

convinced that his claim of computability in an invented system of market socialism is justified. However, we are of the conviction that the whole discussion from Mises to Lange is quite beside the point and entirely divorced from reality. As a matter of fact, Mises did not attack socialism but argued against a system of state capitalism which he and his adversaries mistook for socialism. Lange does not defend socialism but an imagined state capitalist system.

Contrary to other writers, Lange is of the opinion that Marx "was well aware of the problems" which he attempts now to solve, though Marx "tried to solve it in a rather unsatisfactory way (130)." Marx, Lange says, "seems to have thought of labor as the only kind of scarce resource to be distributed between different uses, and wanted to solve the problem by the labor theory of value (132)." However, he continues, Marx and Engels were also "well aware of the role demand (utility) has in determining the allocation of resources, though they were unable to find a clear and functional expression of the law of demand (134)." However, Marx awareness of the fact that no society can prevail which entirely disregards the real needs of the people, and his recognition of the fact that the mass of products corresponding to the different needs require different and quantitatively determined masses of the total labor of society, has nothing to do with the solution of the problem provided for by modern marginal analyses, and does not require a value calculation. The marginal analysis to which Lange attributed so much importance is, after all, only a largely miscarried attempt to state more adequately the old supply and demand theory, with greater emphasis upon the side of demand or utility in the explanation of value. A value explanation by supply and demand, with or without marginal analysis, still leaves unanswered the question, what lies behind prices, supply and demand? Lange himself states that demand or utility does not determine capitalist production; the application of marginal analysis in capitalism based on

private property boils down to the simple fact that a capitalist hires or fires a worker according to the worker's profitability or nonprofitability to him. "If demand and supply balance one another, they cease to explain anything, they do not effect market-values, and therefore leave us even more in the dark than before concerning the reasons for the expression of the market-value in just a certain sum of money and no other. It is evident that the essential fundamental laws of production cannot be explained by the interaction of supply and demand." — ***) Furthermore, social demand "is essentially conditioned on the mutual relations of the different economic classes and their relative economic positions, that is to say, on the proportion of the total surplus value to the wages, and, on the proportion of the various parts into which surplus value is divided (profit, interest, rent, taxes, etc.). And this shows once more that absolutely nothing can be explained by the relation of supply and demand, unless the basis has first been ascertained, on which this relation rests."****

And the basis on which this relation rests in Lange's "socialism" consists of the divorce of the productive resources outside of labor from the laborers which is, at the same time, the rule of the state over the workers. Social demand will then first of all, be determined by this relationship of rulers and ruled, which, to be continued, will have to make all economic decisions from the viewpoint of securing the existing fundamental class relationship. The continuation of market and price relations will mean here no more than the employment of methods which are best suited to hide the continued class rule, class production, and class distribution. Just as the wage system today beclouds the exploitation of labor, just as the price system creates the illusion that exploitation is a market problem, so the price system based on marginal analysis will be employed only ideologically as a justification of continued class and income

**K. Marx, *Capital*. Vol. III, p. 223.

***K. Marx, *Capital*. Vol. III, p. 214'

differentiations. The whole need for his price system Lange explains by the scarcity of many goods and services. With general abundance, he contends, the more desirable system of "free sharing" without any accounting becomes possible, as increasing abundance slowly makes a price system superfluous. However, if a price system is justified by the scarcity of goods, then this price system, functioning on the basis of class relations, will not be able to prevent class considerations in the distribution of scarce products. In a society of price fixing, the "equilibrium" of supply and demand will reflect the economic wants and political needs of the class which does the fixing. Lange says himself that "the real problem of a socialist state is not economic at all, but sociological; it is the problem of bureaucracy (24)." In his system it depends entirely upon the bureaucracy whether evaluations are made and prices fixed so that the maximum welfare is achieved. The demand schedule, which shall guide the bureaucracy in their change of prices and supplies, may be ignored or followed by them. It is entirely up to them if such "things as leisure, safety, and agreeableness of work," are at all entered into the utility scales of the individuals. It is up to them whether there should be distributed a social dividend constituting the individuals' share in the income derived from the "capital and the natural resources," as if capital and the natural resources could create an income independent from the workers' labor, which employs these means of production. Rather, the control of these means of production will mean securing of a share of the social product to the controllers, the size of which will be more or less dependent on their exploitative needs and the class struggle. The rate of capital accumulation, Lange says, reflects how the Central Planning Board, and not the consumers, evaluate the optimum time-shape of the income stream (85)." In short, it is entirely possible for the authorities to disregard all of Lange's suggestions and all requirements of marginal analysis, and to operate with a price policy which continues the exploitation of

the many by the few. Then, Lange may say, they would not be living up to socialist principles, and so it actually depends upon socialist principles on the part of the authorities whether, under the conditions outlined by Lange, the maximum of social welfare could be reached. In other words, the desired situation in which the consumers dictate to the state what and how should be produced depends on the readiness of the bureaucracy to be mere servants of society.

