

Workers International News

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*Theoretical
Organ of the
Revolutionary
Communist
Party*

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October, 1945

WORKERS INTERNATIONAL NEWS

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Manager's Column

BEGINNING with this issue our magazine appears in a new and improved format. We hope that it will prove popular.

IN the past period we have had a hard struggle to keep W.I.N. going and, it must be admitted, we have not been able to ensure the regular appearance of our monthly theoretical organ. Our main difficulties have been the usual ones facing struggling workers' organisations: shortage of paper and lack of funds.

On occasions we have found it necessary to produce important pamphlets at the expense of an issue of the magazine. That was the case in September, in order that the all-important resolutions of the R.C.P. Congress should be available in pamphlet form.

UNTIL paper restrictions are lifted, or at least relaxed to some degree, we

cannot give any guarantee that this won't happen again. But what we now aim at, is the regular monthly appearance of our theoretical journal either in magazine or pamphlet form. In this we are in your hands; for without your aid we cannot carry on.

EVERY reader who agrees, or is in general sympathy, with our ideas and objectives, everyone who thinks that W.I.N. fulfils a need in the political development of the working class movement, has a duty to help increase the circulation of W.I.N. On that our continued existence depends. We have been compelled to increase the price to sixpence, but we still need more money than our revenue from sales. If you can possibly afford it, please send a donation towards our production costs. Help forward the cause of socialism, help W.I.N.

WORKERS INTERNATIONAL NEWS

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Editorial Notes

LABOUR IN POWER

PROPAGANDA IS NOT ENOUGH

WORDS alone can never produce the stage of political development necessary to achieve the socialist revolution. The propagation of ideas, no matter how profound the ideas, or how brilliantly they are portrayed, will of itself prove inadequate to convince the broad masses of the people of the correctness of a political doctrine. Only when the ideas which we advocate are confirmed by events, by the experiences of the workers themselves, will they win the support necessary for their practical operation. The election of a Labour Government with such an overwhelming majority opens up a new stage in the struggle for socialism. Great is the responsibility which rests on the shoulders of the revolutionary party; for the movement away from social democracy to revolutionary politics, consequent on the betrayals of the Labour leaders, is not an automatic and inevitable process. It will be accomplished only if the activity of the revolutionary party is in its correctness and amplitude, commensurate with the tasks imposed. That is, **only if we succeed in appearing before the mass of workers as an alternative leadership.** The workers, above all the workers in uniform, have shown by their votes their desire for profound social changes, for an end to the old order of low wages, poverty and unemployment. In giving Labour such an indisputable mandate they have sown dragons teeth; but they are harvesting fleas! The official Labour leaders now stand trembling and impotent before the feet of big capital.

THEIR RECORD TO DATE

CARRIED away by their initial exultance, a number of the younger and new M.P.s sang the **Red Flag** on the occasion of their first Parliamentary assembly. This was no portent for the future. The 'Old Guard', the 'respectable, experienced, responsible' coterie have things well under control. When Parliament was opened, they went through the same old feudal pomp and mockery as in the past. The Tory speaker was re-elected. Said the "Times" of this:

"It was more than a vote of confidence in an umpire who has proved his qualifications for his unique office; it declared the loyalty of members old and new to the continuity of the ancient institution, which is so much greater than the parties out of which it is made up. . . . While Parliament is always an organ of change, and sometimes, when that is the people's will, of rapid change, it can never be made an organ of revolution." The record of His Majesty's Socialists up to the present shows that their chief preoccupation is not change, rapid or slow, but maintenance of "continuity" of Tory policy which those who voted Labour so decisively condemned.

PROGRAMME AND REALITY

WE will not grudge our support where it is merited by the activities of the Labour Government. The proposal to repeal the notorious Trades Disputes Act will meet with strenuous resistance from the reactionary opposition, and such opposition must be met and dealt with by a united Labour movement. Here we will give our unstinting support, as on any issue where the Labour leaders are prepared to take one step forward in the interests of the masses and against big capital. But there must be no timidity, no hanging back, no concessions to Toryism. The Bill for unconditional repeal of the Trades Disputes Act must go through. Nothing less will do. The task of the workers is to see that this, at least, is achieved.

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BEYOND this promise the King's Speech contained no redeeming feature. Radical-sounding phrases about measures of nationalisation were added as an oplate. In fact all this has little meaning except to provide the arena for Parliamentary shadow boxing. If the ex-owners of State-acquired enterprises continue to draw tribute in the form of extended compensation instalments rather than dividends, while the State takes over the management and guarantees the capitalists their rake-off, how can it benefit a single miner, or a clerk in the Bank of England, or any other worker? Profits are extracted from the surplus value produced by the workers, that is, from unpaid labour provided by the workers. And whether these profits are paid to the capitalist parasites under the heading of dividends or compensation, what does it matter? Profits is profits!

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BRITISH economy is in decline; her foreign and Empire investments are gone. She is the world's biggest debtor nation. Industrial equipment and production technique are obsolete. Plant is worn out through years of continuous war use with little maintenance or replacement. Gigantic expenditure is needed to bring the standard of technology and equipment into correspondence with requirements. Such capital expenditure can only be wrung from industry itself, that is, from the labour of the producers. There is no other way of raising it with British capitalism in its present state of decay. If to this burden is added the cost of compensating the owners of the industries which are to be nationalised, it can only result in the intensification of work and the lowering of the living standards of the workers. Only if industry is nationalised without compensation will it be possible to plan the national economy so as to increase production and raise the standards of life and the working conditions of the toilers. The need now arises for the workers to push forward with the demand for nationalisation without compensation.

BUT in any case only the unavoidable measures are being taken. To save such industries as coal from complete extinction. Nationalisation will benefit the capitalists, not the miners; and the Labour leaders know that. On August 12, the Industrial Correspondent of the Sunday "Observer" wrote: "One question exercising the minds of the Minister and his advisers is how to ensure that the men at the coalface will co-operate fully once the industry has been nationalised. They realise there will be some disappointment when the miners find nationalisation will bring very little immediate physical change in their conditions." The Bill to nationalise the mines will shortly be introduced, and the transfer (which is, apparently, meeting with the coalowners' approval!) may be well under way by next spring. All this suggests that the

bribe of compensation is sufficiently generous to ensure the "co-operation" of the coalowners. Meantime the miners, undernourished, weary and exhausted, working under impossible conditions and with obsolete and worn-out equipment, are being asked to perform the impossible task of increasing their production by 10%. But even where they have promised nationalisation, the Labour leaders are retreating before any capitalist opposition. Shinwell has already told the miners' leaders that it may take longer than four years to nationalise the gas and electricity undertakings. Thus do the Labour leaders reveal their inability even to carry through their own programme. Their role is that of making capitalism work. Morrison speaks of tax cuts and higher profits as an "incentive" to the manufacturers to increase production. Cripps assures them that there will be "no confiscation" but "fair compensation", and for the most part not even nationalisation but only joint "boards" and committees and the like for such hopelessly backward industries as textiles.

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LABOUR AND FINANCE

WHAT of the Banks and finance houses? The Government is to take over only the Bank of England. And even this will remain under the old management. The rest of the banks and financial institutions will remain in private hands. No wonder that the capitalists are not raising any serious objections! The only complaint so far voiced in the columns of the organs of big business is that which appeared in the "Economist": ". . . the chief regret will be that Parliamentary time should be wasted on a matter of no real importance." As an earnest of their "continuation" of policy, the Labour Government re-appoints to the principal ambassadorship the arch-reactionary, Lord Halifax, and sends him, along with the banker, Keynes, to beg financial aid from Wall-Street and assure dollar imperialism of the safety of capital under "Labour" administration.

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INNOCENTS ABROAD

IN the field of foreign policy things are even worse. Bevin, in his speeches, nurtures the regimes of the remaining remnants of fascism (Spain) and the reactionary military dictatorship imposed on the Greek masses by the bayonets of Churchillian imperialism. It matters little that Laski froths and fumes against fascism and reactionary monarchies. His peregrinations on the Continent are, in reality, made for the same political ends as the activities of Bevin. It is a simple division of labour. Both seek, in the interests of British imperialism, to create a new balance of power: directly aimed against the Soviet Union and remotely aimed also against the U.S.A. The foreign Secretaries are meeting as we write these lines. Comment on their deliberations must, therefore, be reserved for future notes.

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LABOUR AND THE EMPIRE

AND SIMILARLY, in relation to India, the policy of the new Government represents essentially a continuation of the policy of its predecessors. The latest proposals to India, contained in the speeches of Attlee and Wavell differ from the Cripps proposals only in their greater measure of vagueness. In the Cripps proposals, the Constitution-making body was to be made up of delegates elected from the provincial legislatures and the nominees of the Princes. In the

latest proposals, the deviation as to the character and composition of the Constituent Assembly will be made after the completion of the forthcoming elections to the provincial legislatures. The postponement of the decision on this vital issue follows the line of traditional British policy which seeks to exploit all the communal and sectional differences in India for its own imperialist ends. The Government hopes that Mr. Jinnah and the communal leaders of the Moslem League will come off better than in the elections of 1937 when the Congress and non-communal Moslem organisations obtained the overwhelming majority of the Moslem votes. Any enhancement of the power of the Moslem separatists will strengthen the hands of British imperialism and open the possibilities of all kinds of manoeuvrings and obstructions.

THE anti-democratic character of the Cripps proposals has been extensively analysed in the past in the working class press. It is sufficient here to point out that under the existing electoral rules only 11 per cent. of the population has the right to vote! Furthermore, the institution of communal franchise and the over-representation of the so-called minorities add to the distortion of the wishes and desires of the people as a whole. When we add to it the fact that the representatives from the Indian States are to be entirely nominated by the Princes and not, in any sense, elected by their subjects, we can estimate the democratic make-up of a Labour Government which is prepared to foist such a scheme on to the backs of the Indian people. If Mr. Attlee and his colleagues in the Cabinet were concerned with the fate of the Indian masses, the least they could do would be to take away from the autocratic Princes the right to nominate the delegates from the States. The new proposals represent in effect an attempt to perpetuate imperialist rule by allowing the native capitalists a bigger share in the fruits of exploitation. The acceptance of these proposals by the Indian Congress leaders will result in a common front of imperialism and the native exploiters against the struggle of the Indian masses for political and economic emancipation. It is time for the British and Indian masses to intervene, to thwart such designs by a common struggle for unconditional independence for India.

