual inflation to reduce consumption in the ordinary sense in order to “consume” more in the extraordinary sense, and yet secure the profitability of private capital.

In summary, it may be said that an extensive cybernation of production seems unlikely for the very reason which makes it so attractive to capital, i.e., the prevailing insufficiency of profitability and the consequent low rate of economic growth. But even a vast increase of cybernation would lead not to an increase of consumption-to general abundance-but to an increase in waste production, the misery of unemployment, and the slow but inevitable transformation of the “mixed economy.” into a state capitalist system. Meanwhile, just as underdeveloped countries live in anxiety because they are neither able to manage under the old semi-feudal conditions nor capable of entering into capitalist industrialization, so developed capitalist nations, too, live in anxiety, unable to manage under their system of production and incapable of changing their social structure to the extent necessary for a full unfolding of the social forces of production and the progressive abolition of labor.

The Marxism of Karl Korsch

(1964)

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The new interest in Marxism, as reflected in numerous publications, seems to substantiate George Lichtheim’s remark that ‘a new doctrine becomes academically respectable only after it has petrified’.¹ From this point of view the renewed concern with Marx resembles an intellectual wake over the dead body of Marxism and the disposition of some of its still-usable properties among the heirs. If nothing good can be said about past Marxian practice, the aspects of Marxian theory, at least, can be and have been assimilated into current social sciences. Marx himself, it is said, is thereby honoured, for ‘the highest triumph a great scholar can achieve is when his theories lose their special character and become an integral part of the scientific life of society.’²

¹ G. Lichtheim, *Marxism: An Historical and Critical Study* (London, 1961), p. 394.

² L. Kolakowsld. *Der Mensch ohne Alternative* (Munich, 1961) p. 23.

The increasingly tolerant criticism of Marx reflects, on the one hand, the transformation of capitalism itself, and, on the other, the need to strengthen bourgeois ideology by adapting it to changed social conditions. But while the bourgeoisie, at least in part, appears ready to incorporate an emasculated Marxism into its own ideology, the official labour movement tries to free itself of the last remnants of its Marxian heritage. It does so, however, not as an independent labour movement in quest of a new and more effective theory and practice for achieving its own emancipation, but as an accredited social institution within existing society. It is thus clear that the renaissance of Marxism in the bookstalls and universities does not signify the return of a revolutionary consciousness, heralding new social struggles for the liberation of the working class, but rather its present ineffectiveness as an instrument of social change.

It would, of course, be a miracle if the theories evolved by Marx more than a hundred years ago still fitted the present situation. Marx believed not in miracles but in social change. He based his theories on the experiences of the past and on an analysis of existing conditions in order to discover the sources of social development in general and of capitalism in particular. His theories sprang from the recognition of an actually-existing social movement opposed to prevailing conditions, and they were expected to help this movement realise its own potentialities. These theories, and the social practice at their base, were themselves subject to change; Marxism, too, was but a historical phenomenon. His expectations have not come to pass. The Marxian doctrine prevails as a set of ideas unconnected with real social practice, or as the 'false consciousness' of state-prescribed ideologies in support of an un-Marxian practice.

It is with these preliminaries in mind that the work of Karl Korsch is best approached. Korsch called himself a Marxist throughout his adult life, but he adhered to a Marxism without dogmas. His work displays a critical attitude towards Marx and the Marxists, even though it was intended to strengthen, not weaken, the Marxist movement. He understood this movement strictly as the proletarian class struggle for the abolition of capitalist society, and Marxian theory had meaning for him only as an indivisible and essential part of this social transformation.

Like Marx, Korsch came to the socialist movement by way of philosophy and through a strong sense for social justice which rebelled against the conditions of the labouring population. Born into a middle-class family in 1886, he had a sheltered youth and went on to study philosophy, law, economics, and sociology in Jena, Munich, Berlin, and Geneva; in 1911 he became a doctor of jurisprudence at the University of Jena. The same university gave him a professorship in 1919. As a student, Korsch was associated with the 'Free Student Movement', which opposed the traditional and generally reactionary fraternities, and attempted, albeit in a vague way, to establish links between the academic professions and the socialist movement. Between the years 1911 and 1914 Korsch lived in England, studying and practising English and International Law; while there he joined the Fabian Society.

As a philosopher Korsch was at first influenced by Kant; in a later period, mainly by Hegel, Feuerbach, and Marx. Although he took his departure from the study of law, he shifted his emphasis, by way of philosophical studies, from the technicalities of law to their material foundations, to economics and politics. Most of his early writing, which he did in England, displays the influence of Fabianism and of the syndicalist and guild-socialist tendencies within the labour movement. His concern even then was with the practical activities of the movement rather than its theories. The latter, Korsch found, concentrated on the destruction of capitalism and showed little interest in the construction of the new society. Satisfied neither with the political-administrative reformism of the Fabian Society, nor with the purely economic proposals of syndicalism, Korsch favoured

a direct and continuous implementation of socialist theory by practical activities which would actually make a difference in the social developmental process.

The year 1914 brought Korsch back to Germany and into the army where he remained throughout the war. The anti-war movement, which found its voice in 1915 in Zimmerwald and a year later in Kienthal, he welcomed with enthusiasm. After his demobilisation in 1919 he joined the USPD-the German Independent Socialist Party. Back at the University of Jena, he lectured on civil law and procedure, especially labour law and collective bargaining, as well as social science, contemporary history, and philosophy. His publications from 1919 onward show a preoccupation with the practical issues of socialism and with its character as a proletarian endeavour. 'All nationalisation', he wrote in 1919, 'which claims to represent the interests of the working population must, first of all, make a reality of participation of the workers in the organisation, administration, and determination of production and the social production process'.³ Korsch was still speaking in terms of participation, not of control, because he did not think the working class was ready, nor the situation ripe, for the realisation of socialism in the full Marxian sense of a free and equal association of producers. He suggested a combination of workers' autonomy in industry with centralised planning via political institutions, a combination, in brief, of syndicalist and socialist ideas. It was by a system of workers' councils, operating on the factory level and in political life, that both self-determination and social regulation were to be realised.⁴

The radical wing of the German socialist movement in the 1918 revolution and its aftermath demanded a total reconstruction of society on the basis of a system of workers' councils (on the pattern of the Russian Soviets), designed to bring all economic and political power into the hands of the working class. This radical group consisted mainly of the left-wing within the Independent Socialist Party, the Spartakusbund, which at the end of 1918 became the German Communist Party (KPD). At this time, however, and regardless of their differences, all socialist organisations advocated nationalisation. The differences between moderate and radical socialists seemed to be merely questions of procedure; whether to reach socialism by the methods of political democracy or by way of proletarian dictatorship.

The slogan, 'All power to the workers' councils', implied the latter, for its realisation would leave other sections of the population without political representation. But to give them representation in a National Assembly implied the restoration of the power they had temporarily lost and the end of the nationalisation programme. The choice was avoided by deciding for both the workers' councils and the National Assembly-the councils in emasculated form as part of the Weimar Constitution.

With no prospects of early nationalisation, Korsch turned to an investigation of the reasons for the socialist failure. Obviously, the working class was not ready to utilise its opportunities, despite the long period of Marxist indoctrination; their Marxism, Korsch found, had degenerated into a mere system of knowledge and was no longer the consciousness of a revolutionary practice out to realise its revolutionary goal. It was then necessary to reconstruct the revolutionary, active side of Marxism, as exemplified in the Bolshevik Revolution. It was in this spirit that Korsch turned to a reinterpretation of Marxian theory in opposition to both the 'orthodox' and the 'revisionist' wings of the Marxism of the Second International.⁵ It was in this spirit, too, that he entered the

³ K. Korsch, 'Sozialisierung und Arbeiterbewegung', in *Freies Deutschland*, Hannover, 1919.

⁴ K. Korsch, *Was ist Sozialisierung?* Sozialistische Schriftenreihe, Heft 1, Hannover, 1919.

⁵ K. Korsch, *Quintessence des Marxismus* (Berlin-Leipzig, 1922); *Kernpunkte der Materialistischen Geschichtsauffassung* (Berlin, 1922); *Marxismus und Philosophie*, *Archiv für die Geschichte des Sozialismus und der Arbeiterbewegung* (Leipzig, 1923), etc.

Communist Party with the majority of the Independent Socialists, even though he was not happy with the conditions of admission to the Communist International, which subordinated the national communist parties to the programme and tactics of the Moscow centre, controlled by the Russian Communist Party. Korsch shared the belief of the bolsheviks that the socialist workers were bound to gravitate towards the Moscow International. His command of Marxian theory led to his rapid elevation into the party's intellectual leadership. He became a communist representative in the Thuringian Diet and, in 1924, a member of the German Reichstag. He also became editor of, and frequent contributor to, the party's theoretical organ, *Die Internationale*. The events of the 'crisis year' of 1923—the French occupation of the Ruhr, the runaway currency inflation, the series of large-scale strikes, the fiasco of the short lived communist attempt at insurrection in Hamburg, and the emergence of the Nazi movement—events in which both the Comintern and the KPD showed themselves indecisive and lacking in judgement, brought Korsch in opposition to the official, though changing, party line. He became the spokesman of its radical left-wing, *Entschiedene Linke*, and the editor of its oppositional organ, *Kommunistische Politik*. Although expelled from the KPD in 1926, Korsch remained a member of the Reichstag until 1928. From then on, he continued his political activity outside any definite organisational frame.

Among Korsch's early writings, *Marxism and Philosophy* is perhaps the most important, and this despite its apparently strictly theoretical nature. It was supplemented by various other essays on the materialist conception of history and the Marxian dialectic.⁶ These works were not so much inquiries into the relationship between Marxism and philosophy as they were answers to the question of what Marxism itself represented. In this way, the theoretical became at once a practical concern.

According to Hegel, a philosophy cannot be anything but 'its time expressed in ideas.' Korsch conceived both bourgeois philosophy and Marxism as expressions of one and the same historical development, which created in the proletariat the necessary counterpart to the bourgeoisie. The ideational relationship between bourgeois philosophy and Marxism was one aspect of the real and contradictory differences between labour and capital. Marxism was conditioned upon the existence of capitalism and was independent only as the point of view of the proletarian class in its struggle against bourgeois society. It could arise only in conjunction with an actual social movement transcending the historical limitations of capitalism. Bourgeois science and philosophy could not develop beyond the material conditions of their own existence. Where the capitalist mode of production arrested further social development, it also arrested the development of science and philosophy. It was the working class which would break the general social deadlock through its own emancipation, removing the class limitations of social, scientific, and philosophical development. That did not mean that Marxism, as the theory and practice of the proletarian class, developed its own science and philosophy; it meant that the actual abolition of the capitalist mode of production would also end the science and philosophy peculiar to it.

Korsch was aware, of course, that Marxism refers to itself as scientific socialism and not as a philosophy, and that both Marx and Engels equated bourgeois philosophy with philosophy as such. Just as Marx denounced not only one particular historical form of the state—the bourgeois state—but the state as such, so he fought not only against particular philosophical systems but for the elimination of philosophy. How was this to be accomplished? Obviously not by a single mental act. Just as the abolition of the state would require a whole historical process, so the defeat of philosophy would demand a

⁶ Collected in the second, enlarged edition of *Marxismus und Philosophie* (Leipzig, 1930).

prolonged ideological struggle. The question of the relationship between Marxism and philosophy would persist for as long as those conditions prevailed which had given rise to bourgeois philosophy and to its Marxian counterpart, scientific socialism.⁷

Korsch's concern with the relation between Marxism and philosophy did not imply a particular interest in philosophy on his own part, nor an attempt to revive the criticism of philosophy-which had been the young Marx's starting-point in his criticism of capitalism; it derived from his desire to restore Marxism's revolutionary content. The revolutionary character of Marxism had been lost and could be regained only through the resumption of an actual struggle against capitalist society. This struggle seemed at hand in the revolutionary events released by the first World War. In these upheavals the Marxism of the Second International came into conflict with the Marxism of the Third International. How and why did this happen? Wherein did these two movements actually differ? The question had to be answered by applying the materialist conception of history to the 'history of the Marxist labour movement itself.

In so doing, Korsch divided Marxian history into three distinct periods. The first begins with Marx's philosophical communism and ends with the Communist Manifesto. It was still largely dominated by philosophy as a comprehensive criticism of existing conditions, which includes, but does not separate and isolate, the economic, political, and ideological elements constituting 'the totality of social life and development. This period came to an end with the defeat of the revolutionary movements. After that a long, non-revolutionary period ensued which altered the character of Marxism. And this could not be otherwise, for Marxism itself insists upon the interdependence of theory and practice. The new revolutionary upheavals initiated by the Russian Revolution promised a third and revolutionary period of Marxism.

During the long period of inaction, Korsch argued, Marx and Engels developed their theories by giving them an increasingly scientific content. This, however, did not dissolve their system into a number of special and generally applicable social sciences; it retained its identity as an all-embracing critical theory of the whole of capitalist theory and practice, which also could be overcome only in its entirety, through the overthrow of the social relations on which it was based. While philosophy was thus replaced by science, science did not become the key to the social transformation process. Marxism was still conceived as the revolutionary consciousness of an actually-occurring revolutionary process terminating in 'the abolition of capitalism. While this revolutionary consciousness had evolved out of philosophy, it increased its effectiveness by way of science; but it was neither science nor philosophy in the restricted sense of these terms.

The return of revolutionary conditions, in Korsch's view, would also mark the return to a revolutionary social consciousness. The revolutionary process was at once ideational and actual. But as history has to be made by men, this implied that the revolutionary consciousness had to be fostered as much as the actual transformation of its socio-economic base. It was not possible to neglect one in favour of the other without jeopardising both. By attacking once again on all fronts of social awareness and social practice, there would be restored the radical activity of Marxism's revolutionary past which had been lost during its evolutionary period-a loss which manifested itself in the reactionary character of the Marxism of the Second International.

Korsch's Marxism and Philosophy embodying these ideas, appeared in 1923 in Germany and a year later in Russia. Although written for the communist and against the social-democratic theory and practice, both rejected it as a deviation from true Marxism. For Kautsky it was as false as the whole of communism. For the bolsheviks, it was an

⁷ Ibid. p. 89.

idealist revision of Leninist Marxism. Rejection by both the main Marxist tendencies pointed to their common commitment to the Marxism of the Second International, despite their otherwise divergent political practices. Korsch answered their criticism in the second edition (1930), but by this time he had overcome all his illusions with respect to the revolutionary potentialities of the Third International.

Korsch now recognised a definite affinity between the Leninist version of Marxism and the Marxism of the Second International. Although the latter had been split on theoretical lines into a so-called 'revisionist' wing and an 'orthodox' wing, this did not affect actual policies; both wings were revisionist. Their Marxism was mere ideology, that is, the 'false consciousness' of a reformist practice. This, Korsch conceded, may have been unavoidable, but there was no need to contend, as both Kautsky and Lenin did, that the working class by itself was not able to develop a socialist consciousness, that this had to be brought to it from the outside, by the socialist-oriented, educated bourgeoisie. Socialist consciousness, in these conditions, was not the revolutionary activity of the working class, but the result of the intelligentsia's scientific insight into social mechanisms and their laws of development.

With this, socialist consciousness ceased to be what it had been for Marx, namely, the theoretical expression of the proletarian class struggle. If Kautsky's 'orthodoxy' represented the false consciousness of a revisionist practice, Lenin's revolutionary Marxism was no better, existing only in ideological form as the false consciousness of a non-socialist activity. It did not express the practical necessities of the modern, international, anti-capitalist class struggle, but was determined by specific Russian conditions, which required not so much the emancipation as the creation of an industrial proletariat.

This situation could be altered only by revolutionary working-class action on an international scale-wherever there was an objective possibility of transforming capitalist into socialist society. Without such actions, the bolsheviks were condemned to bring into being a new social form of oppression, which was bound, in its own self-defence, to subordinate the revolutionary aspirations of the international working class to its own narrow ends. So long as there was a possibility of the Russian Revolution being extended westward, the Leninist attempt to drive it beyond its objective limitations conformed to the requirements of a Western proletarian revolution. With the West's failure this was no longer true. Korsch therefore argued that it was necessary to dissociate proletarian communism from bolshevism and the Third International, as, previously, it had been necessary to break away from the reformism of the Second International. Both movements had to be opposed, equally with capitalism in all its manifestations; the international radical labour movement should not be exploited for the specific purposes of the bolshevik regime and the national interests of Russia.

Korsch parted with the Communist International less because he had, since 1923, found its theory wanting and a mere repetition of Kautsky's orthodoxy, than because the communist movement had become an objectively counter-revolutionary force. It was not that its policies were the outcome of false theories but that they were determined by the concrete needs of the Russian state, and by the special interests of its new ruling elite and their bureaucratic retinue. By trying to use international communism for Russia's national needs, the bolsheviks were repeating the miserable performance of the Second International which, in 1914, also sacrificed internationalism to nationalism.⁸ The new counter-revolutionary role of bolshevism was apparent not only in Russia's internal and foreign policies but in the everyday policies of all the national communist parties as well.

⁸ K. Korsch, *Der Weg der Komintern* (Berlin, 1926).

First in his own paper, *Kommunistische Politik*, later in Franz Pfempfert's anti-bolshevik and anti-social-democratic *Aktion*, in Franz Jung's *Der Gegner*, in various liberal publications and academic journals, Korsch continued his criticism of the labour movement, whether openly reformist or seemingly radical, always combining his critique with an elucidation and critical interpretation of Marxian doctrine. The themes of his articles ranged from questions of Hegel's dialectic, over various aspects of Marxian theory, to contemporary political and economic issues, and established his pre-eminence as a Marxist polemicist, even though he found a diminishing circle of appreciative readers and a growing number of political enemies.

Particularly outstanding was his polemic⁹ against Kautsky's magnum opus, *The Materialistic Conception of History*, which appeared in 1927. In it Kautsky himself repudiated his past 'orthodoxy' in the interest of 'scientific progress'. In the attempt to develop Marx's historical materialism through its extension by way of the natural sciences, Kautsky took as his starting-point not the dialectic of society as derived from Hegel, but the evolutionary biological theories of Darwin. Kautsky's work confirmed Korsch's earlier critique of the 'scientific socialism' of the Second International, as well as his assertion that its orthodoxy merely hid its own revisionist inclinations which were now, finally, proclaimed as an advance over Marx.

In 1932, Korsch prepared a new edition of the first volume of Marx's *Capital*,¹⁰ again stating in his preface and commentary that, contrary to the assumptions of many Marxists, Marx himself did not differentiate between the specifically historical and the strictly theoretical-economic content of his work. In the generally accepted view of Rudolf Hilferding, for instance, Marxism was a scientific system of the general laws of social production and Marxian economic theory an application of the general law to the commodity-producing society. Marx's labour theory of value and the materialist conception of history were seen as identical, whereas for Marx the first referred only to capitalism and the second was not a general economic law but elucidated historical development as a whole. In being an effective critique of bourgeois political economy, Marx's *Capital* was, of course, as Korsch pointed out, also a contribution to economic science. But political economy was for Marx not only a theoretical system of propositions, either true or false, but a piece of historical reality, i.e., the totality and the history of bourgeois society, and as such it constituted the subject-matter of *Capital*.

When Hitler came to power in 1933, Korsch left Germany for England, went from there to Denmark, and in 1936 emigrated to the United States. During his stay in Denmark he spent much time with Bertolt Brecht,¹¹ who had previously attended his lectures in Berlin, and began work on his book *Karl Marx* for Professor Morris Ginsberg's series of sociological studies.¹²

Korsch's *Karl Marx* is perhaps the richest and at the same time the most concentrated interpretation of Marxism. It is at once historical, sociological, and economic. Despite the auspices under which it was published, it denies any connection between Marxism and what is generally thought of as sociology. Its concern is with the

⁹ K. Korsch, *Die Materialistische Geschichtsauffassung: Eine Auseinandersetzung mit Karl Kautsky* (Leipzig, 1929).

¹⁰ *Das Kapital*. Mit Vorrede und Anmerkungen von Karl Korsch (Berlin, 1932).

¹¹ Brecht referred to Korsch and to Fritz Stenberg as his Marxist teachers. But their teaching was obviously lost on the pupil, who remained a Stalinist with bourgeois inclinations until his death. However, there were some results of the Korsch-Brecht 'collaboration', for instance, Brecht's attempt (in rather questionable taste) to modernise and re-write the Communist Manifesto in hexametric form. See: W. Rash, 'Bertold Brecht's Marxistischer Lehrer', *Merkur*, October 1963; *Sinn und Form*, No. 2/3, 1963.

¹² Published in London in 1938 and re-issued in New York, 1963. A German version is soon to appear under the auspices of the Institute for Social History, Amsterdam.

original ideas of Marx rather than with their subsequent development, and these ideas are viewed in the light of recent historical events.

Korsch's exposition is organised around three principles: historical specification, change, and criticism. Marx was strictly concerned, he wrote, with capitalist society and its fetishistic economic categories; his sole interest was to change society; the particulars of this change were left to the future. This did not exclude theoretical generalisation; but by analysing the specific historical form of bourgeois society Marx attained a general knowledge of social development far transcending that particular form, and by penetrating the fetishistic categories of political economy, his critique became the theory of an impending revolution. Marx's theory of the class struggle was itself class struggle and did not pretend or desire to be anything else.

Marxism, in Korsch's view, was the transitional theory of capitalist society as a transitory phase of historical development. It dealt 'with all ideas as being connected with a definite historical epoch and the specific form of society pertaining to that epoch, and recognises itself as being just as much an historical product as any other theory pertaining to a definite stage of social development and to a definite social class' (p. 84). This historical character of Marxism excluded any form of dogmatism, and Korsch devoted a great part of his subsequent work to freeing Marxism from such encumbrances.

Korsch's book found only a limited response, and his political ideas even less, in a social climate shaped by preparations for war and by the defeat, either actual or by default, of all working-class aspirations. The Spanish Civil War and its partial transformation into an imperialist contest found Korsch siding with the anarcho-syndicalists and their short-lived attempts to collectivise social production and distribution. All manifestations of proletarian independence through direct action for working-class objectives Korsch now perceived as so many signs pointing to the persistence of proletarian class consciousness within the expanding area of authoritarian control over ever larger spheres of social life. Not ideological adherence to Marxist doctrine, but action by the working class on its own behalf was the key to a possible rebirth of the proletarian movement.

Standing outside the official labour movement, and quite unfit for the increasingly conformist academic world, Korsch's life in America was one of great isolation, which became more pronounced during the war and its aftermath. For most of the time he had no other outlet than the publications of the 'Council Communists',¹³ themselves a small and isolated group with a consistently radical Marxist point of view, whose anti-parliamentary and anti-trade unionist views Korsch now shared. His contributions dealt with the monopolistic transformation of capitalism, with the false and real issues of the second world war, and with the workers' attitude to the war; in Korsch's view the war could not further their real interests whatever its outcome. 'The workers', he wrote, 'have already too long done other people's tasks, imposed on them under the high-sounding names of humanity, of human progress, of justice, and freedom, and what not. . . . The only task for the workers, as for every other class, is to look out for themselves'.¹⁴

In 1950 Korsch visited Europe and delivered a series of lectures in Germany and Switzerland, in which he propounded Ten theses on the state of Marxism.¹⁵ At first sight, these seemed to indicate Korsch's total break with Marxism. It no longer made sense, he

¹³ *Living Marxism* and, later, *New Essays*, both published in Chicago from 1934 to 1943. A selection of Korsch's articles from these periodicals will be published by the Amsterdam Institute for Social History, and another selection by Feltrinelli, Milan. See also K. Korsch, 'The New Program of the American Workers Party', *Council Correspondence* (Chicago), January 1935.

¹⁴ *Living Marxism*, Vol. V, No. 3, p. 47.