However, the Russian development destroyed a number of illusions in this respect as well as those of the desirability of a state controlled economic system. Recent occurrences disquieted a great number of intellectuals, as it proved deadly not to be in the most complete agreement with the authoritarian rulers controlling the instruments of power. The results of the observable state capitalist trend in other countries, too, exclude to an always greater degree the hope that this new capitalist transformation will bring about the desired social peace and the realization of a rational economy. Rather, as one writer observed, this new economic system, "will rely on the will, insight, and abilities of the few persons who are in dictatorial command of the whole society. Thus a decisive irrational, personal, and subjective element comes in. That objective regular character resulting from the interplay of numerous sellers and buyers... is gone and excluded as long as a collective economy means at the same time a dictatorial economy****." Though this view undoubtedly exaggerates the possibility of the subjective element to disregard objective necessities, it expresses nevertheless a deep distrust towards recent "planning" attempts apparently opposed to the only form of "regulation" possible in capitalism, i. e., the unhindered competition in which from time to time a crisis re-establishes the lost capitalist "equilibrium."

However, the intervention of the state in economic matters is more

****H. v. Beckerath, *Economic Thought and Evolution*. The Philosophical Review. November 1937, p. 595.

and more accepted as unavoidable, though it is feared that it will be "disastrous when it is not democratic." The coalescence of economic and political power, writes Bertrand Russell,* "is an irresistible tendency in the modern world. It may be effected in an undemocratic manner by the politicians, as has happened in Russia, Italy and Germany. It may be effected in an undemocratic manner by the plutocrats, in the countries that are nominally democratic. For the believer in democracy, the only practicable course is to advocate its happening in a democratic way, by the transference of ultimate economic power into the hands of the democratic state."

The liberal bourgeoisie, as yet unwilling to embrace bolshevism or fascism, faces therewith a great problem: how to reform capitalism so that it may continue to function, without applying the pre-requisite for such reform, a dictatorship. Apparently, Lange's book seems to provide a theory which makes it possible to have state capitalism and democracy, and as Dr. Lippincott said in his introduction, even "might make possible the achievement of that rare thing in history — a fundamental change in political control, or in class relations, without a conflict (38)." Small wonder then, that this book found so many attentive ears. For example, we may quote Alfred M. Bingham, who, reviewing in *Common Sense* Max Lerner's book "It Is Later Than You Think," criticizes the latter slightly because "he ignored the new literature of 'market socialism' and of 'monopolistic competition', which might suggest that the democratic planned capitalism he calls for as a transition step is much nearer to socialism than he could dare to hope."

Indeed, we, too, could not discover any essential difference between the numerous proposals of a democratic reform of capitalism as an alternative to fascism recently brought forward by liberal theorists, and Lange's "theory of socialism," in its possible practical implications. For that matter, we are unable to see any

fundamental difference between all these suggestions of capitalist reform and its actualization in fascist countries including its most complete Russian form. And really, "The conception, which regards only the condition of distribution historically, but not the conditions of production, is, on the one hand, merely an idea begotten by the incipient, but still handicapped, critique of bourgeois economy. On the other hand it rests upon a misconception, an identification of the process of social production with the simple labor process, such as might be performed by any abnormally situated human being without any social assistance**." And it is quite amusing to notice, that, as everything appears upside down in capitalist economy, so also Lange's concept of socialism, which only attempts to alter distribution, presents itself as a concept which "socializes production alone."

It remains to be said that the capitalistic character of this type of "socialism" comes to light also in its proposals regarding the transition period preceding it. At first glance, these proposals seem to be quite radical; indeed, Lange says emphatically, "Socialism is not an economic policy for the timid (125)." But the resolute fighter for socialism should, in Lange's opinion, first of all make clear "that socialism is not directed against private property as such, but only against that special type of private property which creates privileges to the detriment of the great majority of the people (125)." The socialist government, he says, must start its policy of transition immediately with the **socialization** of the industries and banks in question (122). That is, those industries "with monopolistic and restrictionist practices, which create obstacles to economic progress." But, "All private property of the means of production and all private enterprises which have useful social function will enjoy the full protection and support of the socialist state (125)," and "to prove the seriousness of its intentions, the socialist government may have to undertake some im-

mediate deeds in favor of the small entrepreneurs and small property holders (including holders of saving deposits and small stock and bond holders (126)."

For Lange is convinced that "competition forces entrepreneurs to act much as they would have to act were they managers of production in a socialist economy (98)." "By appropriate legislation, taxes, and bounties a socialist economy can induce the small-scale entrepreneurs to take all alternatives into consideration and avoid the danger of their causing serious business fluctuations (107)." What can be controlled should not be expropriated. But such control is senseless if it excludes entrepreneur profits. The state control must guarantee profitability so that the entrepreneurs are willing to remain as such, for they are only entrepreneurs to realize profits; they are not pursuing a hobby. If these still tremendous numbers of small entrepreneurs extract profits, and, if there exists in addition to them the ruling bureaucracy living from the social dividend, which is the surplus product of labor, then in the face of the necessity of continued international competition to the point of war, the whole economy will be forced, despite all possible ethical considerations, to direct production and distribution even more desperately into channels guaranteeing the largest possible quantity of surplus labor, i. e., the greatest possible exploitation. Under such conditions, and with such a program, a boundless optimism alone can expect that the mere control of the now stagnant monopolistic enterprises and an improved price system and the eventuality of a socialist minded bureaucracy will allow this "new" society to be free of the fluctuations of the business cycle. However, even the present monopolistic and state capitalist systems are no longer subject to the fluctuations of that business cycle which regulated the old and less monopolistic and more dynamic capitalism. Yet, they are still subject to crisis conditions of a far greater destructive character, though these crises conditions are no longer manifest merely in the destruction of capital in a more or less automatic

way, but by a more grandiose destruction of capital and human life by military attempts to reorganize world exploitation with a view to maintaining capital labor relations.