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THE T.U.C. PARTY AND THE LABOUR

WITH the coming to power of the Labour Government, the process of the growing together of the Trade Unions and the State machine will increase in tempo. This was evidenced at the Trade Union Congress which convened at Blackpool in September. The division of labour between the industrial and political arms of the Labour Government was made manifest by the Congress.

THE trade union structure has long since become bureaucratised, and has for many years been concerned, not with struggle against the capitalist class, but with class collaboration. Now that the Labour leaders are in power and are pre-occupied with proving how well they can, as Lord Latham put it, make 'Socialism pay', i.e. make capitalism work, they rely, more and more, on the Trade Unions to keep industrial peace. That this cannot be achieved without a show of belligerency on the part of the T.U. leaders, was evidenced within the first days of Attlee and Co. taking office. Binks, the N.U.R. leader could only keep the struggle of the railworkers in bounds by threatening a major strike in the future if the railwaymen's conditions didn't improve.

SIMILARLY with the T.U.C. The speeches of the Ministers, Attlee and Isaacs, were completely barren. When the wrath of the workers aroused by

the slow rate of demobilisation reflected itself in the Congress, the union leaders made fiery speeches and quieted the delegates with promises that something would be done. So it was with the 40-hour week, with idle periods during redundancy, with wages, conditions, every issue that was raised, the T.U. leaders have one line: to make a left demagogic speech and then call on the workers not to press things "just now". Give the Labour leaders a chance, they have only just taken over, that is the present stock-in-trade of the leaders of the organised industrial movement. For the moment they are getting away with it. Reluctantly, and not without misgivings, for they have not forgotten the role Bevin and Co. in the coalition, the workers are prepared for a time to listen to these pleas. But it won't go on. The bureaucrats are squandering their capital. Soon will come the time for dividends to be paid in form of higher wages, better conditions and so on. Then it won't be so easy to lull the masses with demagogic talk and empty promises. A measure of harmony prevails at present between the industrial and political leaders of the Labour movement, but the increasing struggle will force the leaders of the T.U.C. into conflict with the Labour Party tops. The union leaders cannot do otherwise if they wish to retain any semblance of support among the organised workers. Either one way or the other: the T.U.C. will tend towards becoming a glorified Labour Front, a part of the capitalist state machine; or it will have to express, more and more, the will of the masses for struggle. It is our forecast that the next Trade Union Congress will be a much stormier and determined gathering than was this one. The immediate and urgent task facing the industrial workers is that of democratising the Unions and breaking them from the State machine.

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FOOTNOTE ON POLLITT IN our July-August issue we analysed and condemned the class collaboration policies of Harry Pollitt and the British Communist Party.

THE essence of Pollitt's declamations was the need for unity between the capitalists and the workers on a national and international scale. Pollitt sneered at those who asked "what has become of the class struggle?" His American compatriots, following the lead given by Stalin when he dissolved the Comintern, liquidated the American C.P.

BUT the love match between Joe Stalin and his capitalist "buddies" doesn't appear to be working out quite so sweetly these days. Particularly since the death of Roosevelt. Consequently, through the Kremlin mouthpiece, Duclos, the French Stalinist leader, Browder and Co. have been instructed to revive the American C.P.

THEY have done so and produced a sackcloth and ashes declaration which condemns not only their own past policies but precisely those of Harry Pollitt which we dealt with in July-August. The Resolution of the American C.P. states in part:

"In the recent period, especially since January, 1944, these mistakes consisted in drawing a number of erroneous conclusions from the historic significance of the Teheran accord. Among these false conclusions was the concept that after the military defeat of Germany, the decisive sections of big capital would participate in the struggle to complete the destruction of fascism and would co-operate with the working people in the maintenance of post-war national unity. This illusion had no foundation in life, either in the class nature of finance capital, or in the post-war aims of

the trusts and cartels which seek imperialist aggrandisement and huge profits at the expense of the people. This has been amply demonstrated by recent events.

"This revision of Marxist-Leninist theory regarding the role of monopoly capital, especially after military victory, led to other erroneous conclusions, such as to utopian economic perspectives and the possibility of achieving the national liberation of the colonial and dependent countries through arrangements between the great powers.. It also led to tendencies to obscure the class nature of bourgeois democracy, to false concepts of social evolution and to minimising the independent and leading role of the working class."

This "revision of Marxist-Leninist theory", everyone of these "erroneous conclusions" can be read in the writings of Pollitt and the British C.P. leaders no less than in those of Browder and the Americans. And, needless to say, no fundamental change of policy has taken place. The Browders and Pollitts are no less opportunist than previously. There has been a slight shift to the Left that is all.

THE CHARACTER OF THE EUROPEAN REVOLUTION

A Reply to some Comrades of the I.K.D.

BY E. GRANT.

THE contribution of our German comrades ("Problems of the European Revolution" published in July-August W.I.N.) is an indication of "retrogression" from the fundamental doctrines of Marxism. Abandoning the Leninist criterion, the class criterion, of all processes taking place in society, they have adopted a pre-Leninist, even pre-Menshevik theory of 'democratic' revolution in Europe. A "national democratic" revolution which, after the collapse of Hitler, will now be directed throughout Europe, against the Allies!

IT would seem incredible that, after the tremendous struggle that Trotsky waged for the conception of the permanent revolution against the revisionists of Stalinism, a petit-bourgeois democratic, revisionist tendency would develop within the ranks of the Fourth International. It is explained, of course, by the uninterrupted series of defeats which have been suffered by the proletariat and the isolation to which the comrades have been doomed by the emigration. They have succumbed to the pressure of the petit-bourgeois reaction.

THESE comrades pride themselves on their understanding of dialectics, but fail even to attempt to examine the problem they are facing from a genuine historical point of view. From what to what is society today evolving? The coming to power of Hitler, the war and its aftermath are a reflection of the blind alley of capitalism, its disintegration and decay, its incapacity to solve a single one of the problems confronting it. It is a result of the failure of the proletariat through the treachery of its leadership (Stalinist and Reform-

ist) to overthrow capitalism and institute the rule of the working class. To these elementary propositions, not even the confused comrades of the I.K.D., would dare to object, but, not stating the problem clearly, they draw the most fantastic conclusions from the gangrenous and rotting collapse of capitalism. They draw the conclusion that the bourgeoisie, through a "democratic" revolution, can still play a progressive role! It is true that they put this forward under the guise of a "peoples" movement, the class character of which they do not define. But never in modern times has the "people" or the "nation" as such played an independent role. The petit-bourgeois masses, in all their layers, can support either the proletariat or the bourgeoisie. There cannot be, in modern society, any other state but that of the proletariat or the bourgeoisie. Lenin clearly developed this idea when he wrote:

"all political economy—if one has learned anything at all from it—the whole history of the revolution, the whole history of political development during the nineteenth century, teaches us that the peasant goes either with the worker or with the bourgeois. If you do not know this, I should like to say to such citizens, just reflect upon the development of any one of the great revolutions of the eighteenth or the nineteenth centuries, upon the political history of any country in the nineteenth century. It will tell you why. The economy of capitalist society is such that the ruling power can only be either capital or the proletariat which overthrows it. Other forces there are none in the economics of society." (Vol. XVI, page 217).

THE I.K.D., intentionally vague talk of the struggle of the "whole people against the national and political oppressor" is intended to cover up their capitulation to the petit-bourgeois conception of the revolution. Confronted with the above quotation,

they would undoubtedly be compelled to accept it, if only in words. But what follows from it? What is the class character of this "peoples" movement? Is it proletarian, is it bourgeois or is it petit-bourgeois? In attempting to skip over the class character (always a characteristic of petit-bourgeois thought) of this movement, the I.K.D. reveal the genesis of their ideas, petit-bourgeois capitulation to bourgeois democracy and imperialism.

TAKING as their point of departure, the failure of the proletariat to overthrow capitalism, the I.K.D. comrades argue that society has been thrown so far back that the bourgeois-democratic revolution solved by the French revolution of 1789 is posed anew for solution! What a conclusion. From the failure of the proletariat (due to its leadership) they turn to the petit-bourgeoisie, the people, for salvation. But precisely the impotence of the petit-bourgeoisie to find a new road, and its frenzy opened the way for the Fascist gangs to come to power. From the petit-bourgeoisie, there can come no leadership. In modern society, they must find leadership in one or the other basic classes, bourgeoisie or proletariat. Having rejected the proletarian revolution as a solution, quite naturally the I.K.D. find themselves in tow to the bourgeoisie. But these conceptions represent an entire break with the Marxist conception of the epoch which is, in the words of Lenin, one of wars and revolutions, proletarian revolutions. Thus the bourgeoisie is plunged into its wars and bestial repressions not because there is any solution for it thereby, but because they are driven to these extremities by the insoluble contradictions of the system. Wars and repressions cannot provide a solution, but only aggravate the problem.

THE victory of the German imperialists, led to the collaboration of

the conquered bourgeoisie of France and other countries in Europe with the victors as junior partners in the exploitation of the masses. This could not but lead to an intensification of the **class hatred** of the workers, not alone against the foreign oppressor but against his agents at home. The petit-bourgeoisie as well as the workers could not but conceive hatred for the trusts and combines who placed their profits above the fiction of the "nation". Consequently, the basis for an alliance of proletariat and petit-bourgeoisie against the foreign and home oppressors, against **capitalism**, arose.

IN the backward countries, the national bourgeoisie prefers in the last analysis to combine with the landlords and foreign imperialist oppressors against their own workers and peasants because of the incapacity to solve the problems of the bourgeois-democratic revolution, according to Lenin and Trotsky. (Especially the latter developed this idea with the theory of permanent revolution.) Because of the impossibility of the petit-bourgeoisie playing an independent role, only the proletariat as a class could lead the struggle against the foreign oppressor and carry through the bourgeois democratic revolution and the struggle for national liberation. But such a struggle, by its very nature, could only lead, either to the victory of the Imperialist bourgeois counter revolution or to the conquest of power by the proletariat. Under such conditions, the task of the proletariat and its vanguard, is to maintain its independence from the bourgeoisie and to fight to win the plebian masses to its side.