¹⁵ Published in 1959 in *Arguments* (Paris), No. 16.

stated, even to raise the question whether or not Marx's and Engels's teachings still had theoretical validity and practical applicability. Marx's theory in its original function, as the theory of the workers' socialist revolution, could not be restored and all attempts to do so were reactionary Utopias. To make a first step towards the reconstruction of revolutionary theory and practice, it was necessary to deny Marxism's monopolistic claims upon the revolutionary movement, and to consider Marx merely as one of many founders and developers of socialism, along with the so-called Utopian socialists, and with Marx's great competitors, Blanqui, Proudhon and Bakunin. Important parts of Marx's theory remained valid, but their functions had changed with changing conditions. Particularly critical for Marxism was its dependence on the backward economic and political circumstances in which it arose, and its consequent connection with the political forms of the bourgeois revolution. Equally critical was the belief that England constituted the model for all subsequent capitalist development, and that it was this particular type of development that provided the necessary presupposition for socialism. These conditions and assumptions gave rise to the Marxist overestimation of the state as the decisive instrument of the socialist revolution, as well as to the mystical identification of capitalist development with the proletarian revolution.

Because of these characteristics, it was possible for Lenin to adapt and transfer Marxism, in a new form, to Russia and Asia, and to change Marxian socialism from a revolutionary theory to pure ideology, which could be used for a variety of different goals, and was so used in the Russian Revolution and in the world at large. But the mere transformation of competitive private capitalism into a monopoly over the means of production and social control did not lead to the self-determination of the workers, and was not, whatever else it might be, any longer a revolutionary goal.

What was new in these theses was only their tone. Otherwise they were merely a summing-up of Korsch's life-long critical preoccupation with Marxism in its relation to the workers' revolution, and a consequence of his conviction that Marxism itself could not comprehend more than a particular stage of historical development. As once he had worked his way from Marx's theories to the Russian Revolution, so now he worked his way back from Leninism to Marxism, and found the former already contained in the latter. This discovery, however, required the intermediary actual application of Marxism to social reality. The bourgeois degeneration of Marxism in Russia, as Korsch had pointed out in 1938, 'was not essentially different from the outcome of the series of ideological transformations which . . . befell the various currents of so-called Western Marxism. Less than at any previous time does Marxism today serve as a theoretical weapon in an independent struggle of the proletariat, for the proletariat and by the proletariat'.¹⁶ But now he found the seeds of all these transformations already embedded in the time-conditioned Marxism of Marx himself.

What in Marxian theory and practice appeared as anti-bourgeois at one stage of capitalist development became assimilable to the capitalist mode of production at another stage. What seemed to be the road to socialism led to a new type of capitalism. Thus Korsch's criticism of Marxian orthodoxy, particularly of its Leninist version, finally became a critique of Marxism itself and therewith, of course, self-criticism. However, it was not, he said, 'directed against what may be called in a very comprehensive sense the Marxist, that is, the independent revolutionary movement of the international working

¹⁶ K. Korsch. 'The Marxist Ideology in Russia', *Living Marxism*, Vol IV, No. 2, p. 50; 'Marx's Stellung in der Europaischen Revolution von 1848', *Die Schule*, No. 5, 1948.

class'. It was directed against the insufficiency of Marxism, in all its various stages, to serve this revolutionary movement in an unambiguous way.¹⁷

* * *

A great number of fragmentary drafts for articles, as well as outlines for contemplated books, attest to Korsch's continued desire to proceed from the criticism of Marxism to an understanding of the theoretical and practical requirements of socialism under the prevailing conditions and their ascertainable tendencies. For he was still convinced that, like the capitalism of old, capitalism in its modern monopolistic form also has its historical limitations. If this was no longer possible within the old Marxist frame of reference, the new revolutionary theory and practice would nevertheless 'be a kind of Marxism of the twentieth century, though it could not be called by that name. To serve that end, Korsch not only tried to look forward, but also re-examined those theories and movements of the past which had opposed Marxism not because it was socialist, but because it appeared not socialistic enough, by incorporating into itself aspects of a capitalist nature and of capitalist development-such as government centralisation of decision-making-which would hamper the self-determination of the working class.

Korsch also realised that the so-called under-developed countries would, in one form or another, employ Marxian ideology for immediate ends that did not correspond with the concept of socialism as the emancipation of the industrial proletariat and the abolition of social class relations. But these transformations were real and had to be related to the general process of social change now under way on a world-wide scale. To describe this process in Marxian terms was to misunderstand it; nor was it possible to ignore this actual transformation process by adhering to a Marxism which did not fit the real situation.

It is not clear whether the fragmentary state of Korsch's various endeavours to deal with the present world situation and its revolutionary, or counter-revolutionary, potentialities was due to difficulties inherent in the subject matter itself, or was related to the progressive loss of his own abilities-the result of an illness which was slowly destroying him. His last coherent attempt to formulate his new ideas has the significant title, *The Time of Abolitions*. This investigates the possibilities and requirements of the expected abolition of the capitalist mode of production, of capital, of labour itself, and of the state. It tries to segregate the realistic from the Utopian elements in Marx's thinking on these questions, and to go one step beyond Marx in considering the probabilities of a socialist future.

Korsch died in Cambridge, Massachusetts, in 1961.

¹⁷ K. Korsch, 'Marxism and the Present Task of the Proletarian Class Struggle', *Living Marxism*, Vol. IV, No. 4, p. 119.

Humanism and Socialism

(1965)

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I

Like science, industry, nationalism and the modern state, humanism is a product of capitalist development. It crowns the ideology of the bourgeoisie, which arose within the social relations of feudalism, whose main ideological support was religion. Humanism is a product of history, i.e. the product of men engaged in changing one social formation into another. Because it evolved with the rise and development of capitalism, it is necessary to consider the humanism of bourgeois society before dealing with its relationship to socialism, or with 'socialist humanism'.

Pre-capitalist social relations developed so slowly that changes were almost imperceptible. Absolute stagnation does not exist, however, and the rise of capitalism after the Middle Ages, which saw the end of one epoch of social development and the beginnings of another, was the result of many isolated, drawn-out but cumulative changes in production processes and property relations. The accumulation of great wealth and its concentration in urban centres, as well as the limitations on the amassing of wealth imposed by persistent feudal conditions, led to an intellectual movement opposed to the other-worldly medieval Christian discipline which had sustained the feudal social structure and the power of the Church. But like commercial wealth itself, the newly-developing irreligious attitude, which made Western man once again 'the measure of all things', remained for some time the privilege of the rich and their retainers. Humanism seemed to exhaust itself after freeing the mind of theology's dogmatism and after its return to, and fresh appreciation of, the Greek classics.

Being itself an expression of a general developmental trend, humanism could not help affecting this trend, in turn, through its critical attitude toward the medieval Church. In this way it helped support the Reformation, even though the reformed Church could not adapt itself to humanism. Until the eighteenth century it remained an intellectual pastime, but ensuing revolutionary events brought it to full flower as part of the general ideology of the middle classes, which aspired to add political power to their growing economic importance within the decaying feudal regimes.

The revolutionary middle class identified its own specific class interests with the needs and desires of the large majority of society suffering under the tyrannical rule of an aristocratic minority. Its own political emancipation it saw as the emancipation of humanity from all forms of oppression and superstition. This was both a necessity and a conviction, even though the rich middle class had no real intention of altering the lot of the lower classes. otherwise, however, there was to be liberty, fraternity and equality. The men of the *Enlightenment* felt themselves to be true humanists, opposing the supernatural

and emphasising the truly human, to which alone belonged the right to fashion society in accordance with human nature and reasoning.

With the bourgeoisie securely established, humanism degenerated into humanitarianism for the alleviation of the social misery that accompanied the capital formation process. Although the capitalist mode of production was adjudged unalterable — it was thought to conform best to both natural law and the nature of man — social reformers, imbued with the humanist tradition, thought it nonetheless possible to combine the system of private capital production with a more egalitarian system of distribution. The harsh rules of natural economic laws were to be tempered by human compassion and charity.

The cockier the bourgeoisie became through its success, and the more the enormous increase of wealth overshadowed the plight of the working classes, the less did bourgeois ideology refer to the humanist past. Instead, Malthusian doctrine and social Darwinism questioned the rationality of humanitarian attitudes and policies which were found to contradict the natural law of the ‘survival of the fittest’. Humanism was superseded by *economic man* as the ‘final’ and ‘scientifically established’ recognition of the true nature of man and the laws of nature.

The ‘survival of the fittest’ involves both force and ideology. The force brought to bear upon the ‘unfit’, i.e. the working classes, resides in the capitalist class possessing the means of production and its control over the political means of coercion. The ideology which supports this condition and, thus, the exploitation of labour by capital, maintains that capital production and the social relations at its base are natural relations independent of the influence of time. To make this doubly sure, old superstitions were revived and added to the new. Once more men were turned into passive victims of superhuman forces beyond their control. The humanisation process which had accompanied the rise of capitalism turned into a new and more powerful dehumanisation process through the subordination of all human endeavour to the new fetish of capital production.

The history of capitalism, as distinct from that of its early protagonists, is the history of the increasing dehumanisation of the social relations of production and of social life in general. In all previous social systems, wealth confronted labour concretely in the directly discernible social relations of master and slave, lord and serf, oppressor and oppressed. Slavery and serfdom were sanctioned by the gods, or by God, and could not be questioned. To make slavery convenient, slaves were relegated to the animal world, but their masters knew what they were doing when they put them to work. The landlord and the serf both knew their stations in society, even though the serf might, at times, have wondered at the wisdom of these arrangements. But, then, the ways of the Lord were inscrutable. Nonetheless, slavery and forced labour were human activities, to be suffered by one class, enjoyed by another, and understood by both for what they were.

The fetish of religion which helped secure these conditions did not becloud the real social relations at their base; it merely made them acceptable. In any case, the early humanists were not bothered by class relations, as their great affection for pre-Christian slave society testifies. Neither did it bother the middle class engaged, as it was, in replacing the feudal with the capitalist system of exploitation. Its concern was with the nature, or essence, of individual man, with human nature in general, and with society only in so far as it encroached upon the realisation of man’s assumed potentialities as a species-being.

This was a philosophy of man appropriate for the still-embattled emerging capitalist society of individual entrepreneurs, who justified individual self-interest with the assumption that it was the very instrument for achieving the freedom of the individual and the welfare of society. just as the revolutionary middle class identified its own

specific class interests with the needs of society as a whole, so it identified the particularities of 'human nature' under capitalistic conditions with human nature in general.

In reality, of course, the abstract concept of individual man and of his nature was confronted by real men holding opposite positions in the social production process. The world of men was the world of buyers and sellers of labour power; their relations to one another appeared as market relations. Production for exchange was the production and accumulation of exchange-value-expressible in terms of money. But only the buyers of labour power enriched themselves. The sellers merely reproduced their wretched conditions as wage workers. The selling and buying of labour power could not, and obviously was not, an equal exchange, for part of the labour was not exchanged at all but simply appropriated as surplus-value, a process hidden by the market, or price, form of commodity production. However, the exploitation of labour by capital was recognised at an early stage of capital formation. Lamented by the exploited it was taken for granted by the exploiters.

This by itself, however, did not imply an *increasing* dehumanisation of society. Humanistic attitudes had evolved under conditions of class exploitation prior to the specific capitalist relations of production and could, perhaps, slowly ameliorate, and finally overcome, the class determination of the economy. This was indeed the hope of the well-meaning among the bourgeoisie, and of the early utopian socialists, who stressed the common humanity of man and appealed to their innate sense of justice to set things right.

II

If only for a short time, this hope was shared by the young Marx during his phase of *philosophical communism* and — in an extremely tortured philosophical form — found its expression in the *Economic and Philosophical Manuscripts of 1844*. According to Marx, and in context with his criticism of Hegelian idealism, man had gone astray by alienating himself from his true essence, in consequence of which he experienced the products of his labour as alien objects exercising power over him, and the external world as an alien world antagonistically opposed to him. Alienation was seen under the aspect of Feuerbach's materialism and was dealt with in a criticism of bourgeois economy. This economy was itself, however, conceived as a specific form of human self-estrangement. Marx deemed it necessary to make man aware of his essential nature and of the nature of his alienation. This was to be the function of philosophy, of a positive humanism. It was expected to end all forms of alienation — of man from his true nature, of man from his work, of man from his fellow-man and, by doing so, end the various manifestations of alienation such as religion and private property. Humanism, in Marx's view, equated with communism and communism with the end of man's alienation.

What was the essence of man? It was, according to the young Marx, what differentiated man from the animal. Whereas the animal is immediately identical with his life-activity, man "makes his life-activity itself the object of his will ... In creating an *objective world* by his practical activity, man proves himself a conscious species being, that is, a being that treats the species as its own essential being, or that treats itself as a species being. Production is his active species life. Through and because of this production, nature appears as his work and his reality. The object of labour is, therefore, the *objectification* of man's species life; for he duplicates himself not only, as in

consciousness, intellectually, but also actively, in reality, and therefore he contemplates himself in a world that he has created.”¹

But why did Marx bother with the nature of man in a work that dealt *mainly* with problems of political economy? After all, as he said, his real concern was with the “*actual economic fact*” of the alienation of the labourer from his product, which then confronts the labourer as an alien and independent power. The product of labour, Marx wrote, “is labour which has been congealed in an object, which has become material: it is the *objectification* of labour. Labour’s realisation is its objectification. In the conditions dealt with by political economy this realisation of labour appears as a loss of *reality* for the worker; *objectification* as a loss of *the object* and of object-bondage; appropriation as estrangement, as *alienation*. So much so does labour’s realisation appear as a loss of reality that the worker loses reality to the point of starving to death ... Indeed, labour itself becomes an object which he can get hold of only with the greatest effort and with the most irregular interruptions. So much so does the appropriation of the object appear as estrangement that the more objects the worker produces the fewer can he possess, and the more he falls under the domination of his product, capital.”²

The fetishism of commodity and capital production of Marx’s *Capital* is here fully anticipated, but relates itself not only to the specific social relations of bourgeois society but also to the nature of man as a species-being consciously producing the conditions of his life. Now the nature of man, as conceived by the young Marx, is the same for capitalist and worker — for those who find it difficult to realise their labour and for those who find it easy to appropriate the objects of other men’s labour. What Marx said was that capitalism not only exploits labour but also violates human nature. The bourgeois assertion that its system of capital production was a natural system corresponding to human nature Marx countered with the assertion that it distorts the nature of man.

It did not take Marx long to notice that as a Young Hegelian he had been spouting the same ‘rubbish’ in his criticism of bourgeois society as the bourgeoisie had produced in its own defence. Within less than two years after his philosophical concern with the essence of man, he ridiculed this very concern in *The German Ideology*. He still held that production is man’s “active species life”, but he was no longer interested in man in general but only in “real, historical men”. And what these men were, at any particular time, depended on *what* and *how* they produced. Their nature “depended on the material conditions determining their production. This production only makes its appearance with the increase of population. In its turn this presupposes the intercourse of individuals with one another. The form of this intercourse is again determined by production.”³ By developing their material production and their material intercourse, men “alter, along with this, their real existence, their thinking and the products of their thinking”.⁴

Human nature, Marx now held, cannot be abstracted from the isolated individual because it derives from an “ensemble of social relations”. Man can be no more than what men actually do in their concrete historical and social environment. By changing their environment, they change themselves; history may thus be regarded as the continuous transformation of human nature. This is not to say that there are no fixed drives which are characteristic of man and which changing social circumstances may only be able to modify in their form and direction. But these do not affect the mutability of human nature in the course of social and historical development.

¹ Karl Marx, *Economic and Philosophical Manuscripts of 1844*, Moscow, pp 75-76.

² Ibid, p 69.

³ Karl Marx, Friedrich Engels, *The German Ideology*, New York, 1939, pp 7-8.

⁴ Ibid, pp 14-15.

In any case, society means relations between individuals, not the individual. One cannot say, for instance, that “from the standpoint of society neither slave nor master exist for both are human beings. That, however, they ‘are only *outside* society; slave and master being social determinations.”⁵ Humanism can thus neither be related to, nor derived from, the essence of man. It refers to social conditions and relations which determine the behaviour of men. It must be produced by men, and — to come back to our starting-point — was the product of particular social and historical circumstances. Developed within class society, it was necessarily of a more ideological nature, i.e., it represented the false consciousness of a class aspiring to rule society and for that reason identified its own interests with those of humanity.

As an emancipatory value humanism was discarded by the bourgeoisie as soon as it gained full control of society. Humanism was revived by the working class to achieve its own emancipation — but with a difference. It was now recognised that humanism was incompatible with exploitation and class relations, and could become a practical reality only through the establishment of a non-exploitative, classless society. Humanism was still equated with communism. It was no longer seen as an ideal, however, to which reality should adjust itself, but as the real social movement which stood in opposition to the capitalist system. Socialist humanism was nothing less nor more than the proletarian class struggle to end capitalism and thus create the objective conditions for a humanist society, or a socialised humanity.

The struggle for a humanist society incorporates humanism as an ‘ideal’ because it is not as yet a reality. Socialism, by looking at things as they are, cannot help contemplating what they ought to be. But it does so only with regard to practically achievable ends as determined by existing conditions. What ought to be relates not to abstract ethical goals but to concrete social conditions that can be changed for the better, that is, to what men, at any given time, consider to be better. This excludes, of course, all those who are satisfied with existing conditions which, generally, means the ruling and privileged classes. Only those intent on improving their lot by way of social change will adhere to the practical ethics of social change that find their expression in the requirements of the social struggle itself. Individualism gives way here to class consciousness and economic self-interest to proletarian solidarity, as preconditions for establishing a society which, in its existence and further development, will no longer be determined by class relations and will thus be enabled to realise the humanist ‘ideals’.

Humanism as a practical reality presupposes socialism. Until then neither man, nor men, but only a particular social class of men will attempt to change its ideological state into a weapon for its concrete realisation. This attempt is at once a practical struggle against existing oppression and misery, a taking of sides against all forms of inhumanity perpetrated in defence of the *status quo*. The socialist movement is thus an ethical movement in so far as morals involve actual human behaviour and not ‘eternal truths’ associated with the nature, or God-given nature, of man. It will attempt within its own ranks, and within society at large, to realise those historically-evolved rules, norms, and standards of behaviour which assure and improve the well-being of all members of society, and will oppose those that serve only special interests. To do so means to lay bare the inconsistency of bourgeois morals within bourgeois practice, and to prepare for social conditions within which moral rules can actually be applied.

The fetishistic ethics of bourgeois society found opposition in the historical materialist ethics of the proletarian class. Bourgeois humanism was supplanted by proletarian humanism, expressed in the class struggle, and providing the means to

⁵ Karl Marx, *Grundrisse der Kritik der Politischen Oekonomie*, Berlin, 1953, p 176.

humanist ends. These means, however, are not only determined by the ends they intend to serve; they are co-determined by bourgeois resistance to social change. The actual forms the class struggle takes on derive as much from the socialist goal as from the reality of existing power relations within capitalism. It is thus not possible to find ‘unadulterated’ humanistic means to achieve humanist ends. This could be possible only *outside* the class struggle, that is, through the realisation of humanism by the bourgeoisie itself, which is both an empty hope and an objective impossibility.

III

According to Marx, capitalism represents the present stage of a long developmental process of changing modes and relations of social production. This process was based on the social division of labour, which was, from the outset, a division of the conditions of labour, that is, of tools and materials, or, in modern parlance, of the splitting up of accumulated capital among different owners, and thus also, the division between labour and capital, and the different forms of property. With the growth of social production went the extension of exchange and the increasing use of money. Considered at first a mere medium of exchange to further social production, money, and the exchange it facilitated, soon took on an apparently independent character. The fortunes of the individual producers became dependent upon market relations, for it was only by way of exchange that social realities could assert themselves and thus control the producers instead of being controlled by them.

Bourgeois economic theory rationalised the discrepancy between private production and market exchange with the concept of the market equilibrium. It was assumed that the competitive price and market mechanism would lead to the most economical allocation of the social labour and assure to each and all the equivalent of their particular contributions to the production process. It was precisely by maximising private self-interest within the market relations that the latter, like an ‘invisible hand’, would bring forth the optimum of social well-being. All this is contradicted by the reality of crises and depressions and was theoretically disproven by Marxian theory. But what interests us here is merely the proudly-acknowledged fact that capitalist production and distribution are not determined consciously and directly by men, but only indirectly — by the vicissitudes of uncontrollable market occurrences.

This is only half the story, however, even though it is the whole of it for bourgeois economy which refuses to acknowledge the exploitation of labour by capital. Capitalistic production is the production of unpaid labour as capital — expressible in money terms. The exchange between labour and capital leaves surplus-labour, materialised in commodities, in the hands of the capitalists. This surplus-labour has to be realised outside the capital-labour exchange, and is so realised through the consumption of the non-producing population and the formation of capital. The increasing productivity of labour devalues the existing capital and reduces the amount of surplus-labour extractable through the medium of a *given capital*, which compels the capitalists constantly to increase their capital. This is not the place to enter into the extremely complex subject of capitalist dynamics. It is enough merely to assert what everyone may recognise for himself, namely, that capital competition implies the constant enlargement of capital. The control of the producers by the market is simultaneously the control of the producers *and the market* by the compulsion of capital accumulation.

Behaviour in capitalism is subordinated to the capital expansion process. This process is the direct result of the development of the social forces of production under private property relations, which, in turn, are determined by the class structure of society

and its exploitation mechanism. The expansion of production is thus practically the 'self-expansion' of capital, for no capitalist can abstain from single-mindedly devoting himself to the expansion of his capital. Moreover, only as long as capital expands as capital can material production be carried on; the satisfaction of human needs depends on the formation of capital. Instead of using the means of production to satisfy these needs, these means, as capital, determine the conditions of social existence for both labour and capital.

The various manifestations of the 'alienation' of modern men, with which current social criticism concerns itself, follow from the fundamental fact of fetishistic capital production, which appears on the market as commodity fetishism. Because capital production must be realised through the circulation process, the drive for a larger capital in terms of money values and with complete disregard for the real social requirements in terms of human values, turns all social relationships into economic relationships, that is, human relationships can only be consummated by way of economic relationships and actually have, or assume, a commodity character. Everything is for sale and all can be bought. The social compulsion to accumulate capital compels individuals to put their trust in money rather than in men. And as only the possession of money allows for social intercourse, social intercourse itself is only a means of making money. Every man is a means to another man to secure and improve his own economic position, no matter what his interests may be in extra-economic terms. Although a social being, he is such only outside society. He may find his social behaviour both enjoyable and defensible, but actually he has no control over it and remains a helpless victim of circumstances.

Excluded by the objectively given conditions of capital production, humanism, as attitude and behaviour, restricts itself to the socially rather meaningless accidental subjective dispositions of individuals, and may, or may not, have beneficial effects. In so far as it exists, it is a private affair with no effect whatever on the cannibalistic nature of capitalism. Adolf Eichmann is, perhaps, the best exemplification of the degree of 'humanism' left to the individuals of this society. Feeling himself incapable of killing a single human being, he was quite ready to help arrange for the killing of millions of people by other men. Yet his case is only a more dramatic instance of a prevailing attitude. The individual sees only himself as real; other men he regards as expendable or manipulative abstractions. The various inventors, designers, producers and users of modern weapons of war may all be sharing Eichmann's 'weakness' but do exactly, either actually or potentially, what Eichmann was doing. And so do the capitalists, financiers, merchants, statesmen, politicians, scientists, educators, ideologists, poets, labour leaders and the workers themselves in the name of one, or another, of the fetishes that help maintain and perpetuate existing conditions.

This is not a new characteristic of capitalism but in its enormity corresponds to its present stage of development. To refer to the increasing dehumanisation is merely to note the expansion and extension of capitalism, and the simultaneous loss of the only humanising force operating within it, that is, the destruction of the socialist movement. Marx certainly overstated the workers' capacity to develop a socialist consciousness, just as he understated the resilience of capitalism, its ability, that is, to increase the exploitation of labour and at the same time improve the workers' living standards. In short, Marx did not foresee the full extent of the increase of the productivity of labour under capitalist auspices, which, in advanced capitalist nations, altered the conditions that had been expected to generate a revolutionary consciousness.