Last in his proposals, Lange outlines the "special situation where a socialist government, even if it has not the power to achieve a comprehensive socialization, may have a useful task to fulfill, a task which a capitalist government may be unable to carry out (127)." On the basis of the reasoning of Mr. Keynes, as laid down in his "General Theory of Employment, etc." Lange suggests "a bold program of public investments to restore employment to a higher level (127)." As such policy, because of its nonprofitability, may not be carried out by the bourgeoisie itself, "it may take a socialist government, free from the ballast of bourgeois prejudices about economic policies, to restore the capitalist economy (127)," which program, if "carried out successfully would increase the popularity of the socialists greatly." This rather queer way of thinking, which makes socialism popular because it restores capitalism, its alleged enemy, overlooks the simple fact that such a restoration of capitalism can be undertaken only at the expense of the workers. Besides, the "new" credit, money, and public works policies in the sense of Keynes, the quest for a lower rate of interest, and even the "socialization of investments" are as old as capitalism. Their present more intense application only reflects the increasing difficulties of capitalism. They are not designed to change the system, but instead they follow from changes already made in the capitalist structure, and mean practically that the concentration and centralization of capital proceeds now with additional political means. After all, Keynes' proposals are based on the discovery that it is easier to reduce the income of the workers by inflationary than by deflationary methods. As a crisis is chiefly caused by a decline of profitability, he knows quite well that it can be overcome only by restoring profitability, which he would bring about by price inflation, decrease of the rate of interest, and public works. As far as

*Democracy and Economics. Survey Graphic. February 1939, p. 132.

**K. Marx, Capital. Vol. III, p. 1030

labor is concerned, he still holds that "in general, an increase in employment can only occur to the accompaniment of a decline in the rate of real wages.***" The more intense exploitation of the workers is the objective of his theory. Would such a policy greatly enhance the popularity of socialism? It did so in German "National-Socialism," and in the American "New Deal-Socialism." But we doubt very much whether Dr. Lange is very happy about the result and the consequences of the popularity of socialism brought about by the application of methods as outlined by Keynes and largely adopted in the two countries mentioned.

If it weren't for these more practical proposals, the need for criticizing Lange's concept of socialism would be less urgent because of the highly abstract manner of his argumentation. His play with a socialist price system is quite removed from all practical considerations. As long as the logic of the abstract assumptions is maintained, all is well as far as Lange's contribution to the theory of socialism is concerned. If these theoretical assertions are not applied, he could argue that this is not his fault, but the mistake of those responsible for actual policies. However, on the basis of such abstractions, whether or not practically realizable, practical politicians construct ideological arguments which may serve exactly the opposite from what they express ideologically. This is the more true at the present time because not only do the proponents

***The General Theory of Employment, Interest, and Money. London, 1936, p. 17.

of state capitalism, but also its eventual victims, conceive, like Lange, a mere transformation within the capitalist mechanism as an entirely new society. At the recent convention of the Illinois Bankers Association, for instance, former Congressman S. B. Pettengill excited his audience considerably by declaring that America "faces a knockdown and drag-out fight between those who want to maintain the country's traditional system of free economic enterprise and the socialists who are now in Washington.****" He based his argumentation on the testimony of A. A. Berle, assistant Secretary of State and a Roosevelt brain-truster, who advocated before the monopoly committee the socialization of credit and government ownership of the country's basic industries. This increasing neglect of questions of profitability, however, serves only one purpose, to save profit economy. To avoid expropriation of capital, the capitalist society has to expropriate the individual capitalists to an always greater extent. To prevent socialism it is necessary to turn state-capitalistic. In all proposals appearing recently under the name of "socialism," the proletarian class remains a proletarian class. The only thing that is to be modified and made more efficient is the control over this class. The only thing really to be planned is the exploitation of labor. As Lange's book helps to support the propaganda for this sort of "bastard-socialism," it must be rejected by the workers fighting for a socialist Society.

****Chicago Daily Tribune. May 27, 1939.

IN THE NEXT ISSUE OF LIVING MARXISM

Economy and Social Legislation in America
Bread and Union-Dues

Recent Development in France

Mexico: Today and Tomorrow

Reviews: Fascism and Big Business — Death is not Enough — The Black Jacobins — Work-Hour Value — and other articles and reviews.

THE STRUGGLE AGAINST FASCISM BEGINS WITH THE STRUGGLE AGAINST BOLSHEVISM

Russia must be placed first among the new totalitarian states. It was the first to adopt the new state principle. It went furthest in its application. It was the first to establish a constitutional dictatorship, together with the political and administrative terror system which goes with it. Adopting all the features of the total state, it thus became the model for those other countries which were forced to do away with the democratic state system and to change to dictatorial rule. Russia was the example for fascism.

