

at the head of the Communist Party of Germany, broke with the Comintern. From then on, first in Germany, and after 1933 in France, she fought the Russian State Party and its national branches.

She has had personal contacts with many of the leading figures in Russia and with most of the leading communists in Europe, for instance, with Maurice Thorez, Wilhelm Pieck, Palmiro Togliatti, and Georghi Dimitrov.

The *Newsletter* will analyse current trends of contemporary communism, the policy of the communist parties, the background of their leading cadres, the tactics and the aims of the Russian Hierarchy. It is issued regularly with a map pictorializing the major problems of the month and statistical and biographical notes for your file.

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Extracts:—

#### *Soviet Moslems*

One of the hardest nuts to crack for the experts of the Baku NKVD School is Palestine. About 18 millions of Moslems are living within the Soviet borders; one of the grandiose plans is to group the Arab nationalists around this Soviet Nucleus. The Indian communists have suffered many setbacks because of Moscow's orders to support Pakistan—the idea of an independent Moslem India, part of the Arabian dream envisioning a chain of Moslem states from the Indian border to the coast of Dakar. Until now, however, the Arab League sided with Great Britain. When the Soviet Moslems were encouraged in 1945 to undertake pilgrimages to Mecca, this was the first indication of Moscow's renewed bid for supporters within the Arab League.

With regard to Palestine, the emphasis of Moscow's policy has now been shifted very definitely to the Arabs. The Jews have served their purpose against Nazism; they can be dropped now.

In the NKVD training centres in Baku and Tiflis, studies on social engineering complete the military training. The Near Eastern political and economic regimes are scientifically dissected in the classrooms; nothing is neglected in the survey as a possible instrument for gaining control. Side by side with the encouragement of the Soviet Moslems, much attention is paid to the Orthodox churches (Eastern Catholics) scattered all over the Near East and the Balkans. The messengers of Patriarch Alexei to his brother churches in Egypt, Syria and Abyssinia (the KOPTS) are very helpful.

#### *MAURICE THOREZ*

In his early youth Thorez had worked in a mine. At the end of the first World War he entered the French army. He was not among those French socialists who adhered to Lenin's ideas of internationalism during the war; only in 1920 after the split of the French Social De-

mocratic Party on the question of an alliance with the Comintern, he entered the Communist Party.

The French Communist Party at that time was not estimated very highly in Moscow. The party was full of free-masons, free thinkers of all varieties, intellectuals, Parisian artists, and was, in spite of its revolutionary rhetoric, unfit for Bolshevik activities. The French party was considered very early as a mere convenient framework for Russian espionage. Paris was a good place to observe the behind-the-scene activities of the League of Nations. Parisian coffee houses were excellent meeting places of spies of all nations.

Thorez was one of the GPU agents in France. Stalin selected in 1926 his handy men with predilections among those who already had a double function and combined native communism with GPU assignments in Russian services. Thorez was popularized by the apparatus as the true incarnation of the French proletariat, a new type of revolutionary leader supplanting the soft intellectuals.

Thorez was a representative of Stalin's "Third Period" (1929-33), the time when the Politburo instructed European communists to avoid scrupulously any United Front with the Social Democrats, the "Social Fascists." In 1935 Thorez jumped to the opposite, the "People's Front" policy in France and Spain which almost brought him into the French Cabinet under Blum. The Parisian streets echoed "Maurice Thorez, au pouvoir." In 1937-38 the People's Front changed into the "National Front." "Give us the government Thorez-Marin" (Marin, leader of an extreme nationalist party). When the German-Russian pact was signed in Moscow (August 23, 1939), Thorez's friends spread rumors that he thought of the possibility of acclaiming the independence of his party from Moscow. His entrance into the army cut short political activities. Stalin, having heard about the bad sentiments of his favorite disciple, called him to Moscow for intimate deliberations; this fact lies behind Thorez's desertion from the French Army. On the order of the party, Laloette, another communist leader, wrote Daladier and asked to take Thorez's place in the front populaire.

Thorez was kept in Moscow, and did not return to France before 1944. Upon Moscow's request, Le Gaulle granted him the permit, and Maurice arrived by special plane. He had not only made up completely with his old friend Stalin, but had been groomed for the difficult job that lies ahead of him, to seize power in France in the Hitler style by constitutional procedure.

Thorez is a dynamic personality; he received higher military instruction in Moscow, and had occasion to see warfare on the Russian front lines during 1941-44. Conspiratorial technique on its highest level is familiar to him. He is surrounded by a staff of experts—and a bodyguard.

## **Lenin**

### **THE LENIN LEGEND**

By PAUL MATTICK

in the *Western Socialist*, Boston  
January, 1946.

The yellower and more leatherly the skin of the mummified Lenin grows, and the higher the statistically determined

number of visitors to the Lenin Mausoleum, 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 mold 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. 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. Lenin appears 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.

#### *Great Man Theory*

"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 of 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. Yet, 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 combatted. Of course it is often asserted that with the taking over of State power by the Bolsheviks the originally bourgeois-demo-

cratic 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 pre-suppositions 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, 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 the enormous economic importance, the majority of the peasants still led a wretched existence. The cause of their deplorable situation was the lack of land. State, nobility and large landed proprietors assured to themselves 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 endeavors, 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.

#### PEASANT REVOLT

"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.

Notwithstanding the defeats, the pressure of the peasant 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 last 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."

#### LAND TO THE PEASANTS

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 good-will 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 socialist 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 collectivizing of farms at a later time can also not be regarded as the fulfillment of socialism. 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 ni 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 the rulers, 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 of new illegal organizations.

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 labor. 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 thoroughgoing demands to that of control of production, and wished to stop short with the socialization of the banks and transport 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, unauthorized 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 nationalization 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 to-day they no

longer serve more than decorative purposes.

New peasant uprisings against the Bolsheviks first drove 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 proved a failure, since the poor peasants whose interests are thus preferred refuse to "turn the face again to the middle support the Bolsheviks, and Lenin 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.

#### BOLSHEVIK POLICY

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 post-office 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 program 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 boasts 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 to 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 inconsistency 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 book-keeping sprang likewise from the jacobinical need of the Bolsheviks for holding on to power. With both slogans the cries of intervention of the capitalist countries in Russian affairs were weak, 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: one 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 world-wide 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 failed of accomplishment. 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, asserted—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 neighborliness. 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 labor 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 Ger-

man 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 such 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. Trotsky was not only in error, but revealed a failure of memory when he characterized 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.

In view of the fact that the Communist International in so far it continues to function in a black market fashion is merely an agency for Russian foreign policy, 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 to-day 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.

#### SIGNIFICANCE OF LENIN

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 this 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.

The actual condition in Russia and the present situation of the workers throughout the world ought really to be sufficient proof to any observed that the "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.

#### LAW AND THE WORKING CLASS

(Continued from Page One)

obeyed. Their property Law.

Like Shylock, they want their full pound of flesh.

But as Portia so successfully contended in that law suit—Shylock can NOT have his full pound of flesh, plus blood.

The Red Flag typifies the common