IV

This seems to be contradicted by the existence of the so-called socialist part of the world. In fact, the search for a socialist humanism is directly connected with the existence of socialist countries. These nations, it turns out, display no more humanism than capitalist states and, consequently, are accused of violating their own principles and ignoring their own potentialities. It seems as if the very means to reach socialism pervert the socialist end and that new ways must be found to avoid this dilemma. However, the immediate ends of these nations was not, and could not be, the achievement of socialism but rather capital accumulation, even though it was accumulation under the auspices of the state instead of private capital. Socialism exists in these states only in ideological form as the false consciousness of a non-socialist practice. It has nevertheless been accepted as reality even by the free-enterprise bourgeoisie, because from their particular standpoint, state capitalism equates with socialism merely because it dispenses with private property in the means of production.

Capital formation as the appropriation of surplus-labour in capitalistic ally less-developed nations presupposes the existence of at least two social classes — the producers and the appropriators, and the relationship between them will be a market relationship between capital and labour. Even if planning and not competition determines the rate of accumulation, the planning is done by the appropriators, not the producers, of surplus-labour. As previously, under private property relations, the producers are ‘alienated’ from their products. It is the rate of accumulation, decided upon by the state, that is, by a special group of people, which determines the immediate life-conditions of the labouring population. The decisions of the state cannot be arbitrary, for its very existence depends, internally, on a sufficient rate of accumulation and, externally, on a rate sufficiently competitive to secure national existence. Capital accumulation still dominates the producers of capital. Under such conditions, however, the increasing rate of exploitation cannot be immunised through better living standards which make life sufficiently tolerable for a free acquiescence in the prevailing social relations. Exploitation will be secured by authoritarian methods of control. There is no chance for humanism to raise its head.

The capitalist world, unable to transform itself into a socialist society, but still able either to neutralise or subdue the potentially-given social forces that could affect such a transformation, tends towards its own self-destruction. Its partial destruction during two world-wide wars merely prepared the way for its total destruction in a highly-probable nuclear holocaust. The recognition that war can no longer solve the problems that beset the capitalist world does not affect the drift towards war, for the relentless drive for political and economic dominance, either to gain or retain it, is the outcome and sum-total of all the asocial behaviour that comprises social life in capitalism. The political decision-makers are no less trapped in this *cul-de-sac* than the emasculated and indifferent masses. Simply by making the ‘right’ decisions, in accordance with the specific needs of their nations and the security of their social structure, they may destroy themselves and a large part of the world.

While it is generally granted that war, though improbable, may be released ‘accidentally’, a concern with humanism must assume that, while war is probable, peace may be maintained ‘accidentally’. In that case, there arises the possibility of a new upsurge of anti-capitalist sentiments and activities. The capacity of private capitalism, in its variously diluted forms, to ameliorate the conditions of exploitation is clearly limited. This is apparent in the division of the labouring population in a decreasingly favoured and an increasingly neglected sector. The elimination of human labour that accompanies the

further expansion of capital neither wipes out the proletariat numerically, nor kills its desire to live decently. The very expansion of the newly-developing capitalistic system, on the other hand, brings with it the growth of an industrial proletariat and thus the objective conditions of class consciousness. The resumption of the struggle for socialism would also be the rebirth of socialist humanism.

Humanism and Socialism

(1966)

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Transcription: Adam Buick.

Letter in reply to Robin Derricourt

It seems to me that Robin Derricourt's distinction between humanism and working-class socialism (*IS* 24) treats humanism not as an historical but as a universal category in the sense in which the young Marx identified humanism with communism, i.e., as the realization of the human essence. In Derricourt's view, humanism seems to be something independent of, and different from, definite social relationships and, presently, a kind of monopoly of the "intellectual or middle-class persons." This is a variation on the theme dear to Kautsky and Lenin, namely, that the workers themselves cannot develop a revolutionary consciousness, which has to be brought to them — from the outside — by the middle-class intellectuals. Derricourt can imagine that the workers may realise socialism, but also that this socialism may be devoid of the rationalised humanism which differentiates the intellectual from the "unsophisticated" worker. In brief, he fears the possibility of socialism without humanism; at any rate, without that humanism which characterises the socialist intellectual in bourgeois society.

In its ideological form, with more or less sophistication, humanism is shared by all alike, for, as Marx maintained, "the ruling ideas are those of the ruling classes." Socialist humanism enters into the picture only with the rise of class consciousness and has no aims apart from working-class socialism, that is, from the realization of a *classless* society as a precondition for the transformation of mere ideological into practical humanism. To assume that working-class socialism may be restricted to an "economic reordering of society," is to say, in that case, that there was no *socialist* reordering. Economic relations are, of course, social relations which appear as economic relations only under capitalist conditions. Antagonistic social relations, i. e., class-relations, preclude practical humanism. But since the classless society abolishes the proletariat, there is no need for Derricourt to worry that its lack of sophistication may perpetuate the capitalistic dehumanisation even within socialism. Actually, of course, even now, the working class is the least dehumanised social class and its socialist movement, where it exists, is the only movement with humanist goals.

Der Leninismus und die Arbeiterbewegung des Westens*

*In: *Lenin. Revolution und Politik*. Aufsätze von Paul Mattick, Bernd Rabehl, Juri Tynjavow und Ernest Mandel, Frankfurt am Main, 1970.

Der Leninismus umfaßt die Theorie und Praxis der russischen Revolution. Lenin und die Bolschewiki machten ihre Revolution jedoch im Namen des Marxismus. Ihr Erfolg führte zu dem Begriff Marxismus-Leninismus als Ausdruck der modernen Theorie und Praxis der Weltrevolution und damit auch der proletarischen Revolutionen in Westeuropa und Nordamerika. Die Synthese der bolschewistischen Praxis mit der Marxschen Theorie enthielt von Lenins Seite her jedoch nur organisatorische Neuerungen, und auch dies nur im Sinne eines Rückgriffs auf frühere, schon überholte Organisationsformen revolutionärer Minderheiten im Kampf um die politische Macht. Lenin selbst hielt sich für einen orthodoxen Marxisten und erhob keinen Anspruch auf Originalität. Seiner Auffassung nach war es nicht möglich, über Marx hinauszugehen, und so bemühte er sich in seinen theoretischen Arbeiten um nichts weiter als den Nachweis, daß die Marxschen Lehren mit der wirklichen Entwicklung im Einklang standen.

Marx hatte seine Theorie der proletarischen Revolution zu einer Zeit entwickelt, in der die dafür notwendigen objektiven Bedingungen noch nicht vorhanden waren. Die Möglichkeit einer solchen Revolution war jedoch in den sozialen Widersprüchen des kapitalistischen Systems enthalten. Das 19. Jahrhundert stand noch im Zeichen der unvollendeten bürgerlichen Revolution. Der proletarische Klassenkampf war damit zugleich Teilnahme an der bürgerlichen Revolution, und zwar in einem doppelten Sinn: einerseits zur Förderung der kapitalistischen Entwicklung, als notwendige Vorbedingung der proletarischen Revolution, andererseits zur Ausnutzung der kapitalistischen Institutionen für die Erämpfung besserer Lebensbedingungen im Rahmen der bürgerlichen Gesellschaft. Diese zwiespältige Haltung der bürgerlichen Entwicklung gegenüber charakterisierte die marxistische Arbeiterbewegung. Allerdings gewann das bejahende Element die Oberhand, als die rapide kapitalistische Entfaltung zu einer temporären Stabilisierung der Gesellschaft führte und dem proletarischen Klassenbewußtsein die revolutionäre Pointe nahm.

Als die russische sozialistische Bewegung in Erscheinung trat, hatte die westeuropäische Arbeiterbewegung bereits ihren revolutionären Elan verloren. Abgesehen von rein ideologischen Bekenntnissen zum Sozialismus, begnügte sich deren Tätigkeit mit der im kapitalistischen System möglichen Sozialpolitik und der Verteidigung der Arbeiterinteressen auf dem Arbeitsmarkt. Die diesbezüglichen Erfolge nährten die wachsende Illusion einer friedlichen Verwandlung des Kapitalismus in eine sozialistische Gesellschaftsordnung, die sich im Rahmen der parlamentarischen Demokratie vollziehen sollte. Diese Verwandlung der Arbeiterbewegung fand ihren theoretischen Ausdruck im sozialdemokratischen Revisionismus und ihre praktische Auswertung in der „rein ökonomistischen“ Gewerkschaftsbewegung. Für eine gewisse Zeit wurde dieser Vorgang ideologisch verdeckt, und zwar durch den Scheinkampf der „Marx-Orthodoxie“ gegen den Revisionismus, der allerdings nur mit dem Sieg der revisionistischen Praxis enden konnte.

SPONTANITÄT UND ORGANISATION

Das mangelnde revolutionäre Interesse des Proletariats konnte verschieden ausgelegt werden. Im allgemeinen war es die gesellschaftliche Lage der Arbeiter, der Grad ihrer Ausbeutung und das Erziehungsmonopol der bürgerlichen Herrschaft, die für das mangelnde Klassenbewußtsein verantwortlich gemacht wurden. Oft wurde den Arbeitern überhaupt die Fähigkeit abgesprochen, selbst Mittel und Wege zu ihrer Befreiung zu finden. Nach Karl Kautsky z.B. war die Idee des Sozialismus, der allerdings das Verhältnis von Kapital und Lohnarbeit zugrunde lag, nicht aus der Arbeiterschaft hervorgegangen, sondern von bürgerlichen Intellektuellen geformt worden. In Übereinstimmung mit ihm erklärte Lenin, daß die Arbeiter im allgemeinen nur die Fähigkeit haben, ein gewerkschaftliches Bewußtsein zu entwickeln, nicht aber die revolutionäre Theorie, ohne die es keine revolutionäre Bewegung geben könne. Hier lag die Aufgabe der revolutionären Intelligenz und der von ihr bestimmten Organisationen.

Für Marx war es selbstverständlich, daß der Sozialismus nicht das ausschließliche Privileg der arbeitenden Klasse ist. Auch zu anderen Klassen gehörende Personen konnten aus humanistischen oder Erkenntnisgründen Sozialisten werden und sich auf die Seite des Proletariats stellen. Das Hinüberwechseln von der Bourgeoisie zum Proletariat ist ebenso möglich wie die Verbürgerlichung vieler Arbeiter. Das ändert jedoch nichts an der gesellschaftlichen Klassenteilung und den Klassenkämpfen als Motor der gesellschaftlichen Entwicklung. Und hier wird die Theorie des Sozialismus zur materiellen Gewalt, sobald sie die Massen ergreift. Die Arbeiter selbst haben den Sozialismus zu verwirklichen, und Marx zweifelte nicht daran, daß sich die Arbeiterklasse durch die moderne Industrie und die kapitalistischen Arbeitsbedingungen zur revolutionären Klasse entwickeln würde.

Der Kapitalismus war jedoch lebensfähiger, als Marx es erwartet hatte, und ohne gesellschaftlichen Zwang zu revolutionärem Handeln erschöpft sich der Gegensatz zwischen Kapital und Arbeit in Fragen der Verteilung und läßt die Produktionsverhältnisse unangetastet. Das Proletariat blieb bei dem Gewerkschaftsbewußtsein und der Sozialpolitik stehen, nicht weil ihm die Fähigkeit fehlte, revolutionär zu denken und zu handeln, sondern weil es vorerst keine Neigung hatte, seine Lebensbedingungen auf revolutionärem Wege zu ändern. Man riskiert Leben und Freiheit nur in ausweglosen Lagen, nicht aber unter Bedingungen, die als erträglich gelten. Der Opportunismus und Reformismus um die Jahrhundertwende entsprach nicht nur den direkten Interessen der Partei und Gewerkschaftsbürokratie, sondern auch denen der organisierten arbeitenden Bevölkerung.

Daß die Zeit der Zweiten Internationale keine revolutionäre war, obwohl die westeuropäische Arbeiterbewegung in ihr groß wurde, erwies sich in höchst dramatischer Weise durch ihren Zusammenbruch zu Beginn des Ersten Weltkrieges. Es waren nicht nur die Führer, die sich vom Sozialismus zum Imperialismus wandten, sondern auch die ihnen nachfolgenden Massen. Die Intellektuellen, die angeblichen Träger der revolutionären Theorie, verfielen dem nationalen Chauvinismus nicht weniger als die sich auf die täglichen Lohnkämpfe beschränkten Arbeiter. Aber da Lenin von den letzteren nicht mehr erwartete, ja in der sogenannten „Arbeiteraristokratie“ eine Stütze des kapitalistischen Imperialismus sah, richtete sich sein Zorn über den „Verrat“ der Zweiten Internationale vornehmlich gegen deren Führung und hier im besonderen gegen ihren „orthodoxen“ Flügel, mit dem sich Lenin in der Vorkriegszeit solidarisch erklärt hatte. Nicht die Arbeiterklasse, sondern die Arbeiterführer hatten versagt; sie hatten den Marxismus und das Proletariat verraten. Sie mußten durch bessere Führer, andere

Parteien und eine neue Internationale ersetzt werden, um den proletarischen Kampf erneut aufzunehmen.

Fast das ganze schriftstellerische Werk Lenins ist polemischer Natur. Es spiegelt einen dauernden Kampf gegen alle von den eigenen Interpretationen des Marxismus und der geschichtlichen Situation abweichenden Einstellungen und Richtungen wider. Unablässig attackiert Lenin die Wortführer anderer und gegnerischer Organisationen und kämpft für die theoretische Vorherrschaft in der eigenen Partei. Es geht um die richtige Theorie und damit um die richtige Strategie und Taktik der revolutionären Bewegung — vornehmlich in Rußland, später aber auch im internationalen Maßstab.

Lenins Arbeiten richten sich gegen verräterische Führer, Konterrevolutionäre, Opportunisten, Revisionisten. Obwohl an sich nichts dagegen einzuwenden ist, bleibt diese Beschränkung auf die führenden Gruppen der sozialistischen oder pseudosozialistischen Bewegung doch merkwürdig. Die Masse der Arbeiter und Bauern sowie deren soziales Streben bilden für Lenin sozusagen nur den selbstverständlichen Hintergrund des politischen Kampfes um die Führung der erwarteten Revolution. Obwohl ohne diese Massen die Revolution nicht gemacht werden kann, ist es für ihn doch klar, daß sie die Revolution nicht allein machen können. Da sie der politischen Führung bedürfen, liegt das entscheidende Moment der Revolution nicht bei den Massen selbst, sondern bei der führenden Partei und der Führung dieser Partei.

Die Geschichte der Arbeiterbewegung hatte allerdings gezeigt, daß die revolutionäre Führung von heute die konterrevolutionäre Führung von morgen sein kann, und daß Klassenkampforganisationen leicht in ihr Gegenteil umschlagen. Nach Lenin kam es darauf an, eine Organisationsform zu schaffen, die einer solchen Verwandlung nicht nachgab und deren Führung ihren revolutionären Charakter garantierte: eine Partei, deren Mitglieder in der Revolution ihre wirkliche Berufung sahen und deren Führung tatsächlich in den Händen von Berufsrevolutionären lag. Die Partei konnte nicht (und sollte auch nicht) versuchen, die Massen in sich zu vereinigen. Jedes Streben in dieser Richtung führte nur zu ihrer Verwässerung und schließlich zum Verlust ihres revolutionären Willens. Nicht der demokratischen Massenpartei, in der sich der opportunistische Reformismus nur zu leicht durchsetzen konnte, sondern allein einer aus überzeugten Revolutionären zusammengesetzten disziplinierten und zentralistisch geleiteten Kampfpartei konnte die Führung der Revolution überlassen werden.

Es ist in der Tat nicht möglich, im Kapitalismus revolutionäre Massenorganisationen aufzubauen, da es der organisatorische Erfolg selbst ist, der die ursprüngliche revolutionäre Ideologie zerstört. Revolutionäre Organisationen müssen sich, um solche zu bleiben, von der ordinären Tagespolitik frei halten, was jedoch wiederum ihre eigene Entwicklung hindert. Das Dilemma der Arbeiterbewegung scheint demnach unlösbar, da beides, die aktive Anteilnahme an der gegebenen gesellschaftlichen Praxis und deren prinzipielle Verneinung, zur revolutionären Entmachtung führt. Diesem Dilemma kann man nur durch die spontane Bildung revolutionärer Organisationen entgehen, die innerhalb des Kapitalismus nicht von Dauer sein können. Mit anderen Worten: es ist die spontane Organisation der Revolution selbst, die das Dilemma der revolutionären Bewegung im Kapitalismus zu lösen vermag.

Die etablierte westeuropäische sozialdemokratische Massenpartei und die mit ihr lose verbundenen Gewerkschaften hatten durch ihre organisatorischen Erfolge ihr ideologisches Endziel in der unbegründeten Erwartung preisgegeben, daß das eigene Wachstum und die fortgesetzten Errungenschaften des Tageskampfes zu einer gesellschaftlichen Umwandlung in Richtung auf den Sozialismus führen würden. Allerdings war diese Auffassung nicht allgemein; es bildete sich in der Sozialdemokratie zu gleicher Zeit ein radikaler linker Flügel, der die Partei ins revolutionäre Fahrwasser

zurückzubringen versuchte. Obwohl die sozialdemokratische Bewegung in Rußland noch schwach war, spiegelten sich in ihr doch alle Differenzen, die innerhalb der westeuropäischen Arbeiterbewegung auftraten, in modifizierter Form wider. Lenin repräsentierte hier den radikalen linken Flügel der russischen Sozialdemokratie.

Die linke Opposition der westeuropäischen Sozialdemokratie unterschied sich von der russischen im wesentlichen durch eine andere Bewertung der Spontaneität und der Rolle der Partei in der Revolution. Lenin wandte den Begriff der Spontaneität in einem doppelten Sinne an: einmal im allgemeinen, das andere Mal spezifisch — als die aus dem Proletariat selbst hervorgehenden temporären oder permanenten Organisationsformen, die sich auf die unmittelbaren ökonomischen Interessen der Arbeiter beschränkten. Der Streik, die Streikorganisation und die gewerkschaftliche Vereinigung waren die Organisationen, die spontan aus dem Verhältnis von Kapital und Lohnarbeit erwachsen, aber auch in diesen Verhältnissen hängenblieben. Das politische Klassenbewußtsein, d.h. die sozialistische Zielsetzung, kann nach Lenin „dem Arbeiter nur von außen beigebracht werden, d.h. außerhalb des ökonomischen Kampfes, außerhalb der Sphäre der Beziehungen zwischen Arbeitern und Unternehmern“.¹ Und da nach Lenin "von einer selbständigen, durch die Arbeitermassen selbst im Verlaufe der Bewegung ausgearbeiteten Ideologie keine Rede sein kann, so kann die Frage nur so stehen: bürgerliche oder sozialistische Ideologie".² Die spontane Entwicklung der Arbeiterbewegung kann nur zur Unterordnung unter die bürgerliche Ideologie führen, es sei denn, daß es der Partei gelingt, „die Arbeiter für die revolutionäre Sozialdemokratie zu gewinnen“.³

Die Partei ist also für Lenin nicht ein Teil der arbeitenden Bevölkerung, sondern eine besondere Macht, die mit der Bourgeoisie um die Gefolgschaft der Arbeiter ringt. Da seiner Ansicht nach die Selbstentwicklung der Arbeiter nur dazu führen kann, daß sie die bürgerliche Ideologie übernehmen, muß die Partei „den Kampf gegen die Spontaneität“ aufnehmen, was allerdings nicht mehr bedeutet, als daß die Partei gegen die bürgerliche Ideologie in der Arbeiterbewegung kämpfen muß. Daß diese Selbstverständlichkeit von Lenin als „Kampf gegen die Spontaneität“ aufgefaßt wird, läßt sich nur aus der spezifischen russischen Situation erklären, deren gesellschaftliche Bedingungen für eine proletarische Revolution noch nicht reif sind, nicht aber aus der dem Proletariat unterstellten Unfähigkeit, politisches Klassenbewußtsein zu entwickeln.

Die zu erwartende russische Revolution konnte vom Marxschen Standpunkt aus nur eine bürgerliche sein, die die feudalistischen Hemmungen des Kapitalisierungsprozesses durchbrechen würde. Um die Jahrhundertwende wurde deutlich, daß die russische Entwicklung sich auf dem Wege zum Kapitalismus befand — eine Tatsache, der Lenin sein Buch über *Die Entwicklung des Kapitalismus in Rußland* (1899) widmete. Mit der unabwendbaren, wachsenden Industrialisierung und dem Übergang zur kapitalistischen Landwirtschaft entwickelten sich ein industrielles Proletariat und eine kapitalistische Mittelschicht, die vorerst allerdings nichts an dem reaktionären, autokratischen Regime zu ändern vermochten. Trotz landwirtschaftlicher Reformen und der Herausbildung eines kapitalistisch orientierten Bauerntums blieb der bäuerliche Landmangel akut, und die Not der landwirtschaftlichen Bevölkerung drängte auf die Enteignung des Großgrundbesitzes. Die klassengeteilte Majorität der Bevölkerung — Arbeiter, Bauern und Bürger — hoffte auf die Beseitigung der bestehenden Zustände und war potentiell revolutionär. Es war anzunehmen, daß die kommende Revolution den Charakter einer Volkserhebung haben würde. Unter diesen Umständen hielt es Lenin für verfehlt, die sozialdemokratische Bewegung als reine Arbeiterbewegung anzusehen oder, wie er es ausdrückte, sie zu einer "einfachen Dienerin der Arbeiterbewegung"⁴ herabzuwürdigen. Sich auf die Arbeiter und deren besondere Interessen zu beschränken,

bedeutete für ihn, auf die Führung der erwarteten Revolution von vornherein zu verzichten.

Analog zur Marxschen Haltung in der Revolution von 1848 sollte sich die Sozialdemokratie nach Lenin an alle aufsässigen Schichten der Bevölkerung wenden, wenn auch an erster Stelle an die Bauern und Arbeiter. Aber die Partei war mit keiner der existierenden Klassen wirklich identisch. Wenn sie sich nicht von den Massen unterschiede, meinte Lenin, dann könnte sie nicht die Rolle des „Vorkämpfers“ spielen. Aber da sie sich als „Vorkämpferin der Revolution“ ausgab, mußte sie notgedrungen von einer „Vorkämpfer-Theorie“ ausgehen, nämlich von der Inanspruchnahme der Führung der Revolution. Um dies erfolgreich zu tun, mußte die Partei selber von einem einheitlichen Willen beseelt sein — ein Zustand, der seinen organisatorischen Ausdruck in der zentralistisch dirigierten und, wo nötig, konspirativen, semi-militärischen Organisationsform findet. Man versuchte den Gegensatz von Zentralismus und Demokratie durch den Begriff „demokratischer Zentralismus“ theoretisch aufzuheben. Mehrheitsbeschlüsse sollten der Zentraleitung zur unbestrittenen Ausführung überlassen werden. In der Praxis jedoch bedeutete der demokratische Zentralismus nichts anderes als die autoritäre Leitung der Partei durch die Zentrale.

Im Anschluß an Marx und Engels sah Lenin die bürgerliche Revolution als Vorbedingung einer proletarischen Revolution. Es bestand jedoch die Gefahr, daß, ähnlich wie 1848 in Deutschland, die bürgerliche Revolution auf halbem Wege stehenbleiben und in einen Kompromiß mit dem Zarismus einmünden würde. Eine wirkliche revolutionäre Umwälzung verlangte deshalb die breiteste Teilnahme der Arbeiter und Bauern und die konsequente revolutionäre Führung durch die Sozialdemokratie. Ebenfalls im Anschluß an Marx und Engels (und später im Zusammenhang mit dem Ersten Weltkrieg) hielt Lenin es für möglich, daß die russische Revolution zum Ausgangspunkt einer westeuropäischen, wenn nicht weltweiten Revolution würde. In solchem Falle war es nicht ausgeschlossen, daß die bürgerlich-kapitalistische Entwicklung Rußlands durch die Internationalisierung der europäischen sozialistischen Wirtschaft übersprungen werden konnte. Wie dem auch sei, die Führung der Revolution durch die Sozialdemokratie war unerläßlich, um die russische Revolution zur vollen Entfaltung zu bringen, vor allem deshalb, weil die Spontaneität der revolutionären Ausbrüche ohne eine zielsichere zentralisierte Leitung zum Untergang verurteilt sein würde.