No accident is here involved, nor a bad joke of history. The duplication of systems here is not apparent but real. Everything points to the fact that we have to deal here with expressions and consequences of identical principles applied to different levels of historical and political development. Whether party "communists" like it or not, the fact remains that the state order and rule in Russia are indistinguishable from those in Italy and Germany. Essentially they are alike. One may speak of a red, black, or brown "soviet state," as well as of red, black, or brown fascism. Though certain ideological differences exist between these countries, ideology is never of primary importance. Ideologies, furthermore, are changeable and such changes do not necessarily reflect the character and the functions of the state apparatus. Furthermore, the fact that private property still exists in Germany and Italy is only a modification of secondary importance. The abolition of private property alone does not guarantee socialism. Private property within capitalism also can be abolished. What actually determines a socialist society is, besides the doing away with private property in the means of production, the control of workers over the products of their labor and the end of the wage system. Both of these achievements are unfulfilled in Russia, as well as in Italy and Germany. Though some may assume that Russia is one step nearer to socialism than the other countries, it does not follow that its "soviet state" has helped the international proletariat come in any way nearer to its class struggle goals. On the contrary, because Russia calls itself a socialist state, it misleads and deludes the workers of the world. The thinking worker knows what fascism is and fights it, but as regards Russia, he is only too often inclined to accept the myth of its socialistic nature. This delusion hinders a complete and determined break with fascism, because it hinders the principle struggle against the reasons, preconditions, and circumstances which in Russia, as in Germany and Italy, have led to an identical state and governmental system. Thus the Russian myth turns into an ideological weapon of counter-revolution.

It is not possible for men to serve two masters. Neither can a totalitarian state do such a thing. If fascism serves capitalistic and imperialistic interests, it cannot serve the needs of the workers. If, in spite of this, two apparently opposing classes favor the same state system, it is obvious that something must be wrong. One or the other class must be in error. No one should say here that the problem is one merely of form and therefore of no real significance, that, though the political forms are identical, their content may vary widely. This would be self-delusion. For the Marxist such things do not occur; for him form and content fit to each other and they cannot be divorced. Now, if the Soviet State serves as a model for fascism, it must contain structural and functional elements which are also common to fascism. To determine what they are we must go back to the 'soviet system' as established by Leninism, which is the application of the principles of bolshevism to the Russian conditions. And if an identity between bolshevism and fascism can be established, then the proletariat cannot at the same time fight fascism and defend the Russian "soviet system." Instead, the struggle against fascism must begin with the struggle against bolshevism.

II.

From the beginning bolshevism was for Lenin a purely Russian phenomenon. During the many years of his political activity, he never attempted to elevate the bolshevik system to forms of struggles in other countries. He was a social democrat who saw in Bebel and Kautsky the genial leaders of the working class, and he ignored the left-wing of the German socialist movement struggling against these heroes of Lenin and against all the other opportunists. Ignoring them, he remained in consistent isolation surrounded by a small group of Russian emigrants, and he continued to stand under Kautsky's sway even when the German "left," under the leadership of Rosa Luxemburg, was already engaged in open struggle against Kautskyism.

Lenin was concerned only with Russia. His goal was the end of the Czarist feudal system and the conquest of the greatest amount of political influence for his social democratic party within the bourgeois society. However, the force of the Revolution of 1917 brought Lenin far beyond the pre-conceived goal, and the Bolshevik Party came into power over all Russia. However, it realized that it could stay in power and drive on the process of socialization only if it could unleash the world revolution of the workers. But its own activity in this respect was quite an unhappy one. By helping to drive the German workers back into the parties, trade unions, and parliament, and by the simultaneous destruction of the German council (soviet) movement, the Bolsheviks lent a hand, to the defeat of the awakening European revolution.

The Bolshevik Party, consisting of professional revolutionists on the one hand and large backward masses on the other, remained isolated. It could not develop a real soviet system within the years of civil war, intervention, economic decline, failing socialization experiments, and the improvised Red Army. Though the soviets, which were developed by the Mensheviks, did not fit into the bolshevistik scheme, it was with their help that the Bolsheviks

came to power. With the stabilization of power and the economic reconstruction process, the Bolshevik Party did not know how to coordinate the strange soviet system to their own decisions and activities. Nevertheless, socialism was also the desire of the Bolsheviks, and it needed the world proletariat for its realization.

Lenin thought it essential to win the workers of the world over to the bolshevik methods. It was disturbing that the workers of other countries, despite the great triumph of Bolshevism, showed little inclination to accept for themselves the bolshevik theory and practice, but tended rather in the direction of the council movement, that arose in a number of countries, and especially in Germany.

This council movement Lenin could use no longer in Russia. In other European countries it showed strong tendencies to oppose the bolshevik type of uprisings. Despite Moscow's tremendous propaganda in all countries, the so-called "ultra-lefts," as Lenin himself pointed out, agitated more successfully for revolution on the basis of the council movement, than did all the propagandists sent by the Bolshevik Party. The Communist Party, following Bolshevism, remained a small, hysterical, and noisy group consisting largely of the proletarianized shreds of the bourgeoisie, whereas the council movement gained in real proletarian strength and attracted the best elements of the working class. To cope with this situation, bolshevik propaganda had to be increased; the "ultra-left" had to be attacked; its influence had to be destroyed in favor of Bolshevism.

Since the soviet system had failed in Russia, how could the radical "competition" dare to attempt to prove to the world that what could not be accomplished by Bolshevism in Russia might very well be realized independently of Bolshevism in other places? Against this competition Lenin wrote his pamphlet "Radicalism, an Infantile Disease of Communism," dictated by fear of losing power and by indignation over the success of the heretics. At first this pamphlet appeared with the subheading, "Attempt at a popular exposition of the Marxian strategy and tactic," but later this too ambitious and silly declaration was removed. It was a little too much. This aggressive, crude, and hateful papal bull was real material for any counter revolutionary. Of all programmatic declarations of Bolshevism it was the most revealing of its real character. It is Bolshevism unmasked. When in 1933 Hitler suppressed all socialist and communist literature in Germany, Lenin's pamphlet was allowed publication and distribution.