THE ideas of the I.K.D. thus revise the conception developed by Trotsky for the Chinese and Indian revolutions and apply this revised conception to the advanced countries of Europe!

THE confusion in the minds of these comrades is shown by their insistence on the necessity of a transitional revo-

lution before the proletarian revolution, a so-called "democratic" revolution. In this they repeat all the mistakes of Stalin-Bucharin in 1925-27, in the Chinese revolution. With the difference that the Stalinist clique could manufacture the semblance of a case as the national democratic revolution had not been accomplished in the East. But even here, as the experience of the Russian revolution had already shown, such conceptions could only lead to disaster. But to apply an even more crass formulation than that which the Stalinists applied in China, to Europe, is to reach the limit of revisionism of the doctrines of Trotskyism. At least Stalin tried to cover his confusion with the outworn Bolshevik formula of the "democratic dictatorship of the proletariat and peasantry". That was the only class formula he could find to describe the "democratic" revolution which he foresaw in Asia. Not having sufficiently thought out the problem, our German comrades leave these questions unanswered. What will this democratic revolution look like? Which class will play the leading role in its realization? Which class will rule in the government? What difference is there between the regime of bourgeois democracy and the regime of this "democratic" revolution?

POSING the problem correctly is already half-way to answering it. Not using the Marxist method, our comrades have lost themselves in a fog of petit-bourgeois phrasemongering.

IT seems fantastic that there should be any argument on questions that any raw student of Trotskyism should understand. Especially so with people with great "theoretical" pretensions. It underlines the necessity for a regular re-statement of the basic theories of the movement, not alone for the benefit of new recruits but for people to whom such propositions ought to be elementary.

IN dealing with the problem of the permanent revolution in China, Trot-

sky, answering in advance, our comrades of the emigration, explained "... in China, the question of national liberation occupies a large place. This demonstrates that the formula of the democratic dictatorship (to replace that of struggle for proletarian dictatorship) presents a much more dangerous reactionary snare ...". And again "In a bourgeois society with already developed class antagonisms, there can only be either an open or disguised dictatorship of the bourgeoisie or of the proletariat. There cannot be any talk of a transitional regime."

OUR comrades have been unable to think their ideas through to the end and thus they end up with a policy which is a ludicrous caricature of that of Stalinism. They argue: "The retrogressive development of capitalism led to the destruction of national independence and democratic liberties of the most important European nations. Nowhere did the movement go beyond the limits of bourgeois demands, the first attempt of the oppressed masses of Europe to realise the democratic revolution and to reconquer national independence, was doomed to failure ... the second wave of democratic revolution will find many obstacles removed which impeded the first ..."

SINCE these comrades argue that Europe has been thrown back centuries and that the task is to carry out the **bourgeois revolution** (for that is the class nature of the "democratic revolution"). How is this to be accomplished? In the past it was carried through by the plebian masses who could not go beyond the limits of the bourgeois forms of property. If this so-called bourgeois revolution is to be carried through by the **proletariat**, then the whole scheme does not make sense. For if the proletariat is to play the leading role, then the revolution can only be the **proletarian revolution**, leading to the dictatorship of the proletariat. In lashing the Stalinists, Trotsky remarked on the

attempt to separate "democracy" from its social content. "**The hopelessness of the epigones is most crassly expressed in the fact that even now they still attempt to contrast the democratic dictatorship with the dictatorship of the bourgeoisie, as well as to the dictatorship of the proletariat. But this means that the democratic dictatorship must have a transitional character, that is, a petit-bourgeois content**", if the comrades argue that they stand for a **bourgeois democracy** then the leading role of the bourgeoisie is reinforced, and their criticism of the Stalinist line in France is absurd. The Stalinists and reformists who had developed a "line" in France and the other occupied countries very similar to that of the I.K.D., consistently fought for the "national war of liberation" in which **all classes** were involved in the fight for "democracy" without explaining its social content. Consequently the feeble criticism of the I.K.D. of their role in the "national liberation" movement is completely unreal. If the position of the I.K.D. were correct, instead of criticising, they should have agreed entirely with the course pursued by the old workers' organisations in Europe.

THE trouble with the I.K.D. is that, having been thrown off course by the reactionary wave, they mistake history's posterior for its face. Searching for an impossible "democratic" revolution, they cannot see the visage of the early stages of the proletarian revolution and equate bourgeois "democratic" counter-revolution of the period of the decline of the bourgeoisie with the democratic revolution of its rise! They do this because they confuse the **democratic demands** of the proletariat with the nature of the revolution which the proletariat is called on to face. **Democratic demands, the right to strike and organisation, the right of free speech, press, elections, Constituent Assembly, etc., etc., are part of the transitional demands of the proletariat in its struggle for the**

Socialist revolution. These demands must be inscribed on the banner of the Revolutionary Party in its efforts to mobilise the masses in the struggle to educate them in the need for the conquest of power. In every revolution of the proletariat in modern times, one or the other democratic demand has played its part in the struggle of the proletariat against the bourgeoisie. But in and of itself, this did not determine the nature of the struggle upon which the proletariat was embarked.

BOTH the opportunists of the I.K.D. and various sectarians were answered in advance by the tactics pursued by the Bolsheviks, in the Russian revolution. Here, while steering a course towards the October insurrection, on the basis of the understanding of the social nature of the tasks facing the proletariat, the Bolsheviks combined this strategical objective with flexible tactics. They fought for democratic demands, but this struggle was indissolubly linked with the struggle for the dictatorship of the proletariat.

OUR epoch, even in the backward countries, which have not accomplished the democratic revolution, remains the epoch of proletarian revolution and bourgeois counter-revolution (whatever its specific form) not at all the epoch of democratic revolution. The victory of fascism in no way alters the social character of the regime, the economy of capitalism or the role of the different classes in society. The victory in war, the plunder and national oppression of one capitalist nation of other imperialist powers, in itself marks no decisive change within bourgeois society. The epoch of the democratic revolution is long since past, consequently, the policies that base themselves on non-existent phantoms of "democratic revolution" can only play into the hands of the bourgeoisie. Not at all accidental is the fact that the Stalinists-reformists in Spain during the civil war, and under the German

occupation in Europe carried out their counter-revolutionary work under the guise of a "struggle for democracy".

SUCH a conception of the tasks facing the proletariat can be no less than a "democratic noose" to strangle the movement of the proletariat. It represents an idealisation of the role of the petit-bourgeois masses and because it involves capitulation to their conceptions inevitably hands the proletariat bound hand and foot to the "national" bourgeoisie.

PRECISELY because of this, what the "Three Theses" comrades imagine to be the "clever" utilisation by the Stalinists of the so-called "national" movement constituted the greatest betrayal. Our comrades announce "unconditional support" of the "Resistance Movement". But which section of the Resistance Movement, they do not explain. They reject, apparently, the leadership of de Gaulle and the other Imperialists. But unconditional support to the Resistance Movement, in its very essence, must mean support for the Imperialists who were in control of it. Perhaps they meant unconditional support of the Stalinist wing of the Resistance Movement? We can imagine the shudders such a suggestion would bring to the comrades of the I.K.D.

HOWEVER, they land themselves in the camp of Stalinist theory, simply because they have not understood, or have forgotten, the social content of the "democratic" revolution: the creation of the national state; the overthrow of feudalism and the introduction of bourgeois relations; the separation of Church from State; the agrarian revolution.

WHAT they imagine is the basic content of "democracy": freedom of organisation, speech, etc., as in reality a bye-product of the class struggle of the proletariat against the bourgeoisie. It is the building up of the bulwarks of proletarian democracy within cap-

italism, points of support for the new system within the framework of the old. Precisely here is the real "retrogressive" mark of fascism: the razing to the ground of all the independent organisations of the proletariat. It is not without importance that this work is accomplished using the petit-bourgeoisie as a lever against the working class. True, the petit-bourgeoisie can play a different role under certain conditions. But only if the proletariat in an **independent struggle** fights to win the middle classes to its side and does not dissolve itself into the petit-bourgeoisie swamp.

CERTAINLY the plebian masses carried through the bourgeois revolution in 1789. But they are incapable of ever again playing a leading role, an independent role, in the development of society. They will always be an adjunct to one of the two basic classes, the bourgeoisie or the proletariat. Where they do not follow the proletariat, as all history shows, they inevitably land in the camp of reaction. Thus in the struggle for the socialist revolution, under the Nazis as well as under the regime of the "liberated" countries and the Allies, the proletariat fights for the winning over of the petit-bourgeoisie to the socialist revolution by economic as well as democratic transitional demands. There may be many ebbs and flows in the struggle. At one stage or another the revolutionary communists may demand a fight for elections, local and national, Constituent Assembly, etc. But whether successfully realised or not the struggle for these demands can but be episodes on the road to the proletarian revolution and the programme of socialist revolution with which they must be linked.

The hopeless muddle and eclectic outlook of the comrades is indicated when they say in one passage, which contradicts everything else they write, that the "democratic revolution" they visualise can only be carried out by the proletariat. As a matter of fact, in the sense in which they

visualise "democratic revolution", it is not at all excluded for a longer or shorter period that parliamentary democracy will exist in Western Europe. Indeed, this process is taking place before their eyes in France, Italy and other countries. They are too blinded and biased by the so-called "national question" to see this process taking place and to understand what it means. No, comrades, this is not the democratic revolution, but the means utilized by the bourgeoisie (**democratic counter-revolution**) in its struggle against the proletarian revolution.

BUT transitional demands, if allowed to become ends in themselves and separated from the strategic policy to be pursued by the Marxists, must inevitably become a trap for the proletariat. Thus, under the Nazis, the struggle for national liberation had to be linked to the struggle for the Socialist United States of Europe. The collapse of the national states objectively posed the problem of the unification of the proletariat of Europe against all the oppressors.