Die westeuropäische Arbeiterbewegung stand allerdings nicht mehr im Zeichen der bürgerlichen Revolution, und ihr revolutionärer Flügel sprach nicht von einer von verschiedenen Klassen getragenen Volksrevolution, sondern von der erhofften proletarischen Revolution. Hier war die Arbeiterklasse die objektiv einzige revolutionäre Klasse, und ihr ein politisches Bewußtsein absprechen hieß, die Möglichkeit der Revolution selbst leugnen. Es stimmte zwar, daß die Arbeiterbewegung im Sumpf des Reformismus steckengeblieben war; aber anzunehmen, daß das so bleiben würde, bedeutete, dem Kapitalismus Ewigkeitswert zuzuschreiben. In Wirklichkeit und aufgrund der in ihm liegenden Widersprüche würde der Periode des Aufstiegs des Kapitalismus die seines Verfalls folgen. Nur ein reformierbarer Kapitalismus erlaubt die reformistische Arbeiterbewegung; ein krisenzerrütteter Kapitalismus erheischt revolutionäre Lösungen für die unmittelbaren und für die geschichtlichen Aufgaben der Arbeiterklasse.

Die Organisationen der Arbeiterklasse waren den Händen der Arbeiter entglitten und zu Instrumenten ihrer Beherrschung geworden. Aber auch das drückte nichts weiter aus als die aktuelle Lebensfähigkeit des Kapitalismus und die Möglichkeit der Immunisierung des Klassenkampfes durch die Institutionalisierung der Arbeiterbewegung. Nichtsdestoweniger, mit oder ohne Klassenkampforganisationen,

würde dem Proletariat letzten Endes nichts anderes übrigbleiben, als den Kampf für die Abschaffung des Kapitalismus erneut aufzunehmen, der aber zugleich ein Kampf gegen die kapitalisierten Arbeiterorganisationen sein würde. Das Augenmerk des Revolutionärs richtete sich nicht so sehr auf eine bestimmte Organisationsform als auf die Selbstbestimmung der arbeitenden Massen in den zu erwartenden revolutionären Kämpfen.

Lenins negative Einstellung zum Problem der Spontaneität konnte in der linken Opposition des Westens nur befremdend wirken. Hier wurde gerade auf die Spontaneität gehofft, nicht um ihrer selbst Willen, sondern um dem entnervenden Einfluß der offiziellen Arbeiterbewegung die revolutionäre Frische proletarischer Selbstinitiative entgegenzusetzen. Das Leninsche Verlangen nach der dem Kapitalismus entliehenen ultrazentralistischen Partei konnte dort kein Verständnis finden, wo die existierende Zentralisation der Arbeiterorganisationen bereits zum Hemmschuh des proletarischen Klassenkampfes geworden war.

Lenins Organisationsprogramm hatte auf dem zweiten Parteitag der russischen Sozialdemokratischen Partei bereits zu ihrer Spaltung geführt. Da die „Bundisten“ die Konferenz verließen, erhielten Lenins Anhänger eine zufällige Majorität und nannten sich dementsprechend die Mehrheit (Bolschewiki), während die Minderheit fortan als Menschewiki bezeichnet wurde. Lenin sah in der Ablehnung seines Parteiprogramms nur einen weiteren Ausdruck des um sich greifenden Opportunismus in der russischen wie in der sozialistischen Bewegung im allgemeinen. Unablässig verteidigte er seinen eigenen als den einzig richtigen revolutionären Standpunkt⁵, und die Auseinandersetzungen innerhalb der russischen Sozialdemokratie griffen auf die westeuropäische Bewegung über.

Rosa Luxemburg als Wortführerin des linken Flügels der deutschen Sozialdemokratie hatte, wie Lenin selbst, dem Opportunismus den Kampf angesagt. Doch glaubte sie nicht, daß man ihn „durch ein Organisationsstatut von der Arbeiterbewegung fern halten kann“.⁶ Obwohl sie für eine einheitliche Organisation eintrat, um geschlossene politische Aktionen der Massen zu ermöglichen, hatte dies ihrer Meinung nach nichts mit einer Organisationsform zu tun, in der „das Zentralkomitee als der eigentliche aktive Kern der Partei, alle übrigen Organisationen lediglich als seine ausführenden Werkzeuge gelten“.⁷ Im Gegenteil, die Arbeiter selbst müssen bestimmen und handeln lernen, selbst wenn dies mit vielen falschen Schritten verbunden sein sollte. „Fehlritte, die eine wirklich revolutionäre Arbeiterbewegung begeht, sind geschichtlich unermesslich fruchtbarer und wertvoller als die Unfehlbarkeit des allerbesten Zentralkomitees“.⁸

DIE RUSSISCHE REVOLUTION

Angesichts der Schwäche der sozialistischen Bewegung in Rußland hatte der Streit um den Charakter der revolutionären Organisation — ob demokratische Massenpartei oder zentralistische Elitepartei — wenig mit der Realität zu tun. Die trotz des Mangels an Arbeiterorganisationen ausbrechende Revolution von 1905 schuf sich ihre eigene Organisationsform in den sich spontan bildenden Aktionsausschüssen und Arbeiterräten (Sowjets). Die Räte sahen sich selbst als temporäre Organisationen zur Durchsetzung von Forderungen, die sich auf Lohn und Arbeitsbedingungen bezogen und auf das mehr allgemeine politische Verlangen nach einer *Konstituierenden Versammlung*. Mit dem Zusammenbruch der Revolution verschwanden die Räte, um in der Revolution von 1917 erneut in Erscheinung zu treten.

Die russischen Massenstreiks, die in ihnen entstehenden Räte und die enge Verknüpfung der unmittelbaren mit den politischen Forderungen zwangen Lenin, sich mit

diesem neuen Phänomen in der revolutionären Bewegung auseinanderzusetzen. Er sah die Räte der Arbeiterdeputierten als „*Organe des unmittelbaren Klassenkampfes*. Sie entstanden als Organe des Streikkampfes. Sie wurden sehr rasch, unter dem Druck der Notwendigkeit, zu *Organen des allgemeinen revolutionären Kampfes* gegen die Regierung. Sie verwandelten sich unwiderstehlich, kraft der Entwicklung der Ereignisse und des Übergangs vom Streik zum Aufstand, in *Organe des Aufstands* (...). Nicht irgendeine Theorie, nicht irgend jemandes Aufruf, nicht eine von irgend jemand entdeckte Taktik, keine Parteidoktrin, sondern die Wucht der Tatsachen hat diese (...) Massenorgane von der Notwendigkeit des Aufstandes überzeugt und sie zu Organen des Aufstandes gemacht“.⁹

All dies widersprach Lenins Ansichten von der Unzulänglichkeit spontaner Aktivität und der Unerläßlichkeit der in der Partei verkörperten Theorie. Unbekümmert blieb Lenin gleichwohl dabei, „daß ‚Räte‘ und ähnliche Massenkörperschaften für die Organisierung des Aufstandes noch *nicht genügen*. Sie sind erforderlich, um die Massen zusammenschweißen, sie für den Kampf zu vereinigen, ihnen die von der Partei aufgestellten (oder von den Parteien gemeinsam ausgegebenen) Losungen der politischen Führung zu übermitteln, das Interesse der Massen zu wecken und die Massen in den Kampf zu ziehen. Aber sie reichen nicht aus, die Kräfte des unmittelbaren Kampfes zu organisieren, den Aufstand in der eigentlichen Bedeutung des Wortes zu organisieren“.¹⁰ Um authentisch zu sein, muß der Aufstand Parteiprodukt sein.

Lenin erkannte allerdings, daß die Arbeiterräte 1905 „in Wirklichkeit Keimzellen der provisorischen Regierung (waren); unvermeidlich wäre ihnen die Macht im Falle des Sieges des Aufstands zugefallen. (Deshalb) muß das Schwergewicht auf das Studium der Bedingungen ihrer Arbeit und ihres Erfolges verlegt werden“.¹¹ Wenn auch nur sporadisch, so kam Lenin doch immer wieder auf das Problem von Partei und Räte zurück. Obwohl der Arbeiterdeputiertenrat für ihn „kein Organ der proletarischen Selbstverwaltung, überhaupt kein Organ der Selbstverwaltung, sondern eine Kampforganisation zur Erreichung bestimmter Ziele“¹² war, hatte er nichts gegen die „Teilnahme der Organisation der Sozialdemokratischen Partei an allgemeinparteilichen Räten von Arbeiterbevollmächtigten und Deputierten und an den Kongressen ihrer Vertreter, sowie die Schaffung solcher Körperschaften, (...) vorausgesetzt, daß hierbei die Interessen der Partei auf das strengste gewahrt werden und die Sozialdemokratische Arbeiterpartei gestärkt und gefestigt wird“.¹³

Nach 1906 lag die organisatorische Initiative wieder bei den politischen Parteien und den Gewerkschaften. In Erwartung der bürgerlichen Revolution sahen die Reformsozialisten die Sowjets lediglich als Verlegenheitsorganisationen an, die ihre Existenzberechtigung durch die Legalisierung traditioneller Arbeiterorganisationen verlieren würden. Anders dachten Lenin und die Bolschewiki, da sie bereit waren, selbst im Rahmen der bürgerlichen Revolution die politische Macht zu ergreifen. Sie selbst als „Vorkämpfer“ des Proletariats und die Arbeiterklasse als „Vorkämpferin“ der Volksrevolution betrachtend, begriff Lenin, daß die politische Machtübernahme neben der Partei auch Organisationen wie die der Räte benötigte. Aber erst 1917 wurde der Begriff „Diktatur des Proletariats“ als Diktatur der Sowjets aufgefaßt.

Die Februar-Revolution 1917 war ebenfalls das Resultat spontaner Erhebungen, obwohl politische Parteien und Gewerkschaften eine größere Rolle in ihr spielten als 1905. Die Revolution fand die Unterstützung der liberalen Bourgeoisie, aus deren Kreisen eine provisorische Regierung gebildet wurde. Unter zunehmenden Schwierigkeiten wurden später Vertreter der Menschewisten und rechten Sozialrevolutionäre in die Regierung einbezogen. Die sich spontan bildenden Arbeiter- und Soldatenräte akzeptierten vorerst die provisorische Regierung, kamen aber im Laufe

der Zeit mit ihr in Konflikt. Die politische Macht lag teils in den Händen der Regierung, teils in denen der Räte. Es war dieser Umstand, der den Bolschewisten in ihrem Kampf gegen die Regierung die Losung „Alle Macht den Räten!“ darbot. Die Regierung hatte nicht die Absicht, über die sozialen Möglichkeiten eines bürgerlich-demokratischen Regimes hinauszugehen. Sie war deshalb auch nicht bereit, für einen sofortigen Frieden und eine radikale Enteignung des Großgrundbesitzes einzutreten. Die Bolschewiki dagegen forderten, daß der Krieg sofort beendet und das Land unter die Bauern verteilt werde (was auch den Forderungen der breiten Massen entsprach), und gewannen damit in verhältnismäßig kurzer Zeit eine Mehrheit in den ausschlaggebenden Sowjets — ein Umstand, der Lenin ermutigte, durch einen *coup d'état* dem bürgerlich-demokratischen Regime ein Ende zu machen.

Die russische Revolution war zugleich eine bürgerliche, proletarische und Bauern-Revolution, aber es war die letzte, die vorerst den Ausschlag gab und der Revolution als Ganzes den Erfolg sicherte. Die Interessen der Bauern wurden von der Sozialrevolutionären Partei vertreten, einer Organisation, die sich ebenfalls in einen rechten und linken Flügel (Maximalisten) gespalten hatte. Die Sozialrevolutionäre forderten, daß alles Land gleichmäßig an die Bauern verteilt werden sollte — ein Standpunkt, den Lenin als Marxist zurückweisen mußte und in seinen Auseinandersetzungen mit den Sozialrevolutionären auch verwarf. Der Marxismus richtet sich gegen die private, parzellierte Bauernwirtschaft im Interesse der kollektiven Großraumwirtschaft. Es wurde allerdings angenommen, daß die kapitalistische Entwicklung selbst die kleine private Bauernwirtschaft vernichten werde, so daß dieses Problem größtenteils noch vor der sozialistischen Revolution gelöst sein würde. In Rußland aber entwickelte sich die bäuerliche Einzeiwirtschaft aus dem feudalen Großgrundbesitz. Um die Bauern für den Bolschewismus zu gewinnen, war es erforderlich, den zögernden Sozialrevolutionären dadurch den Wind aus den Segeln zu nehmen, daß man die Bauern aufforderte, sich das Land anzueignen.

Bereits bei seiner Ankunft in Rußland im April 1917 erklärte Lenin, daß das Sowjetsystem über die Forderung nach der bürgerlich-demokratischen Republik hinausgehe. Die Partei müsse die Macht übernehmen. Mit einer bolschewistischen Mehrheit in den Sowjets würde die neue Regierung eine bolschewistische sein. Allerdings war er auch bereit, die Macht ohne Mehrheit zu ergreifen. „Es wäre naiv“, schrieb er, „eine ‚formelle‘ Mehrheit der Bolschewiki abzuwarten. Keine Revolution wartet das ab.“¹⁴ Begünstigt durch eine Reihe von Umständen, auf die ich hier nicht eingehen kann, gelang die Bildung der ersten, von den Bolschewiki dominierten Arbeiter- und Bauernregierung. Um aber diese dominante Position zu sichern, war es notwendig, daß die Arbeiter und Bauern auch in Zukunft Bolschewisten in die Sowjets wählten. Dafür gab es keine Garantie. So wie die Menschewisten und Sozialrevolutionäre, einst die Mehrheit in den Sowjets, zur Minderheit wurden, so konnten auch die Bolschewiki ihre momentane Mehrheit wieder verlieren. Man mußte daher der Partei das Regierungsmonopol sichern.

Für Lenin war dies selbstverständlich. Genauso wie er seine Partei als die Verkörperung des proletarischen Klassenbewußtseins auffaßte, war für ihn die Herrschaft der Partei identisch mit der der Räte. Er sah nur die Wahl zwischen kapitalistischer Diktatur in demokratischer Verkleidung und der Diktatur der Arbeiterklasse unter Führung der bolschewistischen Partei. Sich selbst überlassen, konnten die Sowjets nur zu leicht den Versprechungen der liberalen Bourgeoisie und deren Handlangern zum Opfer fallen und sich schließlich selbst entmachten. Die Partei hatte die wirklichen Interessen der Räte zu vertreten, wenn notwendig selbst gegen die Räte, was aber nur dadurch möglich war, daß die Partei eine Kontrolle über sie ausübte. Nur so konnte der

sozialistische Charakter der Revolution gewährleistet werden. Durch die Unterdrückung aller anti-bolschewistischen Kräfte wandelte sich in kurzer Zeit das Rätensystem zur Diktatur der bolschewistischen Partei.

Die revolutionäre Parole „Alle Macht den Räten!“ verkümmerte zu einem bolschewistischen Regierungserlaß über Arbeiterkontrolle. Die Unverträglichkeit kapitalistischer Produktion mit einer Arbeiterkontrolle zwang die Bolschewiki, zur Nationalisierung der Industrien überzugehen — von der Arbeiterkontrolle, wie Lenin es ausdrückte, zur Administration der Betriebe durch die Arbeiter. Diese Wendung von der Kontrolle zur Administration entpuppte sich jedoch als die Abschaffung jeder direkten Teilnahme der Arbeiter an der Bestimmung der Produktion und der Arbeitsbedingungen in den Betrieben. Sie nahm geraume Zeit in Anspruch und vollzog sich auf dem Umweg der Betriebs- und Produktionskontrolle durch die Gewerkschaften im Zeichen der Verwandlung der Gewerkschaften in Kontrollorgane der Regierung über die Arbeit und die Arbeiter.

Der wirtschaftliche Zusammenbruch durch Krieg und Bürgerkrieg, die zerrüttete Wirtschaft und der Widerstand der Bauern gegen die erforderlichen Abgaben zur Sicherstellung der Ernährung zwangen die Bolschewiki zu den widerspruchsvollsten Maßnahmen — vom sogenannten Kriegskommunismus bis zur Neuen Ökonomischen Politik. Lenin hielt es für wichtig, an der Macht zu bleiben, selbst wenn das mit der Verletzung sozialistischer Prinzipien und mit peinlichen Kompromissen erkaufte werden mußte. Er war sich der objektiven Unreife Rußlands für den Sozialismus völlig bewußt, und es war für ihn klar, „daß ohne die Unterstützung der internationalen Weltrevolution der Sieg der proletarischen Revolution unmöglich ist. Vor der Revolution, und auch nachher, dachten wir: entweder gleich oder wenigstens sehr schnell kommt die Revolution in den übrigen Ländern, oder wir müssen zugrunde gehen. Trotz dieses Bewußtseins taten wir alles, um das Sowjetsystem unter allen Umständen unbedingt aufrechtzuerhalten, denn wir wußten, daß wir nicht nur für uns, sondern auch für die internationale Revolution arbeiten“.¹⁵

Wenn Lenin nicht an die Beständigkeit der russischen Revolution glaubte, es sei denn, daß sie zur internationalen Revolution wurde, so deshalb, weil er annahm, daß die internationale Bourgeoisie das bolschewistische Regime vernichten würde. Seine Befürchtungen bezogen sich nicht auf die Situation im Innern Rußlands; hier hielt er es durchaus für möglich, durch die Diktatur der Partei und die notwendigen Konzessionen an die Bauern an der Macht zu bleiben. 1921 konnte man jedoch mit einer längeren Atempause rechnen. Der Bürgerkrieg war beendet, und dank den internen Gegensätzen im imperialistischen Lager war der Angriff von außen höchst unwahrscheinlich. Lenins Meinung nach „mußte mit der Tatsache gerechnet werden, daß heute unstreitig ein gewisses Gleichgewicht der Kräfte, die offen, mit der Waffe in der Hand, gegeneinander den Kampf um die Herrschaft der einen oder anderen maßgebenden Klasse führten, eingetreten ist — ein Gleichgewicht zwischen der bürgerlichen Gesellschaft, der internationalen Bourgeoisie in ihrer Gesamtheit einerseits und Sowjetrußlands andererseits“.¹⁶

Der Aufbau in einem vorübergehend von äußeren Eingriffen ungestörten, aber isolierten Rußland bedeutete natürlich, daß die Partei die historische Rolle der Bourgeoisie übernehmen mußte, allerdings ohne die Institutionen der bürgerlichen Gesellschaft und mit einer anderen Ideologie. Es kam darauf an, die Produktion wieder in Gang zu bringen und zu erweitern. Da die Arbeiter nicht geneigt waren, sich über das gewohnte Maß hinaus selbst auszubeuten, waren die Bolschewiki gezwungen, die Rolle einer herrschenden Klasse zu übernehmen, um den Akkumulationsprozeß zu inaugrieren. Damit richtete sich die Diktatur der Partei nicht nur gegen die Kapitalisten,

sondern auch gegen die Arbeiter und Bauern. All das hatte nichts mit Sozialismus und nichts mit Kapitalismus im herkömmlichen Sinne zu tun. Lenin bezeichnete diesen Zustand als Staatskapitalismus, allerdings als einen „ungewöhnlichen, sogar ganz und gar ungewöhnlichen Staatskapitalismus“¹⁷, der aber den herrschenden Zuständen in Rußland vorzuziehen sei und der eine Transformation zum Sozialismus darstellte. „Die Arbeiterklasse“, schrieb er, „die es gelernt hat, die Staatsordnung gegen die Anarchie des Kleinbürgertums zu verteidigen, die es gelernt hat, eine große staatliche Organisation der Produktion auf staatskapitalistischer Grundlage zustande zu bringen, wird dann alle Trümpfe in den Händen haben, und die Festigung des Sozialismus wird gesichert sein.“¹⁸ Der russische Staatskapitalismus unterschied sich vom „gewöhnlichen“ Staatskapitalismus und enthielt deshalb für die Sowjetmacht nichts Gefährliches, weil „der Sowjetstaat ein Staat ist, in dem die Macht der Arbeiter und der Dorfarmut gesichert ist.“¹⁹

So wie für Lenin die Revolution nicht ohne die Partei siegen konnte, so war der Weg zum Sozialismus nur über die zur Staatsmacht gewordene Partei möglich. Es war der bolschewistische Staat, der die wirklichen Interessen der Arbeiter kannte und vertrat, auch dann, wenn dies den Arbeitern selbst nicht bewußt sein sollte. Wenn notwendig, mußten die Interessen der Arbeiter gegen die Arbeiter selbst verteidigt werden, und hier besonders in bezug auf die erforderlichen Maßnahmen zur Steigerung der Produktion. „Wir müssen daran denken“, erklärte Lenin, „daß wir in einem Lande leben, das große Verluste erlitten hat und verarmt ist, und wir müssen es lehren, Versammlungen so abzuhalten, daß dabei auseinandergehalten wird, was zur Versammlung und was zum Regieren gehört. Mache Versammlungen, aber regiere ohne geringste Schranken, regiere mit festerer Hand, als vor Dir der Kapitalist regiert hat.“²⁰ Er wies darauf hin, „daß in der Geschichte der revolutionären Bewegungen durch die Diktatur einzelner Personen sehr oft die Diktatur der revolutionären Klassen zum Ausdruck gebracht wurde.“²¹ Das treffe vor allem für die Wirtschaft zu. Die maschinelle Großindustrie erfordere eine unbedingte und strenge Einheit des Willens, „der die gemeinsame Arbeit von hunderten, tausenden und zehntausenden leitet (...). Aber wie kann die strengste Einheit des Willens gesichert werden? Durch die Unterordnung des Willens von Tausenden unter den Willen eines einzigen. Diese Unterordnung kann bei idealer Zielbewußtheit und Diszipliniertheit der an der gemeinsamen Arbeit Beteiligten mehr an die milde Leitung eines Dirigenten erinnern. Sie kann scharfe diktatorische Formen annehmen, wenn keine ideale Diszipliniertheit und Zielbewußtheit vorhanden ist. Aber, wie dem auch sein mag, die *unbedingte Unterordnung* unter einen einzigen Willen ist für den Erfolg der Arbeitsprozesse (...) eine absolute Notwendigkeit“²²

Nimmt man diese These ernst, so müssen die russischen Arbeiter völlig ohne Disziplin und Zielbewußtsein gewesen sein, denn die diktatorische Kontrolle der Arbeiter nahm Formen an, die alles Vergleichbare in den kapitalistischen Ländern in den Schatten stellten. Aber die Verwandlung Rußlands in einen autoritären Staatskapitalismus änderte nichts an der Tatsache, daß die Arbeiter und Bauern den Zarismus und die Bourgeoisie vernichtet hatten. Die Entmachtung der Räte durch die Partei war zweifellos der objektiven Unreife Rußlands für den Sozialismus zuzuschreiben, doch auch der Tatsache, daß weder die Sowjets noch die bolschewistische Partei eine klare Vorstellung von dem Aufbau der neuen Gesellschaft hatten. Man hatte in der sozialistischen Bewegung wenig darüber gesprochen, oder nur in der allgemeinen Formel der Übernahme der Produktionsmittel durch den Staat. Die Reformsozialisten bildeten sich ein, den bereits innerhalb des Kapitalismus auf dembokratischem Wege eroberten Staat zu diesen Zwecken verwenden zu können. Lenin indes hielt es für unerläßlich, jede Art von bürgerlichem

Staat zu zerschlagen und einen neuen Staatsapparat zu formen, der nicht mehr ein Staat im alten Sinne war. Dieser neue Staat wäre identisch mit der Diktatur des Proletariats.