As regards the content of the pamphlet, we are not here concerned with what it says in relation to the Russian Revolution, the history of Bolshevism, the polemic between Bolshevism and other streams of the labor movement, or the circumstances allowing for the Bolshevik victory, but solely with the main points by which at the time of the discussion between Lenin and "ultra-leftism," were illustrated the decisive differences between the two opponents.

III.

The Bolshevik Party, originally the Russian social democratic section of the Second International, was built not in Russia but during the emigration. After the London split in 1903, the Bolshevik wing of the Russian social democracy was no more than a small sect. The "masses" behind it existed only in the brain of its leader. However, this small advance guard was a strictly disciplined organization, always ready for militant struggles and continually purged to maintain its integrity. The party was considered the war academy of professional revolutionists. Its outstanding pedagogical requirements were unconditional leader authority, rigid centralism, iron discipline, conformity, militancy, and sacrifice of personality for party interests. What Lenin actually developed was an elite of intellectuals, a center which, when thrown into the revolution would capture leadership and assume power. There is no use to try to determine logically and abstractly if this kind of preparation for revolution is wrong or right. The problem has to be solved dialectically. Other questions also must be raised: What kind of a revolution was in preparation? What was the goal of the revolution?

Lenin's party worked within the belated bourgeois revolution in Russia to overthrow the feudal regime of Czarism. The more centralized the will of the leading party in such a revolution and the more single-minded, the more success would accompany the process of the formation of the bourgeois state and the more promising would be the position of the proletarian class within the framework of the new state. What, however, may be regarded as a happy solution of revolutionary problems in a bourgeois revolution cannot at the same time be pronounced as a solution for the proletarian revolution. The decisive structural difference between the bourgeois and the new socialist society excludes such an attitude.

According to Lenin's revolutionary method, the leaders appear as the head of the masses. Possessing the proper revolutionary schooling, they are able to understand situations and direct and command the fighting forces. They are professional revolutionists, the generals of the great civilian army. This distinction between head and body, intellectuals and masses, officers, and privates corresponds to the duality of class society, to the bourgeois social order. One class is educated to rule; the other to be ruled. Out of this old class formula resulted Lenin's party concept. His organization is only a replica of bourgeois reality. His revolution is objectively determined by the forces that create a social order incorporating these class relations, regardless of the subjective goals accompanying this process.

Whoever wants to have a bourgeois order will find in the divorce of leader and masses, the advance guard and working class, the right strategical preparation for revolution. The more intelligent, schooled, and superior is the leadership and the more disciplined and obedient are the masses, the more chances such a revolution will have to succeed. In aspiring to the bourgeois revolution in Russia, Lenin's party was most appropriate to his goal.

When, however, the Russian revolution changed its character, when its proletarian features came more to the fore, Lenin's tactical and strategical methods ceased to be of value. If he succeeded anyway it was not because of his advance guard, but because of the soviet movement which had not at all been incorporated in his revolutionary plans. And when Lenin, after the successful revolution which was made by the soviets, dispensed again with this movement, all that had been proletarian in the Russian Revolution was also dispensed with. The bourgeois character of the Revolution came to the fore again, finding its natural completion in Stalinism.

Despite his great concern with Marxian dialectics, Lenin was not able to see the social historical processes in a dialectical manner. His thinking remained mechanistic, following rigid rules. For him there was only one revolutionary party — his own; only one revolution — the Russian; only one method — the bolshevik. And what had worked in Russia would work also in Germany, France, America, China and Australia. What was correct for the bourgeois revolution in Russia would be correct also for the proletarian world revolution. The monotonous application of a once discovered formula moved in an ego-centric circle undisturbed by time and circumstances, developmental degrees, cultural standards, ideas, and men. In Lenin came to light with great clarity the rule of the machine age in politics; he was the "technician," the "inventor," of the revolution, the representative of the all-powerful will of the leader. All fundamental characteristics of fascism were in his doctrine, his strategy, his social "planning," and his art of dealing with men. He could not see the deep revolutionary meaning of the rejection of traditional party policies by the left. He could not understand the real importance of the soviet movement for the socialist orientation of society. He never learned to know the prerequisites for the freeing of the workers. Authority, leadership, force, exerted on one side, and organization, cadres, subordination on the other side, — such was his line of reasoning. Discipline and dictatorship are the words which are most frequent in his writings. It is understandable, then, why he could not comprehend nor appreciate the ideas and actions of the "ultra-left," which would not accept his strategy and which demanded what was most obvious and most necessary for the revolutionary struggle for socialism, namely that the workers once and for all take their fate in their own hands.

IV.