THE movement of the resistance in the various countries was a class movement of the proletariat and the lower strata of the petit-bourgeoisie. Directed against German Imperialism under correct guidance and leadership, it should have been directed against the quisling bourgeoisie as well. Events have shown that it was the mass organisations which constituted the core of the resistance movement. The class antagonism, despite the Stalinists' attempt to reconcile the proletariat to the "national" bourgeoisie (which could only be done by capitulating to it), could not damp down the class struggle which burst forth in Yugoslavia, Greece, Poland in civil war even before the ousting of the Germans. Was this also the result of the attempted carrying through of the democratic revolution?

IN reality, the so-called "democratic" struggle, the uniting of

the whole "people" was in itself an example of the worst caricature of Popular Frontism and class collaboration, under the pretext of unity with the middle class. It was unity in a national struggle together with the agents of the bourgeoisie while the decisive sections of the bourgeoisie were in the camp of the foreign oppressor.

AGAINST the foreign oppressor, as the comrades in Europe correctly understood, the struggle could only be waged as a class struggle appealing to the solidarity of the German workers and peasant soldiers. The chauvinist methods of Stalinism and reformism were grist to the mill of Hitler. A "democratic" phase in Europe will result not from the objective need for the phase of democratic revolution but because of the sell-out of the old workers' organisations. Had Stalinism and Social Democracy stood on the programme of Marxism, there would have been the possibility of a transition immediately to the dictatorship of the proletariat. The one thing lacking was precisely the revolutionary party which could imbue the masses with a consciousness of their Socialist task. Only the weakness of the revolutionary party and the counter-revolutionary role of Stalinism has given capitalism a breathing space. Seeing that it is virtually impossible to rule by the method of fascist or military dictatorship, the bourgeoisie has prepared to switch, for the time being, to the bourgeois democratic manipulation of their Stalino-reformist agents. **This does not constitute a democratic revolution, but, on the contrary, a preventative democratic counter-revolution against the proletariat.** Under modern conditions, there can be no other kind of democratic revolution or regimes. In Germany in 1918, precisely the Social-Democracy carried out their hangman's work under the slogan of "democracy". But this was no democratic revolution wherein different classes replaced those already in power. It was a proletarian revo-

lution which was strangled by the agents of the bourgeoisie.

SIMILARLY, what Churchill, Roosevelt and Stalin (who understood the problem much better apparently, than the comrades of the I.K.D.) were afraid of in Italy, Greece, Germany, France, Belgium, was not the "democratic" revolution, but the proletarian revolution, as Churchill clearly explained.

AFTER the recent experiences in Europe, only those who have abandoned the idea of the class struggle, could in any way doubt this. Our comrades must have a peculiar sense of humour to say, with a straight face, "The situation today is, therefore, in its fundamental traits, the same as that of 1941 and the 'Three Theses' have not only been confirmed, but their practical proposals retain full validity." To back this up, they tell us "The national oppression has remained, only the uniforms of the oppressors have changed. For the French, 'national independence' by grace of the U.S.A., is a farce and an ever-growing part of the French people realise this. . . . American Imperialism has not the slightest interest in restoring to health an old imperialist competitor. In consequence, it does not lift a finger to put on its feet again, the absolutely broken down French industry and, with it, French national independence." To compare the domination of America over France and "liberated" Europe which is maintained by means of economic pressure, with the direct visible jackboot of the Nazis is ridiculous. In the consciousness of the masses, while there may be a dislike of Uncle Sam, it is against the French bourgeoisie, the trusts and combines that the hatred of the masses is directed. This talk of merely the uniform being changed is an indication of how far from reality the comrades have strayed. The workers' parties and organisations are legal in France and the totalitarian heel has been lifted. It would have been quite im-

possible for the Anglo-American Imperialists to rule France and the other liberated countries with the methods of the Gestapo and S.S., if only because of the resistance of their own soldiers to the playing of such a role.

THUS the attempt to justify a false position only leads to further errors. In reality, the position in Europe arising out of the collapse of capitalism and the aftermath of war is that the most favourable objective conditions are created for the victory of the proletarian revolution. All the conditions laid down by Lenin are present: loss of confidence and uncertainty of the ruling class, vacillation and discontent of the petit-bourgeoisie, readiness of the discontented working class to make the most heroic sacrifices in order to overthrow the capitalists. All that is lacking is the subjective condition—the revolutionary party.

THE mass, not alone of the working class, but of large strata of the petit-bourgeoisie, are looking towards Communism as a way out of the social impasse. Yet the revisionists and faint-hearts put forward a policy far more backward and reactionary than even the reformists in Europe have dared to do, for the period which now unfolds. The "crisis" in Europe consists only in the fact that the Stalinists and reformists are carrying out a policy of collaboration with the bourgeoisie in the construction of "democracy". With this, the comrades of the "Three Theses" should really have no quarrel. It is impossible with an orientation towards a "democratic" revolution to carry out any other policy.

IF the comrades of the "Three Theses" condemn the Stalinist course, that can only be from force of habit and because they have not thought out their own policy to its necessary conclusions.

THE shift away from the ideas of the proletarian revolution and the petit-bourgeois capitulation to national-

ism can best be seen in the references to Germany. Here, the comrades appeal to the tradition of the national liberation war of 1813-15, the students' movement (Burschenschaft) and 1848. This is an entirely reactionary and retrogressive movement on the part of the comrades. the great tradition of the proletarian revolution of 1918, the tradition of Liebknecht and Luxemburg: this is not even thought worthy of mention!

IT is true that, as a consequence of her defeat, Germany will suffer national oppression and dismemberment. But after the last war, Germany was also reduced to the status of a State oppressed by her Imperialist rivals. Nevertheless, the emphasis was laid on the class issues in Germany by the Leninist Comintern, while opposition to the Versailles Treaty was maintained. Similarly, today the German workers can struggle against the foreign oppressor, only through the struggle against the national bourgeoisie, which collaborates with the victors. The struggle against national oppression can only be waged as a struggle for the proletarian revolution.

THE comrades have written a lot of nonsense about the change from the regime of the Nazis to that of the Allies in Europe merely being a change of uniform (as usual with opportunists, they find themselves in warm support of the ideas of the ultra-lefts). Even in Germany itself, that is not so. The Allies rapidly, even if reluctantly, were convinced of the impossibility of merely continuing the Nazi regime with the Allies in the place of the Hitler gangsters. They had neither the internal points of support within the population, the backing among the masses at home, nor the willingness of the British and American troops to play the role of S.S. Thus, in order to gain some sort of basis, they have had to allow organisations and rights to the proletariat, however limited these may be.

IN Germany, obviously it will be the duty of the Trotskyists to fight for an extension of democratic rights against the dismemberment and reparations, against the occupation of Germany. But, no more than the struggle against Versailles, can such a struggle be regarded as a "detour through the democratic revolution".

THE struggle for the national liberation of Germany, by its very essence can only be a struggle directed against the German bourgeoisie. The German ruling class will be only too willing to play the same lackey role to the Allies as the French bourgeoisie played to Nazi imperialism. The German capitalists called Hitler to power, they bear the responsibility for the catastrophe Germany has suffered. That should be the axis around which the propaganda of the German Marxists will revolve. Far from being separated, the struggle for German freedom can only be won as a struggle for the proletarian revolution. The British and American troops will only respond to class propaganda, to the idea of a Socialist Germany and a Socialist Europe, as an answer to the nightmare of war and economic misery.

THE ideas of the "Three Theses", especially for Germany, are false through and through. In appealing to the moth-eaten and now reactionary tradition of 1813 etc., they are playing the traditional role of the German petit-bourgeois intellectuals, whom Marx so scathingly castigated. If these ideas played any role at all, they could only be the basis for a new petit-bourgeois reaction. Having been utterly discredited in its Nazi guise, the Nationalist reaction is quite likely to hark back to these old traditions. The Stalino-Social Democracy, acting as agents of the conquerors, will discredit themselves in the eyes of the masses. If the Trotskyists do not put forward a clear internationalist revolutionary alternative, the way will be cleared for the petit-bourgeoisie to rally round such

a platform and become a helpless tool once again in the hands of the bourgeoisie. How "imminent" or not the proletarian revolution in Germany may be, it is the goal to which all the "democratic" and economic demands from the transitional bridge and not the bridge to the "democratic" revolution. In Germany, as in Europe, there can be no "democratic" revolution separate and apart from the proletarian revolution.

IN Europe today, we stand, not on the threshold of the struggle for "democracy" and "great national wars of liberation" but on the struggle for the proletarian revolution and revolutionary wars against all attempts at capitalist intervention.

TO end this article, we can do no better than quote extensively from Trotsky on the problems of the revolution against Fascism in Italy. Foreseeing, in advance, the reactionary arguments of the type of those of the I.K.D., though he could not have expected that such would emanate from within the ranks of the Fourth International, Trotsky wrote:—

“. . . what social character will the anti-fascist revolution acquire? You deny the possibility of a bourgeois revolution in Italy. You are perfectly right. History cannot turn backward a big number of pages, each of which is equivalent to half a decade. The Central Committee of the Italian Communist Party already tried once to duck the question by proclaiming that the revolution would be neither bourgeois nor proletarian but popular, (i.e. "democratic", E.G.). It is a simple repetition of what the Russian Populists said at the beginning of this century when they were asked what character the revolution against Czarism would acquire. And it is still the same answer that the Communist International gives today about China and India. It is quite simply a so-called revolutionary variant of the

social democratic theory of Otto Bauer and others, according to which the state can raise itself above the classes, that is, be neither bourgeois nor proletarian. This theory is as pernicious for the proletariat as for the revolution. In China it transformed the proletariat into cannon fodder for the bourgeois counter-revolution.

"Every great revolution proves to be 'popular' in the sense that it draws into its tracks the entire people. Both the Great French Revolution and the October Revolution were absolutely popular. Nevertheless, the first was bourgeois because it instituted individual property, whereas the second was proletarian because it abolished this same individual property. Only a few petit-bourgeois revolutionists, hopelessly backward, can still dream of a revolution that would be neither bourgeois nor proletarian, but

'popular' (that is, petit-bourgeois)". . . .