Auch hier stützte sich Lenin auf Marx und Engels, speziell auf deren Beschreibung der Pariser Kommune als eines Beispiels der proletarischen Diktatur. Nach Marx und Lenin war es die große Lehre der Kommune, daß man den bürgerlichen Staat nicht übernehmen konnte, sondern daß er zerstört werden mußte, um einem neuen Arbeiterstaat Platz zu machen, der dann im Laufe der sozialistischen Entwicklung von selbst absterben und damit die klassenlose kommunistische Gesellschaft enthüllen würde. „Stürzt man die Kapitalisten“, schrieb Lenin in *Staat und Revolution*, „schlägt man mit der eisernen Faust der bewaffneten Arbeiter den Widerstand dieser Ausbeuter nieder, zerbricht man die bürokratische Maschinerie des modernen Staates — so hat man einen von dem ‚Parasiten‘ befreiten Mechanismus von hoher technischer Vollkommenheit vor sich, den die vereinigten Arbeiter sehr wohl selbst in Gang bringen können, indem sie Techniker, Aufseher, Buchhalter anstellen und sie alle, wie überhaupt alle ‚Staatsbeamten‘, für Arbeiterlohn ihre Tätigkeit ausüben lassen. Das ist die konkrete, sofort ausführbare Aufgabe gegenüber allen Trusts, die die Werktätigen von der Ausbeutung befreit und die Erfahrungen verwertet, die die Kommune (insbesondere auf dem Gebiet des Staatsaufbaus) praktisch bereits zu machen begonnen hatte.“²³

In Wahrheit waren die Erfahrungen der Pariser Kommune sehr beschränkter Natur: einerseits bestimmt durch die Umstände, die zu ihrer Bildung führten, andererseits durch die Zerrissenheit und Zielunsicherheit der Kommunarden selbst. Nur ein kleiner Bruchteil ihres Ausführenden Komitees bestand aus Arbeitern, und nur eine Handvoll aus Marxisten. Die Mehrheit ihrer Führer stammte aus dem Kleinbürgertum und zerfiel in Anhänger Proudhons, Blanquis und Neo-Jakobiner. Sie waren vornehmlich politisch interessiert und vertraten den Kleinbesitz ebensosehr, wie sie die Ausbeutung der Arbeiter verwarfen. Sie waren im Sinne Proudhons antistaatlich eingestellt und hofften auf eine nationale freie Föderation autonomer Kommunen. Doch die Mehrheit der Pariser Arbeiter setzte sich für die Kommune ein.

Für Marx war die Kommune „wesentlich eine Regierung der Arbeiterklasse; (...) die endlich entdeckte politische Form, unter der die ökonomische Befreiung der Arbeiter sich vollziehen konnte“.²⁴ Trotz all den ihnen vom Marxschen Standpunkt aus noch anhaftenden Mängeln war die Kommune gegen die Bourgeoisie gerichtet: eine Regierungsform, in der Arbeiter ihre Fähigkeit zur gesellschaftlichen Herrschaft demonstrierten. Sie hatte zwar noch keinen sozialistischen Charakter, aber die politische Herrschaft der Arbeiter mußte nach Marx entweder zu deren Emanzipation führen oder wieder in sich zusammenbrechen. Marxens Einstellung zur Kommune wurde von seinen anarchistischen Gegnern als reiner Opportunismus ausgelegt. „Der Eindruck des kommunistischen Aufstandes war so gewaltig“, schrieb Bakunin, „daß selbst die Marxisten, deren Ideen durch diesen Aufstand über den Haufen geworfen waren, sich gezwungen sahen, vor ihm den Hut abzuziehen: Sie taten noch mehr, im Widerspruch mit aller Logik und mit all ihren eigensten Gefühlen machten sie das Programm der Kommune und ihr Ziel zu dem ihrigen. Es war eine komische, aber erzwungene Travestie. Sie mußten sie machen, sonst wären sie abgestoßen und von allen verlassen worden, so mächtig war die Leidenschaft gewesen, die diese Revolution in der ganzen Welt hervorgerufen hatte.“²⁵

Die großen Leidenschaften, die die Kommune bei Bourgeoisie und Proletariat zugleich hervorrief, zeigten an, daß die gesellschaftliche Klassenteilung in ihrem Wirkungsvermögen all die ideologischen und sogar materiellen Differenzen, die jeder besonderen Klasse eigen sind, weit überragt. Es war nicht das spezielle Programm der Kommune, ob föderalistisch oder zentralistisch, die aktuelle oder nur potentielle

Enteignung der Bourgeoisie, was den entfachten Leidenschaften zugrunde lag, sondern die einfache Tatsache, daß ein großer Teil der Arbeiterklasse die bürgerliche Herrschaft ablehnte, sich bewaffnete und sich anschickte, ihr Schicksal selbst zu bestimmen. In der brutalen Antwort der Bourgeoisie auf diesen ersten, noch schwachen Versuch proletarischer Selbstbestimmung erkannten die Arbeiter der ganzen Welt, nicht nur die in Paris, die grenzenlose Wut und Unversöhnlichkeit des Klassenfeindes. Überall standen sie solidarisch hinter den Pariser Arbeitern in völliger Unabhängigkeit von allen existierenden theoretischen und praktischen Differenzen innerhalb der Arbeiterbewegung. Es war deshalb überflüssig, nach den Motiven zu suchen, die Marx zum Verteidiger der Kommune machten. Was Marx von den Kommunarden trennte, war angesichts des nackten Klassenkampfes zwischen Bourgeoisie und Proletariat völlig unerheblich. Was Marx mit der Kommune verband, war die Tatsache dieser direkten Auseinandersetzung, die nichts anderes zuließ als die Verteidigung der Kommune — so wie sie war.

Marx' in großer Eile verfaßte Denkschrift zum *Bürgerkrieg in Frankreich* kann nicht als Anleitung zur proletarischen Revolution und für den Aufbau eines sozialistischen Staates angesehen werden — um so weniger, als Marx vor, während und nach dem Fall der Kommune ihr jede Erfolgsmöglichkeit abgesprochen hatte. Zehn Jahre später schrieb er an Nieuwenhuis: „Sie werden mich vielleicht auf die Pariser Kommune verweisen; aber abgesehen davon, daß dies bloß Erhebung einer Stadt unter ausnahmsweisen Bedingungen war, war die Majorität der Kommune keineswegs sozialistisch, konnte es auch nicht sein. Mit geringem Quantum common sense hätte sie jedoch einen der ganzen Volksmasse nützlichen Kompromiß mit Versailles — das allein damals Erreichbare — erreichen können. Die Appropriation der *Banque de France* allein hätte der Versailler Großtuerei ein Ende mit Schrecken gemacht, etc. etc.“²⁶

So hoffnungslos der Kampf der Kommune war, so deutete er doch auf die Notwendigkeit der proletarischen Diktatur zur Zerstörung des bürgerlichen Staates hin. Aber die Kommune kann nicht, wie Lenin behauptet, als Modell eines kommunistischen Staates angesehen werden, schon deshalb nicht, weil das eigentliche „Endziel des proletarischen Klassenkampfes nicht irgendein noch so ‚demokratischer‘, ‚kommunaler‘ oder auch ‚rätemäßiger‘ Staat, sondern die klassenlose und staatenlose *Gesellschaft*“²⁷ ist. Für Lenins Staatstheorie war die Kommune von ausschlaggebender Bedeutung nicht aufgrund ihres wirklichen Inhalts, sondern weil sie in Marx' und Engels' Rhetorik als proletarische Diktatur gefeiert worden war und Lenin es für richtig hielt, sich auf deren Autorität zu berufen. Angefeuert durch die Revolution, und im Widerspruch zu der bisherigen Überzeugung, daß den Arbeitern nicht die Fähigkeit des selbständigen revolutionären Handelns gegeben ist, sprach er nun in *Staat und Revolution* von der Möglichkeit, „das ‚Kommandieren‘ zu beseitigen und die Staatsverwaltung auf die Organisation der Proletarier (als herrschende Klasse) zu reduzieren“.²⁸

Der Staat, den Lenin im Auge hat, ist jedoch der antizipierte bolschewistische Staat, der die Interessen der Arbeiter vertritt und sich auf die bewaffnete Arbeiterklasse stützt. Dieser Staat macht nach Lenin alle Menschen zu Angestellten der Staatsmacht und verwandelt damit die ganze Gesellschaft in ein Bureau und eine Fabrik, mit gleicher Arbeit und gleichen Löhnen für alle. Lenin weiß natürlich, daß nach Marx die sozialistische Organisation der Produktion und Verteilung nicht Sache des Staats, sondern die der assoziierten Produzenten ist, die den Staat durch die Konsolidierung der klassenlosen Gesellschaft überflüssig machen. Lenin sah jedoch das „Absterben“ des Staates in einem anderen Licht. „Von dem Augenblick an“, schreibt er, „wo alle Mitglieder der Gesellschaft oder wenigstens ihre übergroße Mehrzahl *selbst* gelernt haben, den *Staat* zu regieren, selbst diese Angelegenheit in ihre Hand genommen haben, die Kontrolle ‚in Gang‘ gebracht haben über die verschwindende Minderheit der

Kapitalisten, (...) über die Arbeiter, die durch den Kapitalismus tief demoralisiert worden sind, von diesem Augenblick an beginnt die Notwendigkeit irgendeines Regierens überhaupt zu verschwinden."²⁹ Mit anderen Worten: Der Staat stirbt nicht während des Sozialisierungsprozesses ab, sondern er ermöglicht erst die Sozialisierung — ein Zustand, der so lange dauert, bis die große Mehrheit gelernt hat, „den Staat zu regieren“, womit sich dann der Unterschied zwischen Staat und Gesellschaft verwischt. Die Identifizierung der Partei mit dem Proletariat, der Parteidiktatur mit der proletarischen Diktatur wurde so zur Identifizierung von Staat und Gesellschaft ausgeweitet. Was im Kommunismus erlischt, ist nicht der Staat als Organisationsprinzip der Gesellschaft, sondern nur die staatliche Diktatur, die in der klassenlosen Gesellschaft überflüssig ist.

Lenin war der Überzeugung, daß die Industrialisierung Rußlands nicht von der liberalen Bourgeoisie abhängig war, sondern ebensogut, wenn nicht besser, durch die Initiative des Staates erreicht werden konnte. Die Zentralisation der Kommandogewalt über die wirtschaftlichen und politischen Verhältnisse erschien ihm nicht nur notwendig, um die dem Sozialismus widerstehenden oder entgegenarbeitenden Kräfte lahmzulegen, er hielt die Zentralisation darüber hinaus für die unerläßliche Voraussetzung der modernen Industriegesellschaft, sei sie kapitalistisch oder kommunistisch orientiert. Im Kommunismus allerdings diente sie nicht länger einer besonderen Klasse, sondern der Gesellschaft als Ganzes und hörte damit auf, ein Herrschaftsverhältnis zu sein. In der Zwischenzeit war die zentrale Bestimmungsgewalt Ausdruck der proletarischen Diktatur, und Lenin erwartete, daß die Arbeiterklasse sich mit dem bolschewistischen Staat genau so identifizieren würde, wie dieser Staat sich mit den Arbeitern identifizierte.

Mit den Bauern stand es jedoch anders. Sie ließen sich nicht in die „eine große Fabrik“ eingliedern und zu „Angestellten des Staates“ machen. Sie hatten ihre Revolution gemacht, um sich Land als Privateigentum anzueignen, unberührt von der Tatsache, daß dem Namen nach alles Land der Nation gehörte. Die Konzessionen an die Bauern waren der Preis, den die Bolschewiki für die Staatsmacht zu zahlen hatten und der ihnen zwar die politische, aber nicht die wirtschaftliche Unterstützung der Bauern sicherte. Die Aufteilung des Großgrundbesitzes hatte Millionen kleiner Bodenbesitzer hervorgebracht, die zum großen Teil nur für den Eigenbedarf produzierten. Doch selbst die für den Markt wirtschaftenden Bauern verweigerten dem Staat ihre Waren, da er nichts zum Austausch anzubieten hatte. Die Innenpolitik der Bolschewiki wurde von ihrem Verhältnis zu den Bauern bestimmt. Deren Zufriedenstellung konnte nur auf Kosten der Arbeiter geschehen, die Interessen der Arbeiter nur auf Kosten der Bauern wahrgenommen werden. Um an der Macht zu bleiben, verschrieb sich die bolschewistische Politik mal der einen, mal der anderen Klasse, um sich zuletzt durch den Aufbau eines absolutistischen Staatsapparates, der die ganze Gesellschaft beherrschte, von beiden unabhängig zu machen.

Gewöhnlich wird der Bürgerkrieg für die bolschewistische Diktatur verantwortlich gemacht. Weil das so ist, ist es nicht weniger wahr, daß der Bürgerkrieg den Bolschewisten die Staatsmacht sicherte. Als erste Organisation, neben der Partei, wurde die *Tscheka* zur Bekämpfung der Gegenrevolution in allen ihren Manifestationen organisiert. Eine Rote Armee ersetzte die „bewaffneten Arbeiter“, in der Armee die traditionelle Disziplin die Soldatenräte. Die Rote Armee kämpfte gegen innere und äußere Feinde und benötigte „Spezialisten“, d. h. Offiziere der zaristischen Armee, die sich den Bolschewiki zur Verfügung stellten. Das Prestige der Regierung wuchs durch die Siege der Armee. Was immer sonst ihre Einstellung war, im Bürgerkrieg standen die Bauern und Arbeiter notgedrungen auf Seiten der Bolschewiki, da die Rückkehr des alten Regimes nur zu ihrem Schaden sein konnte. Die Bauern verteidigten ihren neuen Besitz, die Menschewiki, Sozialrevolutionäre und Anarchisten ihr nacktes Leben. Der

Interventionscharakter des Bürgerkrieges gab diesem einen nationalen Anstrich und erlaubte der Regierung, ihn im Namen der Vaterlandsverteidigung zu führen.

Das Ende des Bürgerkrieges führte nicht zur Milderung, sondern zur Verschärfung der bolschewistischen Diktatur, die sich nunmehr ausschließlich gegen die innere, bisher „loyale Opposition“ richtete. Bereits im März 1919 waren auf dem Bolschewistischen Parteitag Stimmen laut geworden, die die Unterdrückung aller Oppositionsparteien verlangten. Aber erst 1921 war die Partei bereit, alle unabhängigen politischen Parteien und die Oppositionsgruppen in der eigenen Partei auszuschalten. Der siegreiche Abschluß des Bürgerkrieges hatte der Opposition auch die Möglichkeit gegeben, die Parteidiktatur als nicht länger entschuldigbar anzugreifen. Die Bauern verlangten das Ende der Zwangsrequisitionen, zu denen sich die Bolschewiki gezwungen sahen, und die Arbeiter protestierten gegen die schlechte Versorgung und die Antreiberei in den Betrieben. Die Welle von Streiks und Demonstrationen erreichte ihren Höhepunkt im Kronstadter Aufstand.

Die Rebellionen richteten sich nicht gegen das Sowjetsystem, sondern gegen die bolschewistische Partei-Diktatur. Für alle Mißstände der sozialen Situation wurde die Regierung verantwortlich gemacht; aber die Regierung war durch das System der Räte nicht länger beeinflussbar. Um dieses System demokratisch zu nutzen, mußte man das bolschewistische Regierungsmonopol sprengen. Das Verlangen nach „freien Sowjets“ bedeutete Sowjets, die frei waren von der bolschewistischen Bevormundung, was praktisch nur heißen konnte: Sowjets ohne Bolschewisten. Es bedeutete politische Freiheit für alle Organisationen und Tendenzen, die an der russischen Revolution teilgenommen hatten, also auch für die Anhänger der bürgerlichen Demokratie, die nicht über den Kapitalismus hinausstrebten. Kurz: die Rebellen forderten die Rückkehr zu den Zuständen, die vor der Machtübernahme der Bolschewiki bestanden hatten, d.h. die Zurücknahme der bolschewistischen Revolution.

Es war unvermeidlich, daß der Kronstadter Aufstand den Beifall aller Feinde des Bolschewismus fand und damit auch den der Reaktion und der Bourgeoisie. Das erlaubte den Bolschewiki, den Aufstand in die Kategorie „Gegenrevolution“ einzureihen, was aber nichts an der Tatsache ändert, daß die Aufständischen der Macht der Partei die der Sowjets entgensetzten. Die Kronstadter Rebellen hatten nicht die Absicht, die zerfallene bürgerliche Demokratie erneut aufzurichten, sondern versuchten, die Selbstbestimmung der Sowjets zurückzugewinnen. Allerdings blieb objektiv nach wie vor die Alternative bestehen: entweder liberaler Kapitalismus oder autoritärer Staatskapitalismus, da die besonderen Umstände Rußlands, der Widerspruch zwischen den bäuerlichen und den proletarischen Interessen und die überwiegende Masse der Landbevölkerung jedes demokratische Regime zum Kapitalismus zu führen drohte.

Der Kronstadter Aufstand überzeugte Lenin jedoch davon, daß die Partei den autoritären Bogen überspannt hatte, und er übernahm einige der wirtschaftlichen Forderungen der Aufständischen, um auf politischem Gebiet zugleich die Zügel noch straffer anzuziehen. Mit der Neuen Okonomischen Politik begann ein teilweiser Rückzug zur kapitalistischen Marktwirtschaft, um die Bauern auszusöhnen und die Städte besser zu versorgen. Die Neue Okonomische Politik konnte als einfache Unterbrechung des „Sozialisierungs-prozesses“ angesehen werden oder auch als ein lang andauernder Zustand, der das Risiko enthielt, daß die sich in ihm entwickelnden privatkapitalistischen Interessen den staatskapitalistischen Sektor überflügeln und ihn zuletzt vernichten würden. In einem solchen Falle wäre die bolschewistische Revolution vergeblich gewesen, ein Nebenprodukt der bürgerlichen Revolution. Lenin war aber überzeugt, daß eine Rückkehr zur Marktwirtschaft politisch und wirtschaftlich dadurch in Grenzen gehalten werden konnte, daß man Großindustrie, Banken und Außenhandel zentral

beherrschte und den Regierungsapparat stärkte, indem man alle Oppositionsmöglichkeiten in der Gesellschaft und innerhalb der eigenen Partei ausschaltete.

Am Ende jedoch, nach dem Tode Lenins, wurden die in der Neuen Ökonomischen Politik liegenden Widersprüche und Gefahren durch die erzwungene Kollektivierung der Bauern aus dem Wege geräumt. Dies erforderte eine „Revolution von oben“, einen jahrelangen Kampf gegen die Bauern und den Ausbau eines absolutistischen Staatsapparates, der die Unterwerfung der ganzen Gesellschaft sicherstellte. Der Kurs war wieder auf kapitalistische Akkumulation als Staatskapitalismus gerichtet und hatte die wachsende Ausbeutung und die terroristische Kontrolle der gesamten arbeitenden Bevölkerung zur Folge. Die in die Revolution gesetzten Erwartungen der Arbeiter und Bauern blieben unerfüllt; sie hatten nur ein Herrschaftssystem gegen ein anderes ausgetauscht: den Zarismus gegen die bolschewistische Diktatur. Dennoch kann von einem „Verrat“ der Revolution nicht die Rede sein. Die bolschewistische Partei hatte nie verheimlicht, daß sie sich berufen fühlte, die Revolution zu führen und den Staat zu beherrschen, um im Interesse der Weltrevolution die scheinbar unabwendbare bürgerlich-kapitalistische Entwicklung Rußlands zu verhindern. Und dies ist ihr tatsächlich gelungen, allerdings ohne damit die internationale proletarische Revolution voranzubringen.

DIE DRITTE INTERNATIONALE

Die russische Revolution war ein Produkt des Ersten Weltkrieges. Nach Lenin hätte die Revolution ohne den Krieg „unter Umständen vielleicht noch Jahrzehnte auf sich warten lassen“. Aber Rußland war das „schwächste und damit ausschlaggebende“ Glied in der imperialistischen Kette und wurde so zum Ausgangspunkt der Weltrevolution gegen den imperialistischen Kapitalismus. In den Vorstellungen von Marx und Engels spielte der Imperialismus keine besondere Rolle in der Auslösung der proletarischen Revolution; es waren ihrer Meinung nach die inneren Widersprüche des höchstentwickelten Kapitalismus, die zur Revolution drängten, obwohl sie zugaben, daß eine Revolution in Rußland möglicherweise zu einer europäischen Revolution führen konnte. Für Lenin jedoch war der Imperialismus zur Lebensnotwendigkeit des Kapitalismus geworden, der alle Nationen, ohne Rücksicht auf deren Entwicklungsgrad, in die gegen den Imperialismus gerichteten revolutionären Bewegungen einbezog. Die Revolution hatte daher nicht nur in Rußland, sondern im Weltmaßstab den Charakter einer Volksrevolution, in der die Arbeiter und Bauern entscheidende Faktoren darstellten. Die Weltrevolution konnte als eine Imitation der russischen Revolution in erweitertem Rahmen verstanden werden, so daß die Erfahrungen der russischen Revolution die Probleme der Weltrevolution zu erhellen vermochten. Dementsprechend bezeichnete Stalin den Leninismus als „den Marxismus der Periode des Imperialismus“.

Der eigene Erfolg in Rußland erhärtete die Leninsche Überzeugung, daß das bolschewistische Organisationsprinzip unerläßlich war. Es sollte auch der neu zu gründenden Internationale zugrunde liegen. Schon bei Ausbruch des Krieges stand fest, daß der abgewirtschafteten Zweiten Internationale eine revolutionäre Internationale entgegengesetzt werden mußte, um die sich in allen Ländern bildenden Oppositionen gegen den Chauvinismus der Sozialdemokratie zusammenzufassen. Die russische Revolution beschleunigte die Gründung der Internationale, brachte sie aber auch unter die Autorität der Revolution und damit letzten Endes unter die Autorität der zur Staatsmacht gewordenen bolschewistischen Partei. Die Internationale hatte von vornherein den Schutz der russischen Revolution zur Aufgabe, sei es durch die Ausdehnung der Revolution auf

andere Länder, sei es durch die Verteidigung Rußlands gegen die Anschläge der internationalen Bourgeoisie.

Die russische Revolution hatte große Begeisterung im revolutionären Lager der sozialistischen Bewegung ausgelöst, nicht nur beim linken Flügel der sozialdemokratischen Parteien, sondern auch in den Gewerkschaften, bei den Industriearbeitern der Welt (I.W.W.), den Syndikalisten und sogar bei den sonst anti-staatlichen Anarchisten. Die Begeisterung für die erste sozialistische Revolution war groß genug, um fürs erste die Eigenarten der bolschewistischen Partei und Staatsauffassung zu verwischen. Im ersten Rausch der Revolution hatten selbst die Bolschewiki mehr in ihr gesehen als eine Parteisache. Als die Internationale Wirklichkeit wurde, traten jedoch die praktisch-organisatorischen und strategisch-taktischen Prinzipien des Bolschewismus wieder in den Vordergrund. Sie wurden im großen und ganzen akzeptiert und in 21 Bedingungen niedergelegt, die die Grundlage für die Aufnahme in die Internationale bildeten.

Die 21 Bedingungen verlangten die Bolschewisierung der sich der Internationale anschließenden Organisationen und die Realisierung des Leninschen Zentralisationsprinzips im internationalen Maßstab. Wie das Zentralkomitee der russischen Partei ihren „Generalstab“ darstellte, so sollte das Zentralkomitee der Internationale zum „Generalstab“ der Weltrevolution werden, dessen Beschlüssen in den einzelnen nationalen Sektionen unbedingt Folge zu leisten wäre. Daß die Interessen Rußlands und der bolschewistischen Partei dabei besondere Beachtung fanden, war durch die Beherrschung der Internationale durch die zur Staatsmacht etablierte Partei unvermeidlich. Aber durch die Identifizierung der speziellen Interessen Sowjetrußlands mit den allgemeinen Interessen der Weltrevolution wurde die Unterordnung der Internationale unter die russische Staatspolitik als selbstverständlich aufgefaßt.