To take their destiny in their own hands — this key-word to all questions of socialism — was the real issue in all polemics between the ultra-lefts and the Bolsheviks. The disagreement on the party question was paralleled by the disagreement on trade unionism. The ultra-left was of the opinion that there was no longer a place for revolutionists in trade unions; that it was rather necessary for them to develop their own organizational forms within the factories, the common working places. However, thanks to their unearned authority, the Bolsheviks had been able even in the first weeks of the German revolution to drive the workers back into the capitalistic reactionary trade

unions. To fight the ultra-lefts, to denounce them as stupid and as counter-revolutionary, Lenin in his pamphlet once more makes use of his mechanistic formulas. In his arguments against the position of the left he does not refer to German trade unions but to the trade union experiences of the Bolsheviks in Russia. That in their early beginnings trade unions were of great importance for the proletarian class struggle is a generally accepted fact. The trade unions in Russia were young and they justified Lenin's enthusiasm. However, the situation was different in other parts of the world. Useful and progressive in their beginnings, the trade unions in the older capitalistic countries had turned into obstacles in the way of the liberation of the workers. They had turned into instruments of counter revolution, and the German left drew its conclusions from this changed situation.

Lenin himself could not help declaring that in the course of time there had developed a layer of a "strictly trade-unionist, imperialistic orientated, arrogant, vain, sterile, egotistical, petty-bourgeois, bribed, and demoralized aristocracy of labor." This guild of corruption, this gangster leadership, today rules the world trade union movement and lives on the back of the workers. It was of this trade union movement that the ultra-left was speaking when it demanded that the workers should desert it. Lenin, however, demagogically answered by pointing to the young trade union movement in Russia which did not as yet share the character of the long established unions in other countries. Employing a specific experience at a given period and under particular circumstance, he thought it possible to draw from it conclusions of world-wide application. The revolutionist, he argued, must always be where the masses are. But in reality where are the masses? In trade union offices? At membership meetings? At the secret meetings of the leadership with capitalistic representatives? No, the masses are in the factories, in their working places; and there it is necessary to effect their cooperation and strengthen their solidarity. The factory organization, the council system, is the real organization of the revolution, which must replace all parties and trade unions.

In factory organizations there is no room for professional leadership, no divorce of leaders from followers, no caste distinction between intellectuals and the rank and file, no ground for egotism, competition, demoralization, corruption, sterility and philistinism. Here the workers must take their lot in their own hands.

But Lenin thought otherwise. He wanted to preserve the unions; to change them from within; to remove the social democratic officials and replace them with bolshevik officials; to replace a bad with a good bureaucracy. The bad one grows in social democracy; the good one in Bolshevism.

Twenty years of experience meanwhile have demonstrated the idiocy of such a concept. Following Lenin's advice, the Communists have tried all and sundry methods to reform trade unions. The result was nil. The attempt to form their own trade unions was likewise nil. The competition between social democratic and bolshevik trade union work was a competition in corruption. The revolutionary energies of the workers were exhausted in this

very process. Instead of concentrating upon the struggle against fascism, the workers were engaged in a senseless and resultless experimentation in the interest of diverse bureaucracies. The masses lost confidence in themselves and in "their" organizations. They felt themselves cheated and betrayed. The methods of fascism, to dictate each step of the workers, to hinder the awakening of self-initiative, to sabotage all beginnings of class-consciousness, to demoralize the masses through innumerable defeats and to make them impotent, — all these methods had already been developed in the twenty years of work in trade unions in accordance with bolshevik principles. The victory of fascism was such an easy one because the labor leaders in trade unions and parties had prepared for them the human material capable of being fitted into the fascistic scheme of things.

V.

On the question of parliamentarianism, too, Lenin appears in the role of the defender of a decayed political institution which had become a hindrance for further political development and a danger to the proletarian emancipation. The ultra-lefts fought parliamentarianism in all its forms. They refused to participate in elections and did not respect parliamentary decisions. Lenin, however, put much effort into parliamentary activities and attached much importance to them. The ultra-left declared parliamentarianism historically passe even as a tribune for agitation, and saw in it no more than a continuous source of political corruption for both parliamentarian and workers. It dulled the revolutionary awareness and consistency of the masses by creating illusions of legalistic reforms, and on critical occasions the parliament turned into a weapon of counter-revolution. It had to be destroyed, or, where nothing else was possible, sabotaged. The parliamentary tradition, still playing a part in proletarian consciousness, was to be fought.

To achieve the opposite effect, Lenin operated with the trick of making a distinction between the historically and politically passe institutions. Certainly, he argued, parliamentarianism was historically obsolete, but this was not the case politically, and one would have to reckon with it. One would have to participate because it still played a part politically.

What an argument! Capitalism, too, is only historically and not politically obsolete. According to Lenin's logic, it is then not possible to fight capitalism in a revolutionary manner. Rather a compromise would have to be found. Opportunism, bargaining, political horse-trading, — that would be the consequence of Lenin's tactic. The monarchy, too, is only historically but not politically surpassed. According to Lenin, the workers would have no right to do away with it but would be obliged to find a compromise solution. The same story would be true as regards the church, also only historically but not politically antedated. Furthermore, the people belong in great masses to the church. As a revolutionist, Lenin pointed out, that one had to be where the masses are. Consistency would force him to say "Enter the Church; it is your revolutionary duty!" Finally, there is fascism. One day, too, fascism will be historically antedated but politically still in existence. What is then

to be done? To accept the fact and to make a compromise with fascism. According to Lenin's reasoning, a pact between Stalin and Hitler would only illustrate that Stalin actually is the best disciple of Lenin. And it will not at all be surprising if in the near future the bolshevist agents will hail the pact between Moscow and Berlin as the only real revolutionary tactic.