"However, while holding to this or that democratic slogan, we must take good care to fight relentlessly against all forms of democratic charlatanism. The 'democratic Republic of the workers', watchword of the Italian Social Democracy, is a sample of this low-grade charlatan-ism. A republic of the workers can only be a proletarian class state. The democratic republic is only a masked form of the bourgeois state."

IT is precisely the type of "democratic charlatanism" propagated by the supporters of the "Three Theses" that Trotsky warned the cadres of the Fourth International against. Continuation on the road mapped out by the comrades of the I.K.D. must, in the long run, lead to a break with the Fourth International, with the programme of the proletarian revolution.

TERROR IN GREECE

The following article appeared as an editorial in the June 30th, issue of the Trotskyist "Workers' Struggle", organ of the Internationalist Workers' Party of Greece. It gives a graphic picture of political life in Greece at the present time. The translation is by N. Kastimos.—Ed.

A WAVE of naked terror weighs like a yolk on the shoulders of the workers. Thousands of arrests are taking place all over the country. The number of detained victims, groaning in the galleys of Greek capitalism, is the greatest ever in the history of the "free" Greek state. In the dark recesses of the national prisons, horrible crimes are being committed. The most barbarous beatings, sadistic tortures and terrible mutilations are daily occurrences.

THE pent-up hatred, the bestiality and depravity of the executioners towards their victims is unbelievable. It surpasses the precedents of the August period (August 4th, 1936, N.K.) and the worst excesses of the S.S.

POLICE and National Guards organise themselves into bands in Athens and the Piraeus and parade through the working class quarters, beating people up. Murderous attacks are launched on unarmed groupings and workers' meetings.

BLUDGEONINGS, abductions, murders, mass executions. Constitutional liberties are evoked. Trade union rights are abrogated. The headquarters of workers' political parties are broken up; working class newspapers are torn up and burnt.

THIS is the triumph of the new "democratic" state, imposed by the victors over Fascism; it is the triumph of the "democratic" lie, of the "liberation" humbug!

THE murderous assault in the Samarski theatre at the meeting of textile operatives, the wild assaults at the Hermes and Lyric theatres, planned and organised by the satanic X-organisation in conjunction with the civic guards and local police, show the full extent of the terror and the moral corruption to which capitalism has sunk.

THIS state of terror is nothing new. It is but the natural extension of the many-sided capitalist oppression which, in different phases, has manifested itself from the first moment of "liberation", from the time of the E.A.M.-Papandreou coalition.

THE workers have perceived, through their own experience, the full tyranny of all the successive administrative phases. The slogans of the K.K.E. (Greek C.P., Ed.) for a representative government, a new government of national unity soon to relieve the people of their abominable status, will no longer deceive the masses. Their concept of peoples' democracy collapsed in a few hours in the melting pot of political reality!

THE differences between royalists and republicans comes down to a squabble as to which military political clique will be able to take the reins of force in its hands.

THE demogogy of the Plastiras and Venizelist rascals has only that motive. No one is deceived.

IT is not only the deluded workers of the nationalist E.A.M. who in "free" Greece are reaping the fruits of the "national liberation struggle" of E.A.M.-E.L.A.S. Pursued, persecuted, arrested, they are the tragic stooges of the E.L.A.S. leadership.

They were shamelessly handed over at Varkiza to the fury of "retribution", right into the hands of their executioners, bartered that E.L.A.S. leaders might save their hides and open the path for surrender.

WITH these crimes we have nothing in common. We condemned and ruthlessly exposed vacillations and deceit. We asked the masses to stigmatise the disgusting murders of dozens of Trotskyists, pure adherents of the proletarian revolution. We announced that it was a scandal for workers to be submitted to heavy fines and condemned to death by capitalist statesmen whose hands are still dripping with the blood of butchered workers and poor peasants; and judges who spare the lives of Rallis and Sias.

BUT at base the terror today hits our whole class. Working class political and trade union liberties are at stake.

THE bloody terror, coupled with the hell of hunger, don't constitute a mere black spot in an otherwise "free" Europe as was hypocritically announced at the 11th Congress of the K.K.E. It is its very picture and image. The masses feel that their status is but little different from what it was under fascism.

TO face this state of affairs we call the masses to a life and death struggle. The Stalinists, plotting new deceptions, say the only path is the "Democratic Front". And Zachariades, lackey of the bourgeoisie and of the Kremlin underworld, is ready to place himself under the orders of Plastiras as easily as he had previously placed himself under the orders of Metaxas. The K.K.E. puts a brake on the workers' strikes under the degrading pretence that strikes would provoke a royalist coup d'etat!

WE announce to the masses that only implacable class struggle can paralyse the hands of black reaction.

Only independent class action against capitalism and its political parties can break the terror!

THE problems confronting our class will be solved on the class arena through proletarian revolution and not through treacherous "democratic fronts".

IN the struggle against the terror, for political and trade union rights, against all the attacks of capital, for the smashing of the militaristic, terroristic counter-revolutionary hordes, the small forces of our Party will fight bravely, and in the front line, regardless of the dangers and sacrifices.

WE believe in the strength and in the victory of our class. We scorn the yellow dogs of Stalinism and

pseudo-socialist reformism who wag their tails to win the benevolence of their "democratic" or royalist masters.

DESPITE all this, we are ready, with their will or against it, to find ourselves in a united front with every working class organisation, even the K.K.E., in the struggle against the terror. We will participate in the struggle for the political and economic demands of the exploited masses, on the basis of class methods of struggle.

IN such a struggle we would be implacable critics and we would not hush up the crimes and betrayals of the K.K.E. or the reformist parties.

THE wave of terror must be broken. It will be broken on the rock of the United Workers' Front!

THE HOUSING PROBLEM

BY HAROLD ATKINSON

ONE of the most important problems facing the Labour Government is the housing problem. The shortage of dwellings for the working people, and the deficiencies of so many of those in which they are now compelled to live, were not caused but only aggravated by the war.

THE Minister of Health in the Churchill Government estimated the minimum needs of the nation at 3 to 4 million houses during the first 10-12 years of peace, one million of which are required immediately. This calculation is faulty, and an understatement of the position. The estimate comprised 1½ to 2½ million homes to replace "slum dwellings in a poor condition or grossly deficient in modern amenities", and 1½ million "to give each family a separate dwelling." This leaves out of account continuing wastage—houses dilapidating below slum level during the period when new ones are being erected. To give an

example: Glasgow Corporation erected 17,354 new houses between 1934 and 1939 during which time 6,729 additional houses were represented as unfit for human habitation, i.e. nearly 40% of the new building was thus neutralised. And it is an ambiguity, to say the least, to talk of giving "each family a separate dwelling" and leaving it thus. What is meant by that? Again to quote Glasgow as an example: 14.8% of all houses consist of only one room 43.7% have two rooms; and 23.7% three rooms. Is this standard regarded as adequate for the purpose of computing the required number of houses to provide

a "separate dwelling" for each family. By submitting the estimate to examination its deficiencies can be clearly seen. It is safe to predict that a minimum of 7 to 10 million houses at least will be required during the next decade to establish even the most modest standards of decent housing for the British masses. To provide these houses is the problem. How can it be solved?

WHAT OF THE LABOUR LEADERS ?

ANEURIN BEVAN is the Minister whom the Labour Government have made responsible for providing the masses with homes. Does Bevan believe that capitalism can deliver the goods? He has made no pronouncements to the contrary since he assumed office, and not a word, not a hint, about the introduction of any measure remotely resembling socialism. And yet the "Tribune" of October 14, 1944, under Aneurin Bevan's editorship, contained an article which concluded as follows:

"The builders and building societies reap the profits. The Government will increase the tax burden on the masses in order to squander its funds in useless subsidies. A few of the more "fortunate" workers and middle class families will live in a Jerry-built house at an extortionate rent. The remainder will live in slums, old style and modern, including the "steel tents" and huts. That is what private enterprise has to offer."

Is this what Bevan and the Labour Government have to offer? Or has private enterprise undergone some mystic transformation since the Labour leaders took over?

ENGELS ON HOUSING

THE housing problem is no new one. Engels, co-founder with Marx of scientific socialism, wrote a series of brilliant articles on the subject in 1872 in reply to the reformist "social

quacks" of his day who advocated patch-work solutions to this social problem. And the ideas contained in this polemic are as apposite today as when they were written.

"The so-called housing shortage," wrote Engels, "which plays such a great role in the press nowadays, does not consist in the fact that the working class generally lives in bad, overcrowded and unhealthy dwellings. This shortage is not something peculiar to the present; it is not even one of the sufferings peculiar to the modern proletariat in contradistinction to all earlier oppressed classes. On the contrary, all oppressed classes in all periods suffered more or less uniformly from it. In order to make an end of this housing shortage there is only one means: to abolish altogether the exploitation and oppression of the working class by the ruling class." The housing shortage, Engels continues:

"is one of the smaller, secondary evils which result from the present-day capitalist mode of production." This was written at the end of the Franco-Prussian War! Capitalism has had over 70 years to contradict this judgment, but at the end of World War II Engel's words still retain all their original meaning and forcefulness.

WHAT is the basis for such an assertion? It is the fact that the present ruling class cannot solve the problem any more than it can solve the general problem of the equitable distribution of all commodities, consonant with the needs of the people. Capitalism is a system of production for profit. All the means of wealth production, including the land, are privately owned. In such a social order the needs of the mass of the people, in the nature of things, conflicts with the system of production for profit. And housing is no exception. When, and only when, production is for use and not for profit can the needs of the people be met and the housing problem solved as part of the general

problem of production and equitable distribution of commodities.