In den Jahren des Bürgerkrieges und der Intervention schien die Existenz des bolschewistischen Regimes ausschließlich von der Ausbreitung der Revolution in den westeuropäischen Ländern abzuhängen. Die politischen Revolutionen in den besiegten Ländern indes führten nicht zu sozialen Umwälzungen, sondern zur Konsolidierung des kapitalistischen Systems. Obwohl nach der russischen Revolution sich revolutionäre Minderheiten für das Räte-system einsetzten, folgte die breite Arbeiter-masse der Sozialdemokratie, deren Ziel sich auf die bürgerlich-demokratische Republik beschränkte. In Deutschland, dem ausschlaggebenden Land, vollzogen die spontan entstandenen Arbeiter- und Soldatenräte ihre eigene Elimination, indem sie für die Einberufung der Nationalversammlung plädierten. Die Mittelklasse und die Bauern bildeten bereits die Konterrevolution innerhalb der Revolution. Ohne Zweifel erstrebte die Masse der Arbeiter den Sozialismus, aber für sie war die Sozialisierung nicht ihre Aufgabe, sondern die der Regierung — eine Illusion, die die Sozialdemokratie nur zu gut zu nutzen verstand. Mit dem Versprechen der Sozialisierung verband sich die Niederschlagung der revolutionären Gruppen, um der Bourgeoisie die Macht zu erhalten.

Wie leicht der Sieg für die Bourgeoisie gewesen war, wurde allerdings erst später klar; die erste Niederschlagung der revolutionären Kräfte mußte nicht zwangsläufig die endgültige Niederlage bedeuten. Da sich die wirtschaftlichen Zustände nur verschlechtern konnten, lag eine weitere Radikalisierung der Arbeiter durchaus im Bereich der Möglichkeit. Ob eine kritische Situation zur Revolution führt, kann nur durch den proletarischen Klassenkampf selbst erprobt werden, und es war die Aufgabe der Revolutionäre, neue Erhebungen vorzubereiten. Dies freilich war in den westeuropäischen Ländern nur als ein Kampf gegen die parlamentarische Demokratie möglich, ein Kampf gegen die mit der Bourgeoisie verbündeten Parteien und Gewerkschaften und damit für das Räte-system und die Arbeiterdiktatur im wahren Sinne

des Wortes. Es gab hier keine revolutionäre Bauernbewegung und keine revolutionäre Mittelklasse, mit denen sich das Proletariat solidarisch erklären konnte, um die Staatsmacht an sich zu reißen. Aber die westeuropäische Arbeiterklasse ist aufgrund ihrer gesellschaftlichen Position und ihrer quantitativen Stärke sehr wohl imstande, die Wirtschaft unter ihre Kontrolle zu bringen und ihre politisch-militärische Schwäche dadurch auszugleichen. Gleichwohl blieben alle Versuche, die begonnene Revolution im proletarischen Sinne weiterzuführen, ohne Erfolg.

Wie schon erwähnt, war Lenin nach 1920 überzeugt, daß auf eine westeuropäische Revolution nicht mehr zu zählen sei, daß aber auch die Gefahr einer Vernichtung der Sowjetmacht vorläufig dadurch beseitigt war, daß sich ein Gleichgewicht der internationalen Klassenkräfte bildete und die imperialistischen Gegensätze im kapitalistischen Lager zunahmen. Es kam darauf an, die Atempause auszunutzen, um Rußland und den neuen Staat aufzubauen. Die Schwierigkeiten in Rußland machten nicht nur den Rückzug in die Neue Ökonomische Politik notwendig, sondern auch den Rückzug von jeder revolutionären Außenpolitik; dies um so mehr, als Lenin es für möglich hielt, Kapital zu importieren und die Operationsbasis auf dem Weltmarkt zu erweitern.

Das westeuropäische Proletariat hatte versagt, und auch die in die kolonialen Völker gesetzten Hoffnungen wurden enttäuscht. Wohl entstanden anti-imperialistische Bewegungen, die sich auf Lenins „Recht der nationalen Selbstbestimmung“ stützten und sich dem bolschewistischen Regime verbunden fühlten, aber erst der Zweite Weltkrieg brachte die Aufhebung oder doch zumindest die Abwandlung des alten Kolonialismus. Während die Bolschewiki sich zunächst nur der allgemeinen Passivität angepaßt hatten, sahen sie sich bald zur Passivität gezwungen, um den russischen Aufbau nicht erneut zu gefährden. Seit 1921 hat sich die Kommunistische Internationale nur noch anti-revolutionär betätigt. So erklärte Trotzki auf dem 3. Kongreß der Kommunistischen Internationale im Hinblick auf den mitteldeutschen Aufstand: „Wir dürfen die Kritik der Märzaktion nicht phraseologisch verdecken und sind verpflichtet, der deutschen Arbeiterschaft klipp und klar zu sagen, daß wir diese Offensivphilosophie als die größte Gefahr und in der praktischen Anwendung als das größte politische Verbrechen auffassen.“³⁰

In Rußland selbst entwickelte sich zur gleichen Zeit eine an die Partei gebundene neue Herrschaftsschicht. Die vorrevolutionären Forderungen: "gleiche Arbeit und gleiche Löhne", wie sie Lenin in *Staat und Revolution* proklamiert hatte, fanden nur insoweit Verwirklichung, als die sogenannte Periode des Kriegskommunismus zur strikten Rationierung der Lebensmittel führte. Doch den „Spezialisten“ der Roten Armee folgten bald die „Spezialisten“ in der Produktion und Verwaltung, und alle Gleichheitsforderungen wurden nun als der nationalen Produktion schädlich und als kleinbürgerlich-anarchistische Vorurteile verworfen. Die Differenzierung der Einkommen spaltete die Gesellschaft erneut in Ausbeuter und Ausgebeutete. Die „Diktatur des Proletariats“ wurde nun von einem Staatsapparat repräsentiert, von dem Lenin 1923 sagen mußte, er stelle "im höchsten Grade ein Überbleibsel des Alten dar, das in geringstem Grade einigermaßen ernsthaften Veränderungen unterworfen ist. Er ist nur leicht übertüncht worden, im übrigen bildet er den ausgeprägtesten Typus des Alten aus unserem alten Staatsapparat".³¹

Die Nutznießer dieses neuen Zustandes verloren das Interesse an der Weltrevolution im gleichen Maße, wie sich ihre eigenen Positionen in Rußland festigten und verbesserten. In dem 1921 erschienenen Buch *Die wirtschaftlichen Probleme der proletarischen Diktatur* schrieb Eugen Varga: „Es besteht die Gefahr einer Ausschaltung Rußlands als Motor der internationalen Revolution. Es gibt in Rußland Kommunisten,

die, des langen Wartens auf die europäische Revolution überdrüssig geworden, sich endgültig auf eine Isoliertheit Rußlands einrichten wollen. (...) Mit einem Rußland, welches die soziale Revolution der anderen Länder als eine ihm fremde Angelegenheit betrachten würde, (...) würden die kapitalistischen Länder allerdings in friedlicher Nachbarschaft leben können. Es liegt mir fern zu glauben, daß eine solche Einkapselung des revolutionären Rußlands den Gang der Weltrevolution aufhalten könnte, aber sie würde ihn verlangsamen."

Mit dem Ende der revolutionären „Offensivphilosophie" mußte auch die Rolle der kommunistischen Parteien in den westeuropäischen Ländern neu bedacht werden. Offensichtlich war es den Kommunisten nicht gelungen, die Massen zu erfassen, und offensichtlich deshalb nicht, weil diese Massen noch nicht revolutionär waren. Wollte man die Arbeiter dennoch für die Ziele der Kommunistischen Internationale gewinnen, so mußten Konzessionen an deren revolutionäre Rückständigkeit gemacht werden. Lenin war besonders stolz auf sein Talent für taktische Manöver; war ein Weg versperrt, so konnte ein anderer zum selben Ziel führen, vorausgesetzt, daß das Ziel stets das Bestimmende blieb. Wenn nötig, mußte man zu allen Konzessionen und Kompromissen bereit sein, um auf diesen Umwegen das revolutionäre Ziel dennoch zu erreichen. Allerdings bestand die Gefahr, daß man auf diesen Umwegen das Ziel aus dem Auge verlor — eine Gefahr, die eine korruptions-freie Führung der Partei abwenden konnte, wenn sie es verstand, im geeigneten Moment von der Konzessionspolitik zur revolutionären Praxis überzugehen.

Abgesehen davon, daß Lenins Ziel — der auf dem Wege des Staatskapitalismus zu realisierende Staatssozialismus — nicht das Ziel der westeuropäischen Arbeiter sein konnte, muß man zugeben, daß Lenin das eigene Ziel niemals verleugnet hat. Lenins außerordentliche Selbstsicherheit und Rechthaberei grenzte sicher ans Pathologische, aber das bewahrte ihn auch vor der Prinzipienlosigkeit der nur nach persönlicher Macht strebenden Politiker. Sie schützten ihn jedoch nicht vor der Illusion, daß die sozialistische Bewegung letzten Endes von ihrer Führung und damit von ihm selbst abhing. Er war überzeugt, daß man die Gegner auf allen Gebieten zu übertrumpfen habe, und daß man klüger und gerissener sein müsse als die kapitalistischen Gegenspieler. Konnte man nicht mit den eigenen Waffen sein Ziel erreichen, so mußte man die Waffen der Bourgeoisie gegen sie kehren. Die „rote Diplomatie" mußte die Rivalitäten innerhalb des kapitalistischen Lagers geschickt ausspielen, um die Interessen Rußlands, und damit die der Weltrevolution, zu fördern. Der Profithunger der Kapitalisten mußte ausgenutzt werden, um sie zu Investitionen in Rußland zu verleiten, die letzten Endes, mit der Entwicklung Rußlands, die Weltrevolution vorwärtstrieben. Der „rote Handel" diente nicht nur den momentanen Interessen der russischen Wirtschaft, sondern wurde zum indirekten Mittel der proletarischen Revolution. Die Bourgeoisie erlaubte sich den Luxus des Parlamentarismus und bot so der Partei eine „Tribüne revolutionärer Propaganda" zum Schaden der bürgerlichen Demokratie. Die Gewerkschaften waren ohne Zweifel konterrevolutionär, aber wenn man in ihnen arbeitete, hatte man die Möglichkeit, sie in Instrumente der Revolution zu verwandeln. Die Partei mußte überall sein, das ganze System durchdringen, um im geeigneten Moment, im direkten Kampf um die Macht, ihr wahres Gesicht zu enthüllen.

Damit war die Strategie der Dritten Internationale wieder auf die verfemte sozialdemokratische Praxis der Vergangenheit gerichtet. Ihre nationalen Sektionen wuchsen, indem sie sich zu konkurrierenden Wahlparteien reduzierten, um innerhalb des Kapitalismus an Gewicht zu gewinnen. Die revolutionären Eliteparteien wurden zu Massenparteien, ohne jedoch ihre ultra-zentralistische innere Struktur aufzugeben.

Die im Namen der Disziplin entmündigten Mitglieder nährten sich von dem Mythos der russischen Revolution und sahen im Wachsen der Organisationen die Verheißung des künftigen Siegs der eigenen Revolution. Der Leninismus entpuppte sich als eine eigenartige Mischung zwischen sozialdemokratischen Traditionen, Erfahrungen der bolschewistischen Partei und Bedürfnissen der russischen staatlichen und nationalen Politik — eine Kombination, mit der sich in Westeuropa keine revolutionäre Politik machen ließ, selbst dann nicht, wenn dies die Aufgabe der Dritten Internationale gewesen wäre.

DER LENINISMUS, GESTERN UND HEUTE

Abgesehen von den wenigen Kennern der russischen Sozialdemokratie war Lenin in der westlichen Arbeiterbewegung der Vorkriegsjahre fast unbekannt. Das änderte sich jedoch durch seine konsequente sozialistische Einstellung zum Krieg, die ihn in den Mittelpunkt der Renaissance der internationalen revolutionären Bewegung stellte. Er stand auf dem linken Flügel der Zimmerwald-Bewegung und agitierte für die Umwandlung des Krieges in den Bürgerkrieg, für den absoluten Bruch mit der Zweiten Internationale und für die Formierung neuer revolutionärer Parteien. Die Differenzen zwischen Lenin und der westeuropäischen Linken verblaßten angesichts der gemeinsamen Aufgaben, und der Sieg der bolschewistischen Partei in Rußland wurde allgemein gefeiert. Trotz vieler Vorbehalte und der Kritik an der Taktik der Bolschewiki begrüßte Rosa Luxemburg die bolschewistische Revolution, weil sie „zum erstmal die Endziele des Sozialismus als unmittelbares Programm der praktischen Politik proklamierte“.³² Sie befürchtete allerdings, daß die von den Bolschewiki ausgeübte Diktatur gefährlich werden könnte, wenn die Bolschewiki aus der Not eine Tugend machten und „ihre von diesen fatalen Bedingungen auf gezwungene Taktik nunmehr theoretisch in allen Stücken fixieren und dem internationalen Proletariat als das Muster der sozialistischen Taktik (...) empfehlen“.³³

Das war natürlich genau das, was die Bolschewiki taten und was Lenins „Beitrag zum Marxismus“ ausmacht. Obschon Rosa Luxemburgs eigene politische Einstellung noch unter der sozialdemokratischen Tradition litt, sah sie doch, daß diese Art Diktatur sich auch gegen die Arbeiter richten mußte. Die Arbeiter, die sich für das Räteresystem einsetzten, plädierten zwangsläufig für die Diktatur, da das Räteresystem praktisch die Diktatur des Proletariats bedeutet. Sie wandten sich gegen Lenin, nicht weil er die Diktatur forderte, sondern weil er eine Parteidiktatur meinte und weil er den westeuropäischen Arbeitern die Rückkehr zur sozialdemokratischen Praxis empfahl. Ein Teil der revolutionären Arbeiter hatte jedoch die Hoffnung auf die Revolution nicht aufgegeben. Doch auch ohne Aussicht auf die proletarische Revolution hielten sie es für unerlässlich, mit dem politischen Parlamentarismus und der Gewerkschaftsbewegung endgültig zu brechen, da die Unzulänglichkeit dieser politischen und organisatorischen Formen der Arbeiterbewegung geschichtlich bereits erwiesen sei. Als Mittel und Ziel dieser Neuorganisation galt ihnen nun die reine Rätebewegung.

An dieser Frage spalteten sich die kommunistischen Parteien. Die als *Kommunistische Arbeiter-Partei* und *Allgemeine Arbeiter-Union* organisierten Marxisten wiesen darauf hin, daß die Lage der Arbeiter, obwohl die Bourgeoisie in den sozialen Kämpfen vorerst gesiegt hatte, sich nur verschlechtern konnte, so daß für sie der Krisenzustand bestehen blieb. In dieser Situation sei nicht zu erwarten, daß die Gewerkschaftsbewegung und die parlamentarischen Parteien die unmittelbaren Bedürfnisse der Arbeiter befriedigen könnten, womit sie ihre klassenversöhnende Funktion verlieren und sich als direkte Werkzeuge der Bourgeoisie offenbaren müßten.

Da objektiv die Situation eine revolutionäre blieb, sollte der Aufbau zeitgemäßer revolutionärer Organisationen und die Zerstörung der traditionellen Arbeiterorganisationen fortgesetzt werden. Gegen diese Auffassung verfaßte Lenin seine unrühmlich berühmte Schrift *Der Radikalismus, eine Kinderkrankheit des Kommunismus* (1921), die bald für die Quintessenz des Leninismus gehalten wurde.

Trotz der sich stetig verschlimmernden Lage gelang es den linken Kommunisten nicht, wirksame revolutionäre Organisationen aufzubauen. Die Massen blieben im Bannkreis der traditionellen Organisationen, zu denen nun auch die kommunistischen Parteien zu rechnen waren. Es existierten nun neben den Gewerkschaften zwei sozialdemokratische Parteien, die sich einzig in der Phraseologie, und auch darin nicht immer, voneinander unterschieden. Allerdings diente die eine dem deutschen Kapitalismus und die andere vornehmlich dem russischen Staatskapitalismus. Die Theorie und Praxis der kommunistischen Parteien, d.h. der Leninismus, beherrschte die gesamte pseudo-kommunistische Bewegung und fand bald durch den zusätzlichen Begriff des Stalinismus eine fatale Ergänzung.

Der Marxismus-Leninismus-Stalinismus repräsentiert den Niedergang der kommunistischen Bewegung im Weltmaßstab. Er ist der Ausdruck der auf den Ersten Weltkrieg folgenden verlorenen Revolution — insoweit sie als proletarische Revolution gelten konnte. Er ist dieser Revolution gegenüber ein Teil der internationalen Konterrevolution, ungeachtet der verbleibenden Gegensätze, die den russischen Staatskapitalismus vom westlichen Monopolkapitalismus scheiden, und unbeschadet der Leninschen Vorstellung der proletarischen Revolution als eines „dialektischen“ Umschlags der bürgerlichen Revolution. Um die Leninsche Konzeption zu rechtfertigen, wäre es notwendig, die Existenz des Sozialismus in Rußland nachzuweisen, was aber nur bei einer Verwechslung von Ideologie mit Wirklichkeit möglich ist. Nur wenn der Sozialismus sich auf die Abschaffung des Privateigentums an den Produktionsmitteln beschränken ließe, könnte man, und auch dann nicht völlig, die russische Gesellschaft als sozialistische bezeichnen. Aber da sich Rußland in allen anderen sozialen Beziehungen nicht von den ausgesprochen kapitalistischen Ländern unterscheidet, kann man nicht behaupten, daß die russische Revolution bereits zum Sozialismus geführt hat.

Im internationalen Maßstab und für die internationale Arbeiterbewegung hat der Leninismus nur von einer Niederlage zur anderen geführt, wenn es sich auch zumeist nur um kampfloze Niederlagen handelte.

Wenngleich dieser vollkommene Zerfall der internationalen revolutionären Bewegungen seinen Tiefpunkt nach dem Tode Lenins erreichte, fällt die Verantwortung dafür dem Leninismus als einer Basis der stalinistischen Politik zu. Obwohl es mehrfach versucht wurde, kann man vom Stalinismus nicht abstrahieren, wenn man vom Leninismus spricht. Aber selbst da, wo es geschieht, bleibt die Tatsache bestehen, daß der Leninschen Revolution durch das Konzept der staatskapitalistischen Partei-diktatur bereits die Gegenrevolution eingebaut war. Allerdings lassen sich gewichtige Unterschiede zwischen Lenin und Stalin ermitteln, da der eine die ihm als notwendig erscheinende Diktatur nur begann, während der andere sie bis zur äußersten Vollendung brachte. Auch ihr Stil war unterschiedlich: bei Lenin wurde die Wahrheit zur Demagogie, während für Stalin die Demagogie zur Wahrheit wurde.

Es mag sein, daß die internationale Arbeiterbewegung auch bei einer anderen Politik der Dritten Internationale zusammengebrochen wäre. Man kann sich auch vorstellen, daß der Leninismus auf Rußland beschränkt geblieben wäre, ohne daß sich deshalb eine konsequente kommunistische Bewegung in Westeuropa entwickelt hätte. Das ändert aber nichts an dem Sachverhalt, daß so, wie die Dinge lagen, die russische Revolution aus ihren eigenen Bedürfnissen heraus und aufgrund der Ideen Lenins

verurteilt war, der internationalen Konterrevolution Vorschub zu leisten und selbst zu einem gegenrevolutionären Faktor zu werden. Für die westeuropäischen kommunistischen Parteien bedeutete die Haltung der Dritten Internationale allerdings nicht mehr als die Absage an jede revolutionäre Politik — bis zur kampflosen Selbstaufgabe unter der faschistischen Diktatur.

Die nach dem Zweiten Weltkrieg neubelebten kommunistischen Parteien des Westens sind mit dem Leninismus der russischen Revolution nur noch rein ideologisch verbunden. In ihrer Praxis sind sie einfache Reformparteien, die sich von der Sozialdemokratie nur wenig unterscheiden, jedenfalls nicht in ihrer Bereitwilligkeit, an kapitalistischen Regierungen teilzunehmen und die bürgerliche Demokratie zu verteidigen, die nun von neuem als der einzig gangbare Weg zum Sozialismus gepriesen wird. Die „echten Leninisten“ sind darum nicht mehr in den kommunistischen Parteien zu finden, sondern bei den Opponenten des Stalinismus, die der „verratenen“ Revolution die falschverstandene Doktrin Lenins entgegensetzen.

Die wahre Bedeutung der bolschewistischen Revolution war nicht von vornherein ersichtlich und wurde erst nach dem Zweiten Weltkrieg völlig klar. Wir müssen daran erinnern, daß sich Lenin in seiner Einstellung zur bürgerlichen Revolution auf die Marxsche Politik von 1848 bezog. In einem kapitalistisch-unentwickelten Land ist die bürgerliche Revolution, historisch gesehen, auch vom Arbeiterstandpunkt aus fortschrittlich, da erst die entwickelte kapitalistische Gesellschaft dem Sozialismus seine Chance gibt. Aber hier handelt es sich um historische Perioden, nicht um ein paar Monate oder, genau genommen, um die Zeit vom Februar bis zum Oktober 1917. Wie schon bemerkt, nahm Lenin jedoch an, daß in der Periode des Imperialismus, „des höchsten Stadiums des Kapitalismus“, die bürgerliche Revolution direkt in die proletarische umschlagen werde, wenn beide Arten der Revolution in verschiedenen Ländern zeitlich zusammenfallen. Es spielte deshalb keine Rolle, in welchen Ländern, entwickelten oder unentwickelten, die Revolution zuerst ausbrach; sie mußte im Namen der sozialistischen Weltrevolution geführt werden. Da die Bevölkerungsmehrheit in den unentwickelten Ländern sich aus rebellierenden Bauern zusammensetzt und eine kleine Minorität moderner Proletarier auch schon vorhanden ist, sollte es möglich sein, die bürgerlichen und proletarischen Revolutionen durch die Existenz revolutionärer Parteien zu integrieren, die sozusagen über den besonderen Klassen stehen, oder besser: die die durch den Imperialismus geschichtlich gebotene Chance ausnutzen, um auf politischem Wege die sonst ordinäre kapitalistische Wirtschaftsentwicklung in den allgemeinen Fortschritt zum Sozialismus umzuleiten.

Tatsächlich sind bürgerliche Revolutionen des alten Typs nicht länger möglich, d.h. Revolutionen der liberalen Bourgeoisie und der Bauern gegen die feudale Oberherrschaft. Der Monopolkapitalismus und dessen Kontrolle über den Weltmarkt, verbunden mit der fortschreitenden nationalen und internationalen Konzentration des Kapitals, erlauben den unentwickelten Ländern keine selbständige nationale kapitalistische Entwicklung. Das ist nur durch die Lösung aus dem kapitalistischen Weltmarktsystem möglich, und durch die politische Befreiung aus der imperialistischen Unterjochung. Der erste Versuch ist auf dem Wege der Konkurrenz und der langsamen Entwicklung kapitalistischen Privateigentums, so wie sie sich einst in den dominierenden kapitalistischen Ländern vollzogen hat, nicht möglich; der zweite benötigt national-revolutionäre Befreiungskriege, die sich ebenso gegen die mit der internationalen Bourgeoisie verwachsene und von ihr abhängige eigene herrschende Klasse richten wie gegen das imperialistische Kapital. Da sich der Kampf der unterdrückten Nationen auf die Volksmassen stützen muß und gegen das ausländische Kapital gerichtet ist, kann er nicht mit kapitalistischer Ideologie geführt werden, sondern muß sich ideologisch als anti-

kapitalistisch — oder sozialistisch — präsentieren. Die Träger dieser Ideologie sind die der Entwicklungsmöglichkeiten beraubten intellektuellen Mittelschichten, die durch die nationale Revolution und die Beherrschung des Staatsapparates zur neuen herrschenden Klasse werden.