Lenin's position on the question of parliamentarianism is only an additional illustration of his incapacity to understand the essential needs and characteristics of the proletarian revolution. His revolution is entirely bourgeois; it is a struggle for the majority, for governmental positions, for a hold upon the law machine. He actually thought it of importance to gain as many votes as possible at election campaigns, to have a strong bolshevik fraction in the parliaments, to help determine form and content of legislation, to take part in political rule. He did not notice at all that today parliamentarianism is a mere bluff, an empty make-believe, and that the real power of bourgeois society rests in entirely different places; that despite all possible parliamentary defeats the bourgeoisie would still have at hand sufficient means to assert its will and interest in non-parliamentary fields. Lenin did not see the demoralizing effects parliamentarianism had upon the masses, he did not notice the poisoning of public morals through parliamentary corruption. Bribed, bought, and cowed, parliamentary politicians were fearful for their income. There was a time in prefascist Germany when the reactionists in parliament were able to pass any desired law merely by threatening to bring about the dissolution of parliament. There was nothing more terrible to the parliamentary politicians than such a threat which implied the end of their easy incomes. To avoid such an end, they would say yes to anything. And how is it today in Germany, in Russia, in Italy? The parliamentary helots are without opinions, without will, and are nothing more than willing servants of their fascist masters.

There can be no question that parliamentarianism is entirely degenerated and corrupt. But, why didn't the proletariat stop this deterioration of a political instrument which once had been used for their purposes? To end parliamentarianism by one heroic revolutionary act would have been far more useful and educational for the proletarian consciousness than the miserable theatre in which parliamentarianism has ended in the fascistic society. But such an attitude was entirely foreign to Lenin, as it is foreign today to Stalin. Lenin was not concerned with the freedom of the workers from their mental and physical slavery; he was not bothered by the false consciousness of the masses and their human self-alienation. The whole problem to him was nothing more nor less than a problem of power. Like a bourgeois, he thought in terms of gains and losses, more or less, credit and debit; and all his business-like computations deal only with external things: membership figures, number of votes, seats in the parliaments, control positions. His materialism is a bourgeois materialism, dealing with mechanisms, not with human beings. He is not really able to think in socio-historical terms. Parliament to him is parliament; an abstract concept in a vacuum, holding equal meaning in all nations, at all times. Certainly he acknowledges that parliamentarism passes

through different stages, and he points this out in his discussions, but he does not use his own knowledge in his theory and practice. In his pro-parliamentarian polemics he hides behind the early capitalist parliaments in the ascending stage of capitalism, in order not to run out of arguments. And if he attacks the old parliaments, it is from the vantage point of the young and long outmoded. In short, he decides that politics is the art of the possible. However, politics for the workers is the art of revolution.

VI.

It remains to deal with Lenin's position on the question of compromises. During the World War the German Social Democracy sold out to the bourgeoisie. Nevertheless, much against its will, it inherited the German revolution. This was made possible to a large extent by the help of Russia, which did its share in killing off the German council movement. The power which had fallen into the lap of Social Democracy was used for nothing. The Social Democracy simply renewed its old class collaboration policy, satisfied with sharing power over the workers with the bourgeoisie in the reconstruction period of capitalism. The German radical workers countered this betrayal with the slogan, "No compromise with the counter revolution." Here was a concrete case, a specific situation, demanding a clear decision. Lenin, unable to recognize the real issues at stake, made from this concrete specific question a general problem. With the air of a general and the infallibility of a cardinal, he tried to persuade the ultra-lefts that compromises with political opponents under all conditions are a revolutionary duty. If today one reads those passages in Lenin's pamphlet dealing with compromises, one is inclined to compare Lenin's remarks in 1920 with Stalin's present policy of compromises. There is not one deadly sin of bolshevik theory which did not become bolshevistic reality under Stalin.

According to Lenin, the ultra-lefts should have been willing to sign the Treaty of Versailles. However, the Communist Party, still in accordance with Lenin, made a compromise and protested against the Versailles Treaty in collaboration with the Hitlerites. The "National Bolshevism" propagandized in 1919 in Germany by the left-winger Lauffenberg was in Lenin's opinion "an absurdity crying to heaven." But Radek and the Communist Party — again in accordance with Lenin's principle — concluded a compromise with German Nationalism, and protested against the occupation of the Ruhr basin and celebrated the national hero Schlageter. The League of Nations was, in Lenin's own words, "a band of capitalist robbers and bandits," whom the workers could fight only to the bitter end. However, Stalin — in accordance with Lenin's tactics — made a compromise with these very same bandits, and the U. S. S. R. entered the League. The concept "folk" or "People" is in Lenin's opinion a criminal concession to the counter-revolutionary ideology of the petty bourgeoisie. This did not hinder the Leninists, Stalin and Dimitrov, from making a compromise with the petty bourgeoisie in order to launch the freakish "Peoples Front" movement. For Lenin, imperialism was the greatest enemy of the world proletariat, and against it all forces had to be

mobilized. But Stalin, again in true Leninistic fashion, is quite busy with cooking up an alliance with Hitler's imperialism. Is it necessary to offer more examples? Historical experience teaches that all compromises between revolution and counter-revolution can serve only the latter. They lead only to the bankruptcy of the revolutionary movement. All policy of compromise is a policy of bankruptcy. What began as a mere compromise with the German Social Democracy found its end in Hitler. What Lenin justified as a necessary compromise found its end in Stalin. In diagnosing revolutionary non-compromise as "An Infantile Disease of Communism," Lenin was suffering from the oldage disease of opportunism, of pseudo-communism.