ENGELS gives us the specific reasons for this conflict of interests so far as housing is concerned:

"The growth of the big modern cities gives the land in certain areas, particularly in those which are centrally situated, an artificial and often colossally increasing value; the buildings erected on these areas depress this value, instead of increasing it, because they no longer correspond to the changed circumstances. They are pulled down and replaced by others. This takes place above all with workers' houses which are situated centrally and where rents, even with the greatest overcrowding, can never, or only very slowly, increase above a certain maximum. They are pulled down and in their stead shops, warehouses and public buildings are erected. . . The result is that the workers are forced out of the centre of the towns towards the outskirts; that workers' dwellings, and small dwellings in general, become rare and expensive and often altogether unobtainable, for under these circumstances the building industry, which is offered a much better field for speculation by the more expensive houses, builds workers' dwellings only by way of exception."

To corroborate this we need only to supply current data. Recently the Glasgow Corporation was preparing a scheme to build houses in the centre of the city. The structures were planned to cost £400. But the sites, assuming they could have been procured at £4 per yard, i.e. on terms more favourable than the much boosted Uthwatt report would allow for, would have increased the cost of each house to £1,200. In London the position is incomparably worse than this. According to Lord Latham, it would cost £50,000,000 to secure four acres of "open space" for every 1,000 Londoners! And the fact that build-

ing work has now to be controlled so that workers' houses are built at all provides the final and irrefutable vindication of Engels' postulate.

THE PRIVATE OWNERSHIP OF LAND

THE second but no less important parasitical of all the exploiters. Their revenues are the result solely of the possession of natural resources, the price of which is artificially and arbitrarily determined. The freehold or leasehold price of a piece of erstwhile waste land is grossly inflated by virtue of the fact that a structure is erected on it. And yet no new value is added to the land itself. The occupant has to pay an enormous tribute for which he receives in return nothing but the "legal right" to occupy a part of the earth's surface, itself a product not of man's work but of nature's! In the early period of the war just concluded a futile attempt was made to construct an aerodrome on marsh land at a cost to the exchequer of £200,000,000, most of which went in purchasing land, hitherto valueless. This provides striking evidence of the need for the expropriating of the landlords. No Scott or Uthwatt reports or tinkering with the problem in any way can produce any worthwhile results.

PRODUCTION FOR PROFIT

THE second but no less important barrier to housing production is the private ownership of the means of production—the building industry in this case. Who would attempt to deny that the building industry in this country would not, today, be engaged on the erection of a single workers' house were it not for Governmental compulsion? So long as there are more expensive, and more profitable, structures to be erected—cinemas, offices, shops, luxury dwellings, the building trade under capitalist ownership will not, and cannot in the nature-

of things, interest itself in the production of cheap dwellings for the masses.

HOUSING production, like all commodity production, suffers cyclical slumps. There is always a shortage of workers' dwellings, but that does not mean a market, or constant demand which cannot be met. The masses are always short of all kinds of commodities but the market becomes glutted, with a consequent "slump", not because real demands are satisfied but because the available **purchasing power** of the workers is inadequate to enable them to procure goods which are available and which they need. So it is with houses. No matter how many are living in the vilest slums; no matter how many are sharing homes; no matter how many large families are crowded together in "homes" of one, two or three rooms, as in Glasgow; in short, no matter how great the **ACTUAL** shortage of houses, there will be no housing market unless employment and wages are sufficient for the purpose of paying for adequate living accommodation.

NO workers' houses will voluntarily be produced by private enterprise during the coming period. Building costs now, as after World War 1, are grossly inflated. As a consequence speculators are not going to build houses to let at rents which are on a high level now but in the future will fall with falling costs. Rent has four component parts. It covers ground rent, interest on building capital (including the profit of the builder), costs of repairs and insurance, and the amortisation of the building capital inclusive of profits in annual deductions according to the rate at which the house deteriorates. Obviously houses built at the present high costs will depreciate rapidly in the coming period as their value decreases with lowering costs. Under these conditions rents will tend to fall with consequent loss to the speculators.

RENTS AND SUBSIDIES

AN official report of the Ministry of Health on "Private Enterprise Housing" contains some interesting facts, observations and conclusions.

On the question of rent control it states:

"If the rents of modern houses are restricted to a level which is substantially below that at which it is possible after the war to provide similar houses for letting, this will tend . . . to check the demand for new houses and their production by private enterprise."

And, following on this :

"He (the private builder) will operate if he is sufficiently sure that there will be a ready demand for his houses when they are completed, at a price which will return him a profit, and the more certainty there is of this demand, the more he will be disposed to extend his activities to the full extent to which capital, materials and labour are to be had."

It is here that the impasse faces the Government. If the private speculators and builders are to receive in the way of rent or purchase price a profitable return on their outlay at the present costs of building (which are at least double those of pre-war) then the rent or selling price of workers' houses will be beyond the reach of those who wish to procure them. Consequently private enterprise is not interested to build houses for the masses at this stage, and the task must of necessity fall on the shoulders of the central and municipal governmental authorities as is now the case.

PRIVATE enterprise provided the bulk of the houses built between the two wars but only after a period, at the close of World War I, during which this task was undertaken by the public authorities. The builders soaked the taxpayer, by means of subsidies, in the process. It might

appear, at first glance, that subsidies paid to private enterprise would provide an economic incentive to produce houses for the masses. If the private builder will not build because the costs are too high to produce a reasonable return for his outlay, then surely this is offset by Government financial aid and the incentive restored? No. Capitalism does not work that way. What the subsidy does in fact is to free the builders from the need for competitive struggle, as their profits are thus guaranteed, and prices remain at high levels as a consequence. A brief examination of the actual developments between the two world wars confirms this.

FROM the above quoted official report we learn that :

"Private enterprise provided rather more than 3,000,000 of the 4,200,000 houses which were built in England and Wales between the wars. All but 433,000 of the private enterprise houses were provided without any assistance from the Exchequer."

The report provides the following details :

"In all 39,186 houses were provided with the assistance of subsidy under the Additional Powers Act of 1919. The total amount paid from the Exchequer by way of subsidy on these houses was £9,498,156, an average of £242 per house. . . The cost of the houses placed them beyond the means of the working classes, and the scheme made little direct contribution towards easing the working class need."

During the period when subsidies were being granted prices remained high. When they were withdrawn, prices fell.

"The reduction or discontinuance of subsidy", the report tells us, "generally coincided with a substantial and abnormal fall in building costs". But if the goods weren't produced, what happened to the sub-

sidies? They went into the pockets of the capitalists, and they will do the same again. That much is admitted in the official document from which we have already quoted:

"It was often alleged that the subsidy paid to private enterprise during the inter-war period went into the pocket of the builder instead of to the benefit of the purchaser or tenant of the house. The public will be much concerned to ensure that the benefit of any subsidy which may again be made available goes to the person for whom it is intended, namely the occupier, and we have accordingly considered very carefully what recommendation we could make for safe-guarding this point. We see no way of entirely eliminating the risk, save by unduly restrictive conditions which defeat the object of the subsidy, viz., the production of houses as speedily as possible."

There is the impasse from which capitalism has no way out. And the Labour Government is just carrying on in the same old way.

SOCIAL DEMOCRACY IS IMPOTENT

REFORMIST methods, no matter from where they emanate, cannot solve this problem. The Stalinists have nothing to add to the Labour Party's programme except methods of extorting more work from the workers through "Progress Committees" and similar anti-working class, collaborationist measures which, insofar as they benefit anyone, benefit the bosses. The so-called "socialist" proposals of the Independent Labour Party show also the reformist character of this Party. They put forward four positive proposals during the period of the coalition all of which can be accepted without question by the reformist Labour Government. First, interest-free loans, which we will deal with later. Second among the I.L.P. proposals is "public ownership of land".

There is no mention of nationalising the land **without** compensation. Left as it is, it can mean the programme now being carried out through the local authorities who are themselves purchasing land for housing sites and thus bringing it under "public ownership" piecemeal. The third demand is for "control" of all building operations and materials. This already exists. Finally they demand that the Rent Restriction Act be extended to cover all property. The whole of the I.L.P. proposals burk the issue and boil down to a simple reformist policy for a problem requiring a revolutionary solution.

FINANCE AND HOUSING

WE have dealt with two of the major factors contributing to the housing problem, which capitalism cannot solve. Finance is the third tie which completes the Gordian knot.

INVESTMENT in property is regarded by the financiers as a sound and lucrative proposition, hence the phenomenal growth and influence of the building societies. Some £576,000,000 was advanced by these glorified pawn-brokers in the two decades preceding World War II. Immediately prior to the war they were loaning about £130,000,000 annually. The normal interest charge on mortgages is $4\frac{1}{2}$ per cent. That is the stake these gentlemen have in the continuance of private enterprise housing. And it is very much in the interest of these sharks that the housing shortage should continue! for an abundance of houses would mean cheaper rents and purchase prices, with a consequent lowering of interest rates.

A simple example, given in the "New Leader" (25/3/45), illustrates how tremendous is the toll extracted from the toilers by the housing financiers.

"Let us suppose that the Glasgow Corporation decides to build a new house costing £800. It raises a loan for this amount repayable over sixty

years, at 3 $\frac{1}{2}$ per cent. interest. The lowest economic rent for that house will be £1 3s. 3d. a week. But if the £800 could be borrowed interest-free, the economic rent would be only 10s. 3d. a week."

Just think of it when you pay out your 23/- a week or more for rent, at least 10/- of this goes, in interest, into the pocket of the financiers!

FROM this the I.L.P. deduces the need for interest-free loans. But they completely evade drawing the necessary conclusions: **interest-free loans can only be provided by a government which has expropriated the banks and financial institutions in their entirety.** The nationalisation of the Bank of England, by itself, will solve nothing. Finance will still remain for the most part in the hands of the private banks and finance houses. And finance capitalists, either in the City of London or Wall Street (and the latter gentlemen are making this perfectly clear at the present time) are not going to give interest-free loans in order to provide the workers with homes. We can add that with the present demands on capital they will not even willingly lower interest rates to provide the "cheap" money so urgently needed by the Labour Government. In the "Daily Mail" of September 18, Garry Allighan, Labour M.P., makes the following observation which completely vindicates our argument and shows the dilemma in which the Labour leaders find themselves:

"Mr. Aneurin Bevan is finding that the Co-op. is threatening to become a mild headache—though it may turn out to be vice versa.

He and the Labour Party are pledged to the provision of houses by 'cheap money'.