Die vorhandene Konzentration des herrschenden Kapitals muß mit der noch weitergehenden Kapitalkonzentration durch den Staat wettgemacht werden. Die unerläßliche und verzögerte Industrialisierung fordert einen wachsenden Teil der nationalen Produktion zu Zwecken der Kapitalakkumulation. Die Bauernrevolution führt zu einer zweiten staatlich-organisierten „Revolution“ gegen die Bauern, um auf dem Wege der kollektiven Wirtschaft das landwirtschaftliche Mehrprodukt zu vergrößern. Das industrielle Proletariat wächst mit der Industrialisierung, braucht aber noch Jahrzehnte, um zur ausschlaggebenden sozialen Klasse zu werden. Was sich hier vollzieht, ist die forcierte kapitalistische Entwicklung ohne die traditionellen Kapitalisten in Vorbereitung auf die Umstände, die erst zu einem späteren Termin eine sozialistische Revolution möglich, aber auch unerläßlich machen, da dieser Prozeß mit der Herausbildung einer neuen herrschenden Klasse verbunden ist, die die von ihr geschaffenen und ihre Privilegien garantierenden sozialen Verhältnisse zu verewigen sucht.

Da Rußland das Musterbeispiel dieser gesellschaftlichen Transformation ist, kann mit Sicherheit gesagt werden, daß Lenins Theorie vom Aufbau des Sozialismus durch den Staat auf der idealistischen Illusion beruht, daß der reine revolutionäre Wille zur Revolution und zum Sozialismus genügt, um alle diesem Willen entgegengesetzten Kräfte aus dem historischen Geschehen auszuschalten. Was Lenin erreichen konnte, war nur das, was der notwendigen Entwicklung der kapitalistisch zurückgebliebenen Länder unter den gegebenen Umständen entspricht und was nicht notwendigerweise mit Marxscher Ideologie verkleidet sein muß. Der Prozeß, der Rußland verwandelte, wiederholte sich nach dem Zweiten Weltkrieg zum Teil mit, zum Teil ohne die Marxsche Theorie in den nationalen Befreiungskämpfen in Asien und Afrika, wo in vielen Fällen die bolschewistische Partei durch die Armee ersetzt werden konnte.

Die national-revolutionären Bewegungen der Dritten Welt sind nicht Zeichen einer herannahenden weltweiten sozialistischen Revolution, sondern aus der Not geborene Versuche der eigenen Kapitalisation, deren erste Voraussetzung der Kampf gegen den alten Imperialismus ist. In dem Maße, in dem es den national-revolutionären Ländern gelingt, sich von fremder Ausbeutung zu befreien, vertiefen sich die dem Kapitalismus eigenen Schwierigkeiten und tragen zu seiner Auflösung bei. Als Ausdruck des zerfallenden Kapitalismus sind diese Bewegungen vom proletarischen Klassenstandpunkt aus zu begrüßen; aber das ändert nichts an der Tatsache, daß sich die Ziele der proletarischen Revolution nicht mit denen der nationalen Selbstständigkeitsbestrebungen vereinbaren lassen. Zu einer Zeit, in der sich Länder, die sich auf den Leninismus berufen, als Feinde gegenüberstehen, ja sich gegenseitig zu zerstören drohen und in der national-staatskapitalistische Interessen, wie alle nationalen Interessen, als imperialistische Interessen auftreten, ist es nicht mehr möglich, von einer Identität der national-revolutionären und der proletarischen Bewegung zu sprechen.

Es wäre natürlich schön, wenn sich die anti-kapitalistischen und anti-imperialistischen Bewegungen in einer großen gemeinsamen Front gegen den imperialistischen Kapitalismus zusammenfassen und unter eine einheitliche revolutionäre Führung bringen ließen. Aber das ist nur in der Vorstellung, nur als Idee möglich, da die Verschiedenheiten der materiellen und sozialen Zustände in den einzelnen Ländern eine solche revolutionäre Einheitsfront ausschließen. Die national-revolutionären Bewegungen können nicht zum Sozialismus führen, und die einzige Revolution, die die Arbeiter des Westens machen können, ist die sozialistische Revolution. Die Theorie und Praxis des

Leninismus liegt jedoch noch *vor* der sozialistischen Revolution, die erst noch ihre eigene Theorie und Praxis zu entwickeln hat. Wenn die Leninisten nicht müde werden, den sehr allgemeinen Satz, daß „es ohne revolutionäre Theorie keine revolutionäre Bewegung geben“ kann, wie ein Gebet herzusagen, so kann man dem zwar zustimmen, muß aber zugleich fragen: Weshalb gerade Lenins Theorie?

1 Lenin, *Was tun?* (1902). In: *Ausgewählte Werke*, Berlin 1932, Bd. II, S. 99.

2 Ibid., S.62.

3 Ibid., S. 63.

4 Ibid., S. 68.

5 Lenin, *Ein Schritt vorwärts, zwei Schritte zurück* (1904).

6 R. Luxemburg, *Organisationsfragen der Russischen Revolution*. In: *Politische Schriften*, Frankfurt am Main, 1968, Bd. III, S. 101.

7 Ibid., S. 86.

8 Ibid., S. 105.

9 Lenin, *Die Auflösung der Duma und die Aufgaben des Proletariats* (1906). In: *Ausgewählte Werke*, Bd. III, S. 371.

10 Ibid., S. 372.

11 Ibid., S. 375.

12 Lenin, *Sozialismus und Anarchismus* (1905). In: *Ausgewählte Werke*, Bd. III, S. 335.

13 Ders., *Aus den Resolutionsentwürfen für den 5. Parteitag der SDAPR*. In: *Ausgewählte Werke*, Bd. III, S. 477.

14 Lenin, *Die Bolschewiki müssen die Macht ergreifen* (Sept. 1917). In: *Ausgewählte Werke*, Bd. VI, S. 216.

15 Ders., *Bericht über die Taktik der KPR(b) auf dem 3. Kongreß der Kommunistischen Internationale* (1921). In: *Ausgewählte Werke*, Bd. IX, S. 243.

16 Ibid, S. 241.

17 Lenin, *Über das Genossenschaftswesen*. In: *Ausgewählte Werke* (1936) Bd. IX, S. 441.

18 Ders., *Über die Naturalsteuer*. In: *Ausgewählte Werke*, Bd. IX, S. 180.

19 Ibid., S. 181.

20 Lenin, *Bericht auf dem 2. Allrussischen Kongreß der Abteilungen für Proletarische Aufklärung*. In: *Ausgewählte Werke*, Bd. IX, S. 283.

21 Ders., *Die nächsten Aufgaben der Sowjetmacht*. In: *Ausgewählte Werke*, Bd. VII, S. 348.

22 Ibid., S. 349.

23 *Ausgewählte Werke*, Bd. VII, S. 47.

24 Marx-Engels, *Werke*, Berlin 1962, Bd. 17, S. 342.

25 Zitiert bei Fritz Brupbacher, *Marx und Bakunin*, Berlin 1922. S. 114-115

26 Marx an F. D. Nieuwenhuis. In: Marx-Engels, *Werke*, Bd. 35, S. 160.

27 Karl Korsch, *Revolutionäre Kommune*. In: *Schriften zur Sozialisierung*, Frankfurt am Main, 1969, S. 107.

28 Lenin, *Ausgewählte Werke*, Bd. VII, S. 45.

29 *Ausgewählte Werke*, Bd. VII, S. 93.

30 Zitiert in *Die KPD. im eigenen Spiegel*, KAPD Verlag, Berlin 1926, S. 30.

31 Lenin, *Wie wir die Arbeiter- und Bauerninspektion reorganisieren sollen*. In: *Ausgewählte Werke*, Bd. IX, S. 413.

32 *Die Russische Revolution*. In: *Politische Schriften*, Bd. III, S. 116.

33 Ibid., S. 140.

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Einleitung von Paul Mattick* zu den Grundprinzipien kommunistischer Produktion und Verteilung

* *Grundprinzipien kommunistischer Produktion und Verteilung*. — Kollektivarbeit der Gruppe Internationaler Kommunisten (Holland) 1930. Reprint Rüdiger Blankertz Verlag, Berlin, 1970. Einleitung von Paul Mattick, Februar 1970.

Die vorliegende Kollektivarbeit *Grundprinzipien kommunistischer Produktion und Verteilung* erschien zuerst vor 40 Jahren. Ihre Verfasser, die Gruppe Internationaler

Kommunisten in Holland, gehörten der Rätebewegung an. Arbeiterräte entstanden zuerst in der russischen Revolution von 1905. Nach Lenin hatten sie damals schon die Potenz der politischen Machtergreifung, obwohl sie sich tatsächlich noch auf dem Boden der bürgerlichen Revolution bewegten. Trotzki zufolge stellten die Arbeiterräte, im Gegensatz zu den politischen Parteien innerhalb der Arbeiterklasse, die Organisation des Proletariats selbst dar. Der Holländer Anton Pannekoek sah in der Rätebewegung die Selbstorganisation des Proletariats, die zu ihrer Klassenherrschaft und zur Übernahme der Produktion führen würde. Mit dem Erlöschen der russischen Revolution und dem Ende der Räte verlor sich jedoch das Interesse an dieser neuen Organisationsform, und die traditionellen politischen Parteien und Gewerkschaften hatten das Feld der Arbeiterbewegung wieder für sich allein. Erst die russische Revolution von 1917 brachte die Räte erneut in das Gesichtsfeld der internationalen Arbeiterbewegung; nun aber nicht nur als Ausdruck der spontanen Organisation revolutionärer Arbeiter, sondern auch als notwendige Massnahme gegen die konterrevolutionäre Haltung der alten Arbeiterbewegung.

Der erste Weltkrieg und der Zusammenbruch der Zweiten Internationale schloss die erste Periode der Arbeiterbewegung ab. Was schon lange zuvor ersichtlich war, nämlich die Eingliederung der Arbeiterbewegung in die bürgerliche Gesellschaft, wurde nun zur unumstößlichen Tatsache. Die Arbeiterbewegung war keine revolutionäre Bewegung, sondern eine Bewegung von Arbeitern, die sich innerhalb des Kapitalismus einzurichten suchte. Nicht nur die Führer, auch die Arbeiter, hatten kein Interesse an der Abschaffung des Kapitalismus und waren demzufolge mit der gewerkschaftlichen und politischen Tätigkeit innerhalb des Kapitalismus zufrieden. Die beschränkten Möglichkeiten der Parteien und Gewerkschaften innerhalb der bürgerlichen Gesellschaft drückten zugleich die wirklichen Interessen der Arbeiterklasse aus. Nichts anders konnte auch erwartet werden, da ein sich progressiv entfaltender Kapitalismus jede wirkliche revolutionäre Bewegung ausschliesst.

Das Idyll einer möglichen Klassenharmonie im Wandel der kapitalistischen Entwicklung, wie es der reformistischen Arbeiterbewegung zugrunde lag, zerbrach jedoch an den dem Kapitalismus eigenen Widersprüchen, die sich in Krisen und Kriegen ausdrücken. Die revolutionäre Idee, vorerst das ideologische Gut einer radikalen Minderheit innerhalb der Arbeiterbewegung, erfasste die breiten Massen, als das Elend des Krieges die wahre Natur des Kapitalismus blosslegte; nicht nur die des Kapitalismus, sondern auch den wahren Charakter der im Kapitalismus gross gewordenen Arbeiterorganisationen. Die Organisationen waren den Händen der Arbeiter entglitten; sie existierten für die letzteren nur insoweit, als es notwendig war, die Existenz ihrer Bürokratien sicherzustellen. Da die Funktionen dieser Organisationen an die Erhaltung des Kapitalismus gebunden sind, können sie nicht umhin, sich jedem ernstlichen Kampf gegen das kapitalistische System entgegenzustellen. Eine revolutionäre Bewegung benötigt deshalb Organisationsformen, die über den Kapitalismus hinausweisen, die die verlorene Herrschaft dem Arbeiter über ihre Organisationen wiederherstellen und die nicht nur Teile der Arbeiter, sondern die Arbeiter als Klasse umfassen. Die Rätebewegung war ein erster Versuch, eine der proletarischen Revolution entsprechende Organisationsform aufzubauen.

Die russische wie die deutsche Revolution fanden ihren organisatorischen Ausdruck in der Rätebewegung. In beiden Fällen verstanden sie es jedoch nicht, die politische Macht zu behaupten und zum Aufbau einer sozialistischen Wirtschaft zu benutzen. Während das Versagen der russischen Rätebewegung unzweifelhaft auf die Rückständigkeit der sozialen und ökonomischen Umstände Russlands zurückzuführen ist, beruhte das der deutschen Rätebewegung auf der Unwilligkeit der Masse der Arbeiter,

den Sozialismus auf revolutionärem Wege zu verwirklichen. Die Sozialisierung wurde als Aufgabe der Regierung, nicht als die dem Arbeiter selbst, angesehen, und die Rätebewegung dekretierte ihr eigenes Ende durch die Wiederherstellung der bürgerlichen Demokratie.

Obwohl die bolschewistische Partei mit der Losung „Alle Macht den Räten“ die politische Macht eroberte, hielt sie an der sozialdemokratischen Vorstellung fest, dass die Einführung des Sozialismus Sache des Staates, nicht der Räte sei. Während keine Art von Sozialisierung in Deutschland unternommen wurde, zerstörte der bolschewistische Staat das kapitalistische Privateigentum, ohne jedoch den Arbeitern Verfügungsrechte über ihre Produktion zuzusprechen. Soweit die Arbeiter in Frage kamen, war das Resultat eine Form von Staatskapitalismus, der die gesellschaftliche Lage der Arbeiter unverändert liess und deren Ausbeutung durch eine sich neubildende privilegierte Klasse fortsetzte. Der Sozialismus war weder durch den sich reformierenden Staat der bürgerlichen Demokratie noch durch den neuen revolutionären bolschewistischen Staat zu verwirklichen.

Abgesehen von der entweder objektiven oder subjektiven Unreife der Situationen, waren auch die zur Sozialisierung beschreitbaren Wege in Dunkelheit gehüllt. Im grossen und ganzen war die sozialistische Theorie auf die Kritik des Kapitalismus und die Strategie und Taktik des Klassenkampfes innerhalb der bürgerlichen Gesellschaft gerichtet. Insoweit man sich Gedanken über den Sozialismus machte, erschien der Weg zum und die Struktur des Sozialismus bereits im Kapitalismus vorgezeichnet. Selbst Marx hatte nur wenige prinzipielle Anmerkungen über den Charakter der sozialistischen Gesellschaft hinterlassen, da es in der Tat nicht sehr einträglich ist, sich mit der Zukunft über den Punkt hinaus zu beschäftigen, der schon in der Vergangenheit und Gegenwart eingeschlossen ist.

Im Gegensatz zu späteren Auffassungen hatte Marx jedoch klar gemacht, dass der Sozialismus nicht Sache des Staates, sondern der Gesellschaft ist. Der Sozialismus, als "Assoziation freier und gleicher Produzenten", benötigte den "Staat", d.h. die Diktatur des Proletariats, nur zu seiner Etablierung. Mit der Konsolidierung des Sozialismus wurde die als "Staat" aufgefasste proletarische Diktatur verschwinden. In der reformistischen wie in der revolutionären sozialdemokratischen Vorstellung vollzog sich jedoch eine Identifizierung von staatlicher und gesellschaftlicher Kontrolle, und der Begriff der "Assoziation freier und gleicher Produzenten" verlor seine ursprüngliche Bedeutung. Die im Kapitalismus vorhandenen Kennzeichen der sozialistischen Zukunft wurden nicht in der möglichen Selbstorganisation der Produktion und Verteilung durch die Produzenten gesehen, sondern in den dem Kapitalismus eigentümlichen Konzentrations- und Zentralisations-Tendenzen, die in der staatlichen Beherrschung der Gesamtwirtschaft ihren Abschluss finden würden. Diese Vorstellung des Sozialismus war von der Bourgeoisie aufgegriffen und dann als Illusion angegriffen worden.

Das Ende einer grossen geschichtlichen Bewegung wie die der Räte schliesst nicht die Erwartung ihrer Wiederkehr in einer neuen revolutionären Situation aus. Aus Niederlagen kann zudem gelernt werden. Die Aufgaben der Rätekommunisten nach den verlorenen Revolutionen bestand nicht nur in der weiteren Propagierung des Räteystems, sondern auch in der Herausarbeitung der Mängel, an denen die Bewegung gelitten hatte. Eine und vielleicht die grösste Schwäche war, dass die Räte kein klares Bild über ihre Aufgaben in Bezug auf die sozialistische Organisation der Produktion und Verteilung hatten. Da die Rätebewegung in den Betrieben ihre erste Basis findet, muss diese auch zum Ausgangspunkt der gesellschaftlichen Koordinierung und Zusammenfassung des wirtschaftlichen Lebens werden, in dem die Produzenten selbst über ihr Produkt verfügen. Die *Grundprinzipien kommunistischer Produktion und Verteilung* war der erste

Versuch der westeuropäischen Rätebewegung, sich mit dem Problem des sozialistischen Aufbaus auf der Basis der Räte vertraut zu machen.

In Anbetracht der ungeheuren Schwierigkeiten, die der proletarischen Revolution im Wege stehen, mag diese sich grösstenteils auf die Recheneinheit und Buchführung der kommunistischen Wirtschaft beziehende Schrift auf den ersten Blick als eigenartig erscheinen. Da man jedoch die Besonderheiten der zu erwartenden politischen Schwierigkeiten nicht voraussehen kann, bleibt die Beschäftigung damit immer spekulativ. Ein Gesellschaftssystem mag schwer oder leicht zu überwinden sein; es hängt von Umständen ab, die sich nicht voraussehen lassen. Aber diese Schrift beschäftigt sich nicht mit der Organisation der Revolution, sondern mit den ihr nachfolgenden Problemen. Da sich auch der wirkliche Zustand der Wirtschaft im Gefolge der Revolution nicht erraten lässt, lässt sich auch kein Programm für die tatsächlich zu leistenden nächsten Arbeiten im voraus aufstellen. Die auftauchenden Notwendigkeiten selbst werden hier der bestimmende Faktor sein. Was sich im voraus diskutieren lässt, sind die Massnahmen und Instrumente, die zur Herstellung bestimmter erwünschter gesellschaftlicher Verhältnisse notwendig sind, in diesem Fall Verhältnisse, die als kommunistisch gelten können.

Das theoretische Problem der kommunistischen Produktion und Verteilung wurde durch die russische Revolution zu einer praktischen Frage. Aber die Praxis war bereits vorbestimmt durch den Begriff der zentralistischen staatlichen Kontrolle, die beide Flügel der Sozialdemokratie beherrschte. Die Diskussionen um die Realisierung des Sozialismus oder Kommunismus liessen das wirkliche Problem, das der Kontrolle der Arbeiter über ihre Produktion, ausser Acht. Die Frage war, wie und mit welchen Mitteln eine zentral geleitete Planwirtschaft zu verwirklichen wäre. Da der Marxschen Theorie nach der Sozialismus keinen Markt, keine Konkurrenz, keine Preise und kein Geld kennt, liess sich der Sozialismus nur als Naturalwirtschaft auffassen, in der mittels der Statistik die Produktion sowohl wie die Verteilung von einer Zentralstelle aus bestimmt wird. An diesem Punkt setzte die bürgerliche Kritik mit der Behauptung ein, dass ein rationales Wirtschaften unter solchen Umständen unmöglich wäre, da die gesellschaftliche Produktion und Verteilung eines Wertmassstabes bedarf, so wie er in den Marktpreisen gegeben ist.

Um nicht die diesbezügliche Diskussion in *Grundprinzipien kommunistischer Produktion und Verteilung* vorwegzunehmen, sei hier nur gesagt, dass ihre Verfasser die Lösung des Problems der notwendigen Recheneinheit in der gesellschaftlichen durchschnittlichen Arbeitszeit als Grundlage für die Produktion als auch für die Verteilung sehen. Die praktische Anwendbarkeit dieser Rechenmethode und der damit verbundenen öffentlichen Buchführung wird im Detail nachgewiesen. Da es sich nur um Mittel zur Erzielung bestimmter Resultate handelt, lässt sich logisch nichts dagegen einwenden. Die Anwendung dieser Mittel setzt natürlich den Willen zur kommunistischen Produktion und Verteilung voraus. Ist diese Voraussetzung gegeben, so stünde der Anwendung dieser Mittel nichts im Wege, obwohl sie nicht die einzigen dem Kommunismus angemessenen sein mögen.

Marx zufolge ist jedes Wirtschaften "*Ökonomie der Zeit*". Die Verteilung und Anordnung der gesellschaftlichen Arbeit zur Befriedigung der Produktion und Konsumtionsbedürfnisse macht auch im Kapitalismus die Arbeitszeit zum Massstab der Produktion, wenn auch nicht zu dem der Verteilung. Den im Kapitalismus auftretenden Preisen liegen an Arbeitszeit gebundene Werte zugrunde, die sich allerdings nicht auf die einzelnen Waren beziehen, sondern auf die gesamtgesellschaftliche Produktion, in der alle Preise zusammen genommen nichts anderes sein können als der Gesamtwert der an Arbeitszeit gebundenen Produktion. Die Produktions- oder Ausbeutungsverhältnisse des

Kapitalismus, die zugleich Marktverhältnisse sind, und die Akkumulation von Kapital als Motiv und Motor der kapitalistischen Produktion, schliessen einen an Arbeitszeit gebundenen Austausch von Wertäquivalenten aus. Nichtsdestoweniger beherrscht das Wertgesetz die kapitalistische ökonomie und ihre Entwicklung.

Von dieser Tatsache ausgehend, kann leicht angenommen werden, dass auch im Sozialismus das Wertgesetz Geltung habe, da auch hier die Arbeitszeit in Betracht gezogen werden muss, um rationales Wirtschaften zu ermöglichen. Aber Arbeitszeit wird zum Arbeitszeitwert nur unter kapitalistischen Bedingungen, unter denen die notwendige gesellschaftliche Koordination der Produktion dem Markt und den privaten Besitzverhältnissen überlassen ist. Ohne kapitalistische Marktverhältnisse gibt es kein Wertgesetz, obwohl nach wie vor Arbeitszeit in Betracht gezogen werden mug, um die gesellschaftliche Produktion der gesellschaftlichen Bedürfnissen anzupassen. In diesem letzteren Sinne sprechen die *Grundprinzipien kommunistischer Produktion und Verteilung* von der gesellschaftlichen durchschnittlichen Arbeitszeit.

Die Verfasser weisen darauf hin, dass schon vor ihnen die Arbeitszeit als wirtschaftliche Recheneinheit vorgeschlagen wurde. Sie finden diese Vorschläge unzulänglich, da sie sich wohl auf die Produktion, jedoch nicht auf die Verteilung beziehen und damit dem Kapitalismus verwandt bleiben. Ihrer Ansicht nach müsse die gesellschaftliche durchschnittliche Arbeitszeit gleichzeitig für die Produktion und die Verteilung gelten. Hier liegt allerdings eine Schwierigkeit und Schwäche der Arbeitszeitrechnung vor, auf die schon Marx hingewiesen hat und auf die er keine andere Antwort fand als die der Abschaffung der Arbeitszeitrechnung in der Verteilung durch die Realisierung des kommunistischen Prinzips "*Jeder nach seinen Fähigkeiten, jedem nach seinen Bedürfnissen*".