VII.

If one looks with critical eyes at the picture of bolshevism provided by Lenin's pamphlet, the following main points may be recognized as characteristics of bolshevism:

1. Bolshevism is a nationalistic doctrine. Originally and essentially conceived to solve a national problem, it was later elevated to a theory and practice of international scope and to a general doctrine. Its nationalistic character comes to light also in its position on the struggle for national independence of suppressed nations.

2. Bolshevism is an authoritarian system. The peak of the social pyramid is the most important and determining point. Authority is realized in the all-powerful person. In the leader myth the bourgeois personality ideal celebrates its highest triumphs.

3. Organizationally, Bolshevism is highly centralistic. The central committee has responsibility for all initiative, leadership, instruction, commands. As in the bourgeois state, the leading members of the organization play the role of the bourgeoisie; the sole role of the workers is to obey orders.

4. Bolshevism represents a militant power policy. Exclusively interested in political power, it is no different from the forms of rule in the traditional bourgeois sense. Even in the organization proper there is no self-determination by the members. The army serves the party as the great example of organization.

5. Bolshevism is dictatorship. Working with brute force and terroristic measures, it directs all its functions toward the suppression of all non-bolshevik institutions and opinions. Its "dictatorship of the proletariat" is the dictatorship of a bureaucracy or a single person.

6. Bolshevism is a mechanistic method. It aspires to the automatic coordination, the technically secured conformity, and the most efficient totalitarianism as a goal of social order. The centralistically "planned" economy consciously confuses technical-organizational problems with socio-economic questions.

7. The social structure of Bolshevism is of a bourgeois nature. It does not abolish the wage system and refuses proletarian self-determination over the products of labor. It remains therewith fundamentally within the class frame of the bourgeois social order. Capitalism is perpetuated.

8. Bolshevism is a revolutionary element only in the frame of the

bourgeois revolution. Unable to realize the soviet system, it is thereby unable to transform essentially the structure of bourgeois society and its economy. It establishes not socialism but state capitalism.

9. Bolshevism is not a bridge leading eventually into the socialist society. Without the soviet system, without the total radical revolution of men and things, it cannot fulfill the most essential of all socialistic demands, which is to end the capitalist human-self-alienation. It represents the last stage of bourgeois society and not the first step towards a new society.

These nine points represent an unbridgeable opposition between bolshevism and socialism. They demonstrate with all necessary clarity the bourgeois character of the bolshevik movement and its close relationship to fascism. Nationalism, authoritarianism, centralism, leader dictatorship, power policies, terror-rule, mechanistic dynamics, inability to socialize — all these essential characteristics of fascism were and are existing in bolshevism. Fascism is merely a copy of bolshevism. For this reason the struggle against the one must begin with the struggle against the other.

BOOK REVIEWS

World Communism. A History of the Communist International. By F. Borkenau. W. W. Norton & Co. New York 1939 (442 pp.; \$3.75.)

Besides being an excellent history of the Communist International (C. I.), Borkenau's book reflects the disillusionment of increasing numbers of intellectuals with the Marxian expectation of a proletarian revolution. Here the author points out that Marx misread the future, and that the Russian Revolution, only apparently proletarian, can only confirm that "the idea of the proletariat opposing, victoriously, all other classes of a complex modern society is a fantastic one." It is utopian to see in the proletariat the leading element in the upheavals of our time. In Russia, "it was not the proletariat, but a quasi-religious order of professional revolutionaries of the intelligentsia which took the lead, with the help of the peasants, the peasant soldiers, and the workers. In Borkenau's opinion not communism but fascism is on the order of the day, unless a policy of class collaboration, co-operation, and compromise is adopted in favor of a progressive and evolutionary democracy.

It is true that Marx's prediction as to the polarization of society into two essential classes has not as yet

run its full course. But Borkenau does not bother to criticize the basis of Marx's prediction, the theory of capitalist development, but simply accepts the apparent contradiction of present-day political phenomena with those predictions. However, a realistic analysis of the positions of the various classes in their relation to the possession or control of the means of production and political power will show that the process of the polarization of society into two essential classes is not only still continuing, but, by way of fascism and bolshevism, continuing in an accelerated manner. As superficial as Borkenau's critique of Marx, are the consequences he draws from his mistaking appearances for reality. To posit as the alternative to fascism a "progressive and evolutionary democracy" and nothing else, means, in practical matters, no more than to serve the ideological "anti-fascism" of some imperialistic nations as against the imperialism of the fascist countries. What today is "progressive and evolutionary" in bourgeois democracy is exactly that which is an essential part of fascism.

Furthermore, it is not a political form of government which will determine the future action of men, but the further disintegration of the capitalist economic system, and that can be stopped neither democratically nor fascistically.

However, these ideas of Borkenau do not detract from the main theme of his work. The history of the C. I. he divides into three distinct periods. "During the first period the Comintern is mainly an instrument to bring about revolution. During the second period it is mainly an instrument in the Russian factional struggle. During the third period it is mainly an instrument of Russian foreign policy." Its whole history proves to Borkenau, "the complete unfitness of international Bolshevism. The author illustrates the bourgeois