At times he has sympathised, even, with the theory of interest-free loans for housing.

Never has the Party been prepared to approve a Labour Government permitting so much as even 3 per cent. for public housing scheme; 2 per cent. has been re-

garded by the party as the maximum return to the financiers.

Mr. Bevan, of all people, would not only find a personal difficulty in persuading the next annual conference to agree to 3 per cent. on housing loans; he would probably refuse to make the attempt.

Co-operative societies wonder what he will say, therefore, to the Co-operative Permanent Building Society, which has just announced the availability of a £200,000,000 pool from which the Government can borrow for house building at 3½ per cent."

Clearly, so long as these vested interests in housing shortage remain, so long the housing problem remains. The question can be solved only when a workers' government takes over, without compensation, the banks and other financial institutions.

HOUSING AND THE STATE

IT is not in the interests of the capitalists to provide adequate housing for the masses. If there are sufficient houses for everyone, rents will tend to fall. If there are sufficient houses to let at reasonable rents, the workers will not be forced into the clutches of the building societies, who now form such a powerful section of the finance-capitalists. And, insofar as it is against the interests of individual groups of capitalists to solve the housing problem even if they so desired, as Engels says:

"It is perfectly clear that the existing state is neither able nor willing to do anything to remedy the housing difficulty. The state is nothing but the organised collective power of the possessing classes, the landowners and capitalists as against the exploited classes, the peasants and the workers. What the individual capitalists (and it is here only a question of these because in this matter the landowner who is also concerned acts primarily as a capitalist) do not want, their state also does not want. If there-

fore the individual capitalists deplore the housing shortage, but can hardly be persuaded even superficially to palliate its most terrifying capitalists, the state, will not do much more. At most it will see to it that the measure of superficial palliation which has become standard is carried out everywhere uniformly."

And this is all that need be expected of the Labour Government no matter whether their Minister in charge is Aneurhan Bevan or any other "left" winger.

THE solution to the housing problem lies only along the road of socialism: the expropriation of the landowners and capitalists and the operation of the commonly-owned means of production under the democratic control of the producers. The problem of houses is bound up with the location of industry, all of which demands a national plan within the framework of a planned, socialist economy.

THE basic material necessities for the production of houses exist: raw materials and labour power. With a properly worked out plan, prepared by the organised building workers and technicians, millions of houses can be produced in a few years. It is the duty of the trade unions to prepare a 4-year or 5-year plan and to present the Labour Government with it, together with a demand for its realisation. A determined struggle along these lines will reveal that the housing problem could be solved in a few years but for the barriers of private ownership standing in the way.

SUCH a struggle will lay bare the need to sweep aside these obstructions, together with the capitalists and their agents in the labour movement, and for the workers to take the state power into their own hands. Only thus can the housing problem be solved as part of the general social problem.

THE FUTURE OF COMMON WEALTH?

BY J. DEANE

THE special conference of Common Wealth held in London on September 16th, rejected by 118 votes to 89 the resolution proposed by Sir Richard Acland and his supporters. This resolution called for the dissolution of Common Wealth as an organisation so that its members could enter the Labour Party. Following the decision to maintain Common Wealth, Acland and Wintringham have resigned, and along with their supporters will enter the Labour Party, leaving C. A. Smith, ex I.L.P. chairman and former claimant Marxist, as leader of this organisation.

THE fact that this life or death choice faced Common Wealth so early after the ending of the war is no accident. The ending of the Coalition was the ending of Common Wealth. The General Election, from which only one Common Wealth candidate was returned, and in which it lost most of its deposits, dealt the death blow to this organisation. The decision to maintain Common Wealth will not prevent its steady disintegration. This process is determined by far more formidable and real forces than C. A. Smith's "ethical standards". Common Wealth is in an impasse. The entire situation demands that the sincere socialist members of Common Wealth should review their position, and by a thorough consideration of the programmes of the various parties, particularly the programme of revolutionary Marxism, choose their path.

WHAT is the future for Common Wealth?

IN order to answer this question correctly it is necessary to understand the social basis and evolution of this movement as a separate organisation of the lower middle class, moving in the direction of the organised labour movement.

* * * *

THE crisis of capitalism on a world scale gave rise to a growing radicalisation amongst all sections of the population, and most significantly amongst the middle class which looked to the Left for a solution to its problems. This development represented a break of the middle class from Big

Business and a progressive evolution towards the organised labour movement. Out of this general situation Common Wealth was formed in July 1942, by an amalgamation of the "1941 Committee", led by J. B. Priestley, and a number of people gathered around Sir Richard Acland.

TWO conditions gave rise to a separate organisation of the middle class. On the one hand, their desire to criticise the Tories through the official labour movement was prevented by the coalition politics of the Labour leaders, which had tied the labour movement to the capitalists and their war programme. On the other hand, certain sections of the middle class, having broken with the capitalists, feared the direct link with the labour movement and its discipline.

THE treacherous coalition policies of the Labour leaders during the war gave the opportunity for Common Wealth to develop, both as an avenue of expression for the anti-Tory and coalition tendencies, and as an electoral machine. During the war period Common Wealth had phenomenal successes in the by-elections. Thousands of workers, as well as middle-class elements, voted for Common Wealth candidates because they offered an alternative to the coalition. But these successes were only to be shortlived. The ending of the coalition ended this situation. Common Wealth went to the polls during the General Election with a programme no different from that of the Labour

Party. It was no surprise, therefore, that it should suffer eclipse. The working class and the radicalised middle class, seeing no difference in the policies of the two parties, gave their votes to the Labour Party, which is more formidable with its giant electoral machine. The leadership of Common Wealth led this organisation light-mindedly into the General Election. It is now obvious to Acland and his leading supporters that there is no future for this movement.

* * * *

THE ephemeral character of Common Wealth was always clear to Marxists, who understand that in the present epoch of social revolution a Party not based upon revolutionary theory cannot withstand the test of events. Such parties come over to revolutionary working class movement, or go over to capitalist reaction or simply disintegrate. This law is clear from the experience of the I.L.P. and other such organisations in other countries which have disappeared in the course of the imperialist war. The only parties which can possibly have a future are those which have stood the test of events. It is no accident that the Fourth International is the only international organisation. Only a revolutionary party based upon revolutionary Marxist theory can develop and grow into the present epoch.

AT one time the Stalinists characterised Common Wealth as a fascist movement. Revolutionary Marxists continually opposed this false and entirely opportunist characterisation, made by a party which had betrayed every meaning of Communism, and which acted as the direct agents of reaction within the labour movement. Revolutionary Marxists welcomed the evolution of the middle class towards organised labour, but pointed out that there was no basis for a separate organisation of the middle class. We considered that it was the task of all sincere socialists

to help the middle class to find its way into the ranks of the labour movement. The only conceivably valid reason for maintaining a separate organisation would be for that organisation to have a revolutionary Marxist programme. We explained that if the middle class failed to make an alliance with the working class it would be used by Big Business against the working class and its struggle for Socialism. Marxists have always understood that it is not only permissible, but obligatory for the working class to make an alliance with the middle class, provided that such an alliance is directed against Big Business. Any one who impedes or opposes this process can only aid the capitalists.

THE experience of every revolutionary crisis teaches that the working-class must win over to its side the middle classes, which do not remain "independent" but end up either in the camp of the capitalists, or the camp of the revolutionary working-class. The failure of the working-class, its defeat and prostration, can only send the middle class, which no less than the working-class demands a change, into the camp of Big Business. A separate organisation of the middle classes can only assist this latter reactionary process.

* * * *

DURING the imperialist war in Europe, Common Wealth revealed that it had no difference in programme with the official labour movement. It supported the imperialist war and the traitorous coalition. Despite its talk of a "fully Socialist policy" its only difference with the policy of the Labour leaders was of a secondary nature; it called for a measure of electoral freedom. Not only did Common Wealth Members of Parliament support the Coalition between labour and Big Business, but they hailed Churchill as the leader of the struggle for "Freedom" and "Liberty". The "difference" between Common Wealth

and the Labour leaders was, therefore, only one of degree.

EVEN today Common Wealth has no fundamental difference with the policy of the Labour Party. Acland is quite open about this, but C. A. Smith prefers to be a little more concealed. In a statement by C. A. Smith and his supporters on the National Committee we read some very correct criticisms of the Labour Government's policy:

"Typical of Labour policy is the announcement of Sir Stafford Cripps that the cotton industry will not be nationalised, but that the Government is bringing together the employers and the employed to discuss its reorganisation.

Precisely! Not Socialism, but capitalist reorganisation. . . . So cotton magnates again breathe freely realising that Labour won't hurt them." ...

"Other aspects of Labour policy will be less popular with big business. . . . These activities will annoy big business but not eliminate it." ("Common Wealth Review", September, 1945).

AFTER reading these criticisms of the Labour Government's policy one is amazed to read that the:

"C.W. no more need be in opposition to the Labour Government than the Parliamentary Labour Party of 1906-14 was in opposition to the Liberal Government of which it formed the Left Wing. . ." ("Ibid").

THE criticisms of the Labour Government turn out to be meaningless! If these criticisms are justified, and we suggest that they are, then one could only draw the conclusion that a revolutionary party with a revolutionary programme is necessary. The political differences between Acland and C. A. Smith disappear, both are agreed to become the Left Wing of the Labour Government—if they are permitted. But the matter does not end here. Later in the same Statement we read:

"Common Wealth demands a fundamental change — political, economic and moral — of our

national life, and this cannot be realised by an extension of social insurance plus one or two measures of nationalisation."

HAVING recognised the fact that a change is necessary, one must ask: How is such a fundamental change to be accomplished? Quite correctly, not by the Labour Party. By Common Wealth, whose programme does not fundamentally differ from that of the Labour Party? Certainly not! Only a party based upon Marxism, a vanguard of the working class, can lead the struggle for a fundamental change. The middle class is incapable of leading such a struggle.