In seiner *Kritik des Gothaer Programms der Deutschen Sozialdemokratischen Partei* führte Marx aus, dass eine an Arbeitszeit gebundene gleiche Verteilung neue Ungleichheiten mit sich brächte, da die Produzenten mit Bezug auf ihre Arbeitsfähigkeiten und ihre privaten Verhältnisse unterschiedlich sind. Manche leisten in der selben Zeit mehr Arbeit als andere, manche hatten Familien zu erhalten und andere nicht, so dass sich die Gleichheit der an Arbeitszeit gebundenen Verteilung als Ungleichheit der Konsumtionsbedingungen auswirkt. "*Bei gleicher Arbeitsleistung und daher gleichem Anteil an dem gesellschaftlichen Konsumtionsfonds*", schrieb Marx, "*erhält also der eine faktisch mehr als der andere, ist der eine reicher als der andere usw. Um alle diese Missstände zu vermeiden, müsste das Recht, statt gleich, vielmehr ungleich sein*". Obwohl er aber diese Missstände für "*unvermeidbar in der ersten Phase der kommunistischen Gesellschaft*" hielt, sah er sie nicht als ein kommunistisches Prinzip an. Wenn die Autoren der *Grundprinzipien* behaupten, dass ihre "Darlegungen nur die folgerichtige Anwendung der Marxschen Gedankengänge sind", so stimmt das nur insofern, als diese Gedanken sich auf eine Phase der sozialistischen Entwicklung beziehen, in der noch das Prinzip des Austauschs von Äquivalenten vorherrscht, das aber im Sozialismus sein Ende finden soll.

Für Marx, war es selbstverständlich, dass die "*jedesmalige Verteilung der Konsumtionsmittel nur Folge der Produktionsbedingungen*" ist. "*Sind die sachlichen Produktionsbedingungen genossenschaftliches Eigentum der Arbeiter selbst*", führte er aus, "*so ergibt sich ebenso eine von der heutigen verschiedene Verteilung der Konsumtionsmittel*". Die möglichen Missstände einer an Arbeitszeit gebundenen Verteilung konnten so nicht durch eine Trennung von Produktion und Verteilung bewältigt werden, da die Beherrschung der Produktion durch die Produzenten auch deren Beherrschung der Verteilung enthält, so wie die staatliche Bestimmung der Verteilung — Zuteilung von Oben — auch die staatliche Kontrolle der Produktion in sich einschliesst.

Die Verfasser der "Grundprinzipien" betonen mit Recht, dass den Produzenten das volle Verfügungsrecht über ihre Produktion zugestanden werden muss, aber ob dieses Verfügungsrecht auch eine an gleiche Arbeitszeit gebundene Verteilung benötigt, ist eine andere Frage.

In den hochentwickelten kapitalistischen Ländern, d.h. den Ländern, in denen sozialistische Revolutionen möglich sind, sind die gesellschaftlichen Produktivkräfte weit genug entwickelt, um einen Überfluss an Konsumtionsmitteln zu produzieren. Wenn man bedenkt, dass sicherlich mehr als die Hälfte aller kapitalistischen Produktion und der mit ihr verbundenen unproduktiven Tätigkeiten (ganz abgesehen von den vorhandenen unangewandten Produktionsmöglichkeiten) nichts mit dem menschlichen Konsum zu tun haben, sondern einem "Sinn" nur innerhalb der irrationalen kapitalistischen Gesellschaft finden können, dann wird ersichtlich, dass unter den Bedingungen kommunistischer Wirtschaft ein Überfluss an Konsumtionsmitteln erzeugt werden kann, der eine Berechnung individueller Anteile überflüssig macht.

Die Aktualisierung des schon heute potentiell gegebenen Überflusses setzt allerdings eine völlige Umstellung der gesellschaftlichen Produktion auf die realen Bedürfnisse der Produzenten voraus. Die Umwandlung der Kapitalproduktion in eine den menschlichen Bedürfnissen zugewandte wird ein Zweifel, nicht nur als Resultat der Abschaffung kapitalistischer Verhältnisse, eine Wandlung der industriell-technischen Entwicklung mit sich bringen und auch die bedrohte Zukunft menschlicher Existenz überhaupt sichern.

Obwohl die *Grundprinzipien* mit Recht betonen, dass die Produktion von der Reproduktion kontrolliert wird, und obwohl der Ausgangspunkt der kommunistischen Produktion nur der Endpunkt der kapitalistischen Produktion sein kann, so benötigt die neue Gesellschaft dennoch eine ihr angepasste Änderung der Produktionsziele und Produktionsmethoden. Die diesen Änderungen entsprechenden Massnahmen und deren Resultate werden bestimmen, ob die Verteilung gemäss den Produktionsanteilen oder gemäss den sich verändernden wirklichen Bedürfnissen unternommen wird. Weiterhin ist es durchaus möglich, dass eine teilweise Zerstörung der Produktionsbasis, durch die mit dem gesellschaftlichen Wandel verbundenen Klassenkämpfe, die Organisation der Verteilung auf Grund der Arbeitszeit ausschliesse, ohne deshalb eine gleiche Verteilung — z.B. durch Rationierung — zu unterbinden. Und diese gleiche Verteilung könnte ohne den Umweg über die Arbeitszeitrechnung durch die Arbeiter selbst direkt sichergestellt werden. Die *Grundprinzipien* gehen jedoch sozusagen von einem "normalen" kommunistischen Wirtschaftssystem aus, d.h. einem System, das sich bereits völlig durchgesetzt hat und sich in seiner neuen Gestalt reproduziert. Unter solchen Umständen erscheint eine an Arbeitszeit gebundene Verteilung als überflüssig.

Allerdings umfasst das von den *Grundprinzipien* geforderte "exakte Verhältnis von Produzent und Produkt" nur den individuellen Anteil der Produktion — nach Abzug der Produktionsteile, die der öffentlichen Konsumtion und der Reproduktion der gesellschaftlichen Produktion zufallen. Der Prozess der Sozialisierung drückt sich in der Abnahme der individuellen und der Zunahme der öffentlichen Konsumtion aus, so dass die kommunistische Entwicklung doch zur Abschaffung der Arbeitszeitrechnung in der Verteilung tendiert. Die marktlose Wirtschaft erfordert den Zusammenschluss der Konsumenten in Genossenschaften mit direktem Anschluss an die Betriebsorganisationen, in denen die individuellen Wünsche mit Bezug auf die Konsumtion, und damit die Produktion, ihren kollektiven Ausdruck finden können. Leider ist dieser Teil der "*Grundprinzipien*" der am wenigsten ausgearbeitete, obwohl es gerade die angebliche Konsumtionsfreiheit der Marktwirtschaft ist, die als Apologie für den Kapitalismus ausgenutzt wird. Aber es ist durchaus möglich, die

Konsumtionsbedürfnisse auch ohne den Markt festzustellen, und zwar weit besser als es der Markt kann, da in der kommunistischen Gesellschaft die durch die klassengebundene Verteilung gegebenen Verzerrungen der Marktnachfrage wegfallen.

Auch in der Produktion kann die Forderung nach *"exakter Berechnung"* nur zu einer Annäherung an eine solche führen, da der Arbeits- und Reproduktionsprozess selbst dauernder Veränderung unterliegt. Die Feststellung der gesellschaftlichen durchschnittlichen Arbeitszeit für die Gesamtproduktion erfordert eine gewisse Zeit, und die einmal erreichte Ermittlung ist der tatsächlichen Reproduktion gegenüber stets veraltet. Die *"Exaktheit"* bezieht sich auf einen verflossenen Zeitpunkt, was sich jedoch nicht ändern lässt, wie sehr sich auch die Ermittlungszeit durch moderne Methoden und Instrumente verkürzen liesse. Die gesellschaftliche durchschnittliche Arbeitszeit ist so steter Veränderung unterworfen. Dieser Mangel an *"Exaktheit"* ist jedoch kein ernsthaftes Hindernis zur Kalkulation der gesellschaftlichen Produktion und Reproduktion, sei es auf der gleichen, oder einer höheren Produktionsstufe. Nur wird die tatsächliche Situation von der berechneten abweichen, und erst in den Abweichungen ergibt sich der wirkliche Stand der Produktion. Bei der Arbeitszeitrechnung handelt es sich nicht um völlige Übereinstimmung der durch die Recheneinheit gewonnenen Produktionszeiten mit der tatsächlich angewandten durchschnittlichen Arbeitszeit und der daraus resultierenden Produktion, sondern um die Notwendigkeit der Anordnung und Verteilung der gesellschaftlichen Arbeit, die dem Natur dem Sache nach stets nur annäherungsweise erreicht werden kann. Mehr ist jedoch nicht für eine geplante kommunistische Wirtschaft erforderlich.

Die Verfasser der *Grundprinzipien* wollen die Produktion so aufbauen, *"dass das exakte Verhältnis von Produzent und Produkt zur Grundlage des gesellschaftlichen Produktionsprozesses wird."* Sie sehen die als *"Kernfrage der proletarischen Revolution"*, da sich nur so der Aufbau eines sich über die Produzenten erhebenden Apparates vermeiden lässt. Nur durch die Festlegung des Verhältnisses von Produkt und Produzent ist *"die Aufgabe der Leiter und Verwalter hinsichtlich der Zuweisung des Produktes aufgehoben"*. Es geht hier also um die Selbstbestimmung der Verteilung durch die Produzenten als der unerlässlichen Voraussetzung der klassenlosen Gesellschaft. Die Festlegung des exakten Verhältnisses von Produzent und Produkt kann allerdings nur das Resultat einer gelungenen proletarischen Revolution sein, die das Räteregime als Gesellschaftsorganisation realisiert. Ist das der Fall, dann mag jedoch die Notwendigkeit, den Produktionsprozess von der Verteilung her zu meistern wegfallen. Man kann sich eine unregelmäßige Verteilung der Konsumtionsgüter genau so gut vorstellen wie eine geregelte, ohne damit den Aufbau neuer privilegierter Schichten zu fördern. Andererseits ist die bloße Annahme einer Verteilungsnorm keine ausreichende Gewähr für den Aufbau einer kommunistischen Wirtschaft, die sich nicht nur an den Anteilen der Produzenten am gesellschaftlichen Produkt zu orientieren hat, sondern, darüber hinaus, an den materiellen Bedingungen der gesellschaftlichen Produktion.

Im Kapitalismus wird die Verteilung nur scheinbar durch den Markt geregelt. Obwohl die Produktion über den Markt realisiert werden muss, wird der Markt selbst von der Kapitalproduktion bestimmt. Es ist die Produktion des Tauschwertes und die Akkumulation des Kapitals, die dem Produktionsprozess zugrunde liegt. Die Gebrauchswertseite der Produktion ist nur Mittel zum Zweck der Tauschwertvermehrung. Die wirklichen Bedürfnisse der Produzenten können nur insoweit Berücksichtigung finden, als sie mit dem Akkumulationszwang zusammenfallen. Die Produktion als Mehrwertproduktion in der Marktwirtschaft regelt sich automatisch durch die Tauschwertbeziehungen, die sich, wenn überhaupt, nur rein zufällig mit den Gebrauchswertbeziehungen decken. Die kommunistische Gesellschaft

produziert für den Gebrauch und muss deshalb Produktion und Verteilung den realen gesellschaftlichen Bedürfnissen anpassen. Um irgendeiner Art von Verteilungsnorm nachzugehen, muss vorerst die Produktion unter bewusste Kontrolle gebracht werden. Der Verteilung geht die Produktion voraus, selbst wenn sie von den Bedürfnissen der Konsumenten bestimmt wird. Aber die Organisation der Produktion erfordert weit mehr als die exakte Bestimmung des Verhältnisses von Produzent und Produkt; sie benötigt die Kontrolle der gesamtgesellschaftlichen Bedürfnisse und Produktionskapazitäten in deren physischen Formen und eine ihnen entsprechende Verteilung der gesellschaftlichen Arbeit.

Man wird so auch im Rätssystem nicht umhin können, Institutionen aufzubauen, die einen Überblick über die gesamtgesellschaftlichen Notwendigkeiten und Möglichkeiten erlauben. Die so gewonnenen Eindrücke müssen in Entschlüsse ausmünden, wie sie von den einzelnen Betriebsorganisationen nicht gefasst werden können. Der Aufbau des Rätessystems muss so gestaltet werden, dass die Produktion zentral reguliert werden kann, ohne damit die Selbstbestimmung der Produzenten zu beeinträchtigen. Aber selbst im einzelnen Betrieb werden die Beschlüsse der Arbeiter den Räten zur Ausführung überlassen, ohne dass dadurch notwendigerweise eine Herrschaft der Räte über die Arbeiter entstehen muss. Auch im grösseren Rahmen, bis zu dem der nationalen Produktion, lassen sich organisatorische Massnahmen treffen, die die Selbständigkeit der überbetrieblichen Institutionen mit daran Kontrolle durch die Produzenten verbinden. Aber diese Auflösung des Gegensatzes von Zentralismus und Föderalismus, der auch von den "*Grundprinzipien*" angestrebt wird, lässt sich wohl nicht allein durch die blosse "*Registrierung des Wirtschaftsprozesses in der allgemeinen gesellschaftlichen Buchhaltung*" herstellen, sondern bedarf höchstwahrscheinlich besonderer, dem Rätssystem eingegliedeter Betriebe, die sich mit dem Problem der Wirtschaftsgestaltung speziell befassen.

Die Zurückweisung einer zentralen Produktionsverwaltung und dem damit verbundenen staatlich-regulierten Verteilung durch die "*Grundprinzipien*" beruht auf den in Russland gemachten Erfahrungen, die sich allerdings nicht auf das Rätssystem, sondern auf den Staatskapitalismus beziehen. Aber selbst hier ist die Produktion und Verteilung nicht das Werk der Planungsorgane, sondern das des Staates, der sich der Planungsorgane als Mittel bedient. Es ist die politische Diktatur des Staatsapparates über die Arbeiter, nicht die Planung der Wirtschaft, die zu neuer Ausbeutung geführt hat, an der dann auch die Planungsbehörden teilnehmen können. Ohne die politische Diktatur des Staatsapparates brauchten sich die Arbeiter nicht dem zentralen Produktionsverwaltung und Verteilung zu unterwerfen.

Die erste Voraussetzung kommunistischer Produktion und Verteilung ist dann, dass sich kein Staatsapparat neben oder über den Räten erhebt, dass die "staatliche" Funktion, d.h. die Unterdrückung konterrevolutionärer Bestrebungen, von den im Rätssystem organisierten Arbeitern selbst ausgeübt wird. Eine Partei, als Teil der Arbeiterklasse, die nach der Staatsmacht strebt und sich als Staatsapparat nach dem Ergreifen der Macht etabliert, wird ohne Zweife versuchen, die Produktion und Verteilung unter ihre Kontrolle zu bringen und diese Kontrolle zur Erhaltung der gewonnenen Position zu reproduzieren. Ist die Kontrolle der Mehrheit durch die Minderheit gegeben, dann lässt sich auch die Ausbeutung fortsetzen. Das Rätssystem kann so keinen Staat neben sich zulassen, ohne sich selbst zuentmachten. Aber ohne diese abgesonderte staatliche Gewalt kann sich jede Planung der Produktion und Verteilung nur durch das Rätssystem durchsetzen. Die Planungsorgane werden selbst zu Betrieben, neben anderen Betrieben, die sich im Rätssystem zu einer Einheit verschmelzen.

In diesem Zusammenhang muss noch erwähnt werden, dass auch die Arbeiterklasse in ihrer Zusammensetzung dauernder Veränderung unterliegt. Die *Grundprinzipien* gehen von dem in den Betrieben zusammengefassten industriellen Proletariat als der gesellschaftlich ausschlaggebenden Klasse aus. Das auf den Betrieben basierende Rätssystem bestimmt die Gesellschaftsformation und zwingt andere Klassen, z.B. die selbständigen Bauern, sich in das Wirtschaftssystem einzugliedern. In den letzten 40 Jahren hat sich die Arbeiterklasse, d.h. die Schicht der Lohn- und Gehaltsempfänger, nun zwar sehr vermehrt, aber relativ zur Masse der Bevölkerung hat sich die Zahl der Fabrikarbeiter vermindert. Ein Teil der Angestellten wirkt zusammen mit den Handarbeitern in den Betrieben, ein anderer Teil arbeitet in den Bereichen der Verteilung und Verwaltung. Durch die Verwissenschaftlichung der Produktion können auch die Universitäten zum Teil als "Betriebe" angesehen werden, da die Produktivkräfte der Wissenschaft die der direkten Arbeit tendenziell überholen. Und obwohl im Kapitalismus Mehrwert immer nur Mehrarbeit sein kann, was auch immer der Stand der Wissenschaft sein mag, stellt sich der gesellschaftliche Reichtum im Kommunismus nicht in wachsender Arbeit, sondern in der dauernden Reduzierung der notwendigen Arbeit durch die den kapitalistischen Schranken entronnenen wissenschaftlichen Entwicklung dar. Die Produktion vergesellschaftet sich zunehmend, durch die Einbeziehung stets breiterer Massen in die Produktionsprozesse, die nun nur noch in engster Verbindung und durch die gegenseitige Durchdringung aller Arten von Arbeiten zu existieren vermögen. Kurz gesagt, der Begriff Arbeiterklasse weitet sich aus; er umschließt schon heute mehr als vor 40 Jahren. Die sich verändernde Arbeitsteilung enthält schon in sich selbst die Tendenz der Auflösung der Berufsscheidungen, der Trennung geistiger von körperlicher Arbeit, von Fabrik und Büro, von Arbeiter und Vorgesetzten; ein Prozess, der durch die Einbeziehung aller Produzenten in die nunmehr gesellschaftlich orientierte Produktion zu einem Rätssystem führen kann, das tatsächlich die ganze Gesellschaft umfasst und damit der Klassenherrschaft ein Ende setzt.

Man kann das Misstrauen der "*Grundprinzipien*" gegenüber den "Führern, Fachleuten und Wissenschaftlern", die sich anmassen, Produktion und Verteilung beherrschen zu müssen, durchaus teilen, ohne deshalb zu verkennen, dass, abgesehen von den Führern, die Fachleute und Wissenschaftler selbst Produzenten sind. Gerade das Rätssystem stellt sie allen anderen Produzenten gleich und beraubt sie der im Kapitalismus ausgeübten Sonderstellung. Da gesellschaftliche Rückfälle immer möglich sind, ist es jedoch klar, dass auch ein Rätssystem sich zersetzen kann, z. B. durch ein mangelndes Interesse der Produzenten an ihrer Selbstbestimmung und der daraus folgenden Übertragung der Rätefunktionen an Instanzen innerhalb des Rätessystems, die sich den Produzenten gegenüber verselbständigen. Diese Gefahr glauben die Verfasser durch die "*neue Produktionsberechnung als allgemeiner Grundlage der Produktion*" abwenden zu können. Aber so wie diese Produktionsberechnung erst eingeführt worden muss, kann die von ihr erwartete Wirkung durch eine Reihe von Modifikationen wieder verloren gehen. In der Darstellung der Verfasser erscheint die einmal erreichte Einführung jedoch als ausreichend. Sie wehren sich gegen die im Staatskapitalismus übliche "*Anordnung durch Personen*", die durch den "*sachlichen Gang der Produktion*" und deren Kontrolle durch die Reproduktion ausgeschaltet werden soll.

Das neue System der Produktion und Verteilung selbst garantiert hier die kommunistische Gesellschaft, obwohl in Wirklichkeit der "*sachliche Gang der Produktion*" immer nur durch Personen gewährleistet wird. Auch im Kapitalismus gibt es einen "sachlichen Gang der Produktion", nämlich den durch das Marktgesetz gegebenen, dem alle Personen unterworfen sind. Es ist hier das System, das die Menschen beherrscht. Dieses fetischistisch gesehene System verdeckt allerdings nur die realen sozialen

Verhältnisse der Ausbeutung des Menschen durch den Menschen. Hinter den ökonomischen Kategorien stehen Klassen und Personen, und wo immer dem Fetischismus des Systems durchbrochen wird, tritt der offene Kampf der Klassen und Personen ans Tageslicht. Obwohl der Kommunismus auch ein Gesellschaftssystem ist, so ist es doch nicht über die Menschen, sondern durch die Menschen gesetzt. Es hat kein Eigenleben, dem sich die Personen zwangsweise anzupassen haben; der "sachliche Gang der Produktion" wird durch Personen angeordnet, allerdings von den im Rätssystem vereinten Personen.

Diese wenigen vorgebrachten Einwendungen müssen hier genügen, um anzudeuten, dass es sich bei den "*Grundprinzipien*" nicht um ein abgeschlossenes Programm handelt, sondern um einen ersten Versuch, dem Problem der kommunistischen Produktion und Verteilung näher zu kommen. Und obwohl die *Grundprinzipien* sich mit einem noch in der Zukunft liegenden gesellschaftlichen Zustand befassen, sind sie zugleich ein geschichtliches Dokument, das einen Stand der Diskussion in der Vergangenheit beleuchtet. Ihre Verfasser waren an die vor einem halben Jahrhundert aufgeworfenen Fragen der Sozialisierung gebunden, und manche ihrer Argumente haben in der Zwischenzeit einen Teil ihrer damaligen Aktualität verloren. Der damalige Streit der Naturalwirtschaftler mit den Repräsentanten der Marktwirtschaft, in den die "*Grundprinzipien*" durch die Ablehnung beider Gruppen eingriffen, hat inzwischen sein Ende gefunden. Im allgemeinen wird der Sozialismus überhaupt nicht mehr als eine neue Gesellschaft, sondern als eine Modifikation des Kapitalismus begriffen. Die Marktwirtschaftler sprachen von der geplanten Marktwirtschaft, und die Planwirtschaftler bedienen sich der Marktwirtschaft. Die Anordnung der Produktion vom Gebrauchswert her schliesst nicht die ungeiche Verteilung der Konsumgüter durch Preismanipulationen aus. Die "Ökonomischen Gesetze" werden als unabhängig von den Gesellschaftsformationen aufgefasst, und man streitet sich höchstens noch darüber, welche Mischung von Kapitalismus und Sozialismus "ökonomischer" wäre.

Das "ökonomische Prinzip", d.h. das Prinzip der wirtschaftlichen Rationalität, das angeblich allen Gesellschaftsordnungen zugrunde liegt und das sich als maximale Verwirklichung wirtschaftlicher Ziele mit den geringsten Kosten darstellt, ist in Wirklichkeit nichts anderes als das ordinäre kapitalistische Prinzip der Profitproduktion, die stets nach dem Höchstmass der Ausbeutung strebt. Das "ökonomische Prinzip" der Arbeiterklasse ist demzufolge nichts anderes als die Abschaffung der Ausbeutung. Dieses "ökonomische Prinzip", von dem die "*Grundprinzipien*" ausgehen, ist ihnen bis heute vorbehalten geblieben. Abgesehen von der offensichtlichen Ausbeutung der Arbeiter in den sogenannten "sozialistischen" Ländern, dreht sich das akademische Geschwätz um den Sozialismus in den kapitalistischen Ländern nur um staatskapitalistische Systeme. Das "sozialistische Eigentum" an den Produktionsmitteln wird immer als Staatseigentum verstanden, die administrative Zuteilung von Gütern, mit oder ohne Markt, bleibt immer die Sache zentraler Entscheidungen. Wie im Kapitalismus ist die Ausbeutung zweifach gesichert, durch die fortgesetzte Trennung der Produzenten von den Produktionsmitteln und durch die Monopolisierung der politischen Gewalt. Und wo man den Arbeitern eine Art "Mitbestimmungsrecht" zugestanden oder aufgedrängt hat, fügt der Marktmechanismus der staatlichen Ausbeutung die Selbstaubeutung hinzu. Was auch immer die Schwächen der *Grundprinzipien* sein mögen, in Anbetracht dieser Situation bleiben sie heute wie morgen der Ausgangspunkt aller ernsthaften Diskussionen und Bemühungen um die Verwirklichung der kommunistischen Gesellschaft.

Februar 1970, Paul Mattick