ONE of the alleged programmatic differences between Common Wealth and the Labour Party is the issue of nationalisation **without compensation**. This is a thoroughly progressive and correct demand, which, if understood, can mean a world of difference between the policy of the Labour Party (State-Capitalism) and the policy of any other party. But this can only be a fundamental difference if it is linked to a revolutionary programme. **By itself it is meaningless, since to expropriate the capitalists is a revolutionary demand which can only be carried through by the organised working class under the leadership of a revolutionary Marxist party.** It is necessary to understand that correct criticism along with occasional correct demands are meaningless, and under certain conditions reactionary, unless they are linked to a Marxist programme, which can only be advanced by a revolutionary Marxist party.

C. A. Smith and those who wish to maintain Common Wealth do so on the basis of the following argument:

"If, according to our prophecy it (the Labour Government) does not (adopt a "fully socialist" policy), why disband Common Wealth in order to become entangled in the Labour wreckage? Now is the time to stand firm to maintain our socialist integrity and to preserve an organisation ready to join forces with the socialists at present in the disillusioned with its gradualist

Labour Party when they are finally reformism." ("Common Wealth Review," Sept. 1945).

THE failure of the Labour Government would have the opposite effect to that envisaged in the above statement, if we fail to win the workers to a revolutionary Marxist programme. Precisely the middle class, characteristically empirical and hysterical, would swing in the direction of reaction. The middle classes integrated in the Labour movement would, by itself, be no guarantee against this most dangerous possibility, which can only be prevented by the building of a strong revolutionary communist party. A separate organisation, of the middle class, fundamentally reformist, could only assist the swing towards reaction as a result of bitter disillusionment with the Labour Government.

THE new turn towards organised labour is a progressive one insofar as it expresses the desire of the middle class to integrate itself with the organised working-class movement. Many of those who will enter the Labour Party do so because of their belief in reformism. These considerations however, are totally different from those of Acland and his leading supporters who are seeking a comfortable place within the Labour Party. The cynicism of these gentlemen has nothing in common with the sincere desires of those who wish to take their place in the Labour movement.

THE new leaders of Common Wealth (C. A. Smith, etc.) have no fundamental difference with the Labour Party policy. Amongst their supporters, however, are many who seek alternative policies to the reformism of the Labour and Stalinist parties. These members of Common Wealth, some of whom came from the C.P., I.L.P., and Labour Party, have been convinced by the two months experience of the Labour Government and its complete absence of socialist measures that an internationalist socialist movement is necessary. We appeal to all who seek a revolutionary internationalist programme to study the programme of revolutionary communism—of Trotskyism.

WE of the Revolutionary Communist Party invite members of Common Wealth to open up discussions with us. To others, who still have faith in the reformist policies of the Labour Party, we strongly urge that they join the Labour Party; for we believe that this experience will reveal their error. There is absolutely no excuse for maintaining a separate organisation with a programme no different to that of the Labour Party. Such organisations are doomed to failure. We are confident that all sincere socialists will learn that only the policy of Marxism, of Trotskyism, can lead the workers and their allies, the middle classes, to Socialism. There is no middle road.

RELIGION IN THE SOVIET UNION

By PAUL DIXON.

In a recent issue of "Workers' International News" we dealt with the degeneration of the Stalinist Bureaucracy as illustrated by the monstrous growth of nationalism which it has engendered in the Soviet Union. The course of this Stalinist degeneration can, however, be followed by studying almost any aspect of Soviet life. Especially clearly is it revealed in the relations of the Bureaucracy with the Russian Orthodox Church.

The attitude of the Bolsheviks towards the Orthodox Church was conditioned not only by the materialist basis upon which Marxism stands but also by the special role played by this Church in Tsarist Russia. It had been not only one of the greatest landowners—it owned 7.5 million acres and had an annual income of 150,000,000 rubles. It was also a tool, and a willing tool, of Tsarism. With the growth of the revolutionary movement towards

the end of the 19th Century the Russian clergy asked to be allowed to cooperate with the Tsarist Secret Service in tracking down revolutionaries and many played no small role in this respect.

After the massacre of the St. Petersburg workers by the Tsar's troops on Bloody Sunday (January 1905) the Holy Synod (the governing body of the Church) issued a proclamation denouncing certain "evil-minded persons" who "lead others into useless death without repentance, with bitterness in their hearts and curses on their lips." "Our enemies," stated the Synod, "wish to shake the foundations of our orthodox faith and the autocratic power of the Tsars . . . Fear God, honour the Tsar . . . submit to every power ordained of God . . . Toil according to God's ordinance in the sweat of the brow."

After the October Revolution, in January 1918, the Patriarch of the Orthodox Church, Tikhon, issued a message to the faithful, in which he denounced the Bolsheviks as "monsters of the human race" and excommunicated all who should support the Revolution.

Lenin wrote; "Marx said, 'Religion is the opium of the people'—and this postulate is the corner stone of the whole philosophy of Marxism with regard to religion. Marxism always regarded all modern religions and churches, and every kind of religious organisation as instruments of that bourgeois reaction whose aim is to defend exploitation, stupefying the working-class." ("The Attitude of the Workers' Party towards Religion," May, 1909.)

But in this same article Lenin made it clear that the Bolsheviks did not expect religion immediately to disappear, even after the seizure of power. Engels, to whom Lenin refers, had established this some forty years previously in "Anti-Duhring" where he wrote:

"And when this act" (the proletarian revolution) "has been accomplished, when society, by taking possession of all means of production and using them on a planned basis, has freed itself and all its members from the bondage in which they are at present

held by these means of production which they themselves have produced but which now confront them as an irresistible extraneous force; when then man no longer merely proposes, but also disposes—only then will the last extraneous force which is still reflected in religion vanish; and with it will also vanish the religious reflection itself, for the simple reason that then there will be nothing left to reflect."

Only in a fully socialist society can religion be expected to disappear completely for only then will the social basis of religion—the fear of the masses caused by their helplessness before the blind forces of production—cease to exist. Meanwhile, the CPSU, as its 1919 Programme put it, endeavoured;

"to secure the complete break up of the union between the exploiting classes and the organisations for religious propaganda, thus co-operating in the actual deliverance of the working masses from religious prejudices, and organising the most extensive propaganda of scientific enlightenment and anti-religious conceptions. While doing this, we must carefully avoid anything that can wound the feelings of believers, for such a method can only lead to the strengthening of religious fanaticism."

With this objective in view the Soviet State decreed the separation of the Church from the State and freed the educational system from all Church influence. All citizens were given the right to carry on both religious and anti-religious propaganda. The property of the Church was confiscated but the church buildings were returned for the use of the clergy. The Church retained freedom of worship, association, meeting and propaganda. On the other hand vigorous anti-religious propaganda was carried on by the CPSU which set up the "Society of Militant Atheists" with its journal, "The Atheist".

During the years of the Civil War the bulk of the Russian clergy supported the Whites but their resistance to the Soviet Regime was broken by the early 1920's. In 1921, in order to get funds for buying foodstuffs abroad in order to relieve the famine,

the Soviet Government decreed the confiscation of gold, silver and precious stones belonging to the Church. The Patriarch ordered the clergy to resist and a bitter struggle resulted in the course of which 45 clergy were executed and 250 sentenced to long terms of imprisonment. By this time it was obvious that the Soviet Government had come to stay and a section of the clergy hastened to make their peace with it upon the best terms they could. In 1922 this section set up the so-called "Living Church" which declared capitalism to be a "deadly sin." A split in the Orthodox Church was the consequence. But henceforth even the majority of the clergy who were opposed to the "Living Church" paid lip-service to the Soviet State.

Such was the situation before the rise of the Stalinist Bureaucracy and its victory over the Bolshevik-Leninist Left Opposition. The Church continued to function in the Soviet Union, but the masses had turned from it, especially in the towns. Its support amongst the youth was very small, and its main basis lay amongst the more backward masses, especially the older generation of peasants. The clergy lived upon donations from their supporters and were entirely cut off from Soviet life. Priests had no right to vote in Soviet elections or to be elected to Soviet organisations. For the class-conscious Soviet worker the Church was a relic of the past which was destined gradually to wither away under the influence of the rising material and cultural standards of the masses.

Such would without doubt have been the course of development had the isolation of the Soviet State been broken by the World Revolution and the growth of Stalinist Bureaucracy been thus prevented. We would have witnessed the fulfilment of the confident prophesy of the "A.B.C. of Communism"—the text-book issued by the CPSU in the days of Lenin and Trotsky—

"the transition from the Society which makes an end of capitalism to the society which is completely freed from all traces of class division and class struggle, will bring about the

natural death of all religion and all superstition."

The actual course of events under Stalinist rule has been almost diametrically opposite—a conclusive proof of the nature of the Stalinist regime and of the extent to which it has, finally and irrevocably" established Socialism!

The attitude of the Bureaucracy towards the Church has passed through the usual zig-zags of Stalinist policy. During the ultra-left period of forcible collectivisation and the Five Year Plan in Four an attempt was made to liquidate the Church and its influence by government decree. Starting in 1929 churches were forcibly closed and priests arrested and exiled all over the Soviet Union. The celebrated Shrine of the Iberian Virgin in Moscow—esteemed by believers to be the "holiest" in all Russia was demolished—Stalin and his Government were not afraid of strengthening religious fanaticism by wounding the feelings of believers as Lenin and Trotsky had been! Religion, they believed, could be liquidated, like the kulak, by a stroke of the pen. The Society of Militant Atheists, under Stalin's orders, issued on May 15th 1932, the "Five Year Plan of Atheism"—"by May 1st 1937"), such as the "Plan", "not a single house of prayer shall remain in the territory of the USSR, and the very concept of God must be banished from the Soviet Union as a survival of the Middle Ages and an instrument for the oppression of the working masses."

Unfortunately for the Stalinist "Plan", during the very period when it was proclaimed the Bureaucracy was actually strengthening the social basis of religion in the Soviet Union—by the ever increasing miseries which its disastrous economic policy was imposing upon the masses. The Great Famine of 1932-33 in which millions died in the Soviet Union did more for the strengthening of the hold of the Church over the masses than could have been done by any amount of religious propaganda. Like so many other Stalinist "Plans" of this period, the "Five Year Plan of Atheism" was officially forgotten long before the time for its fulfilment was due.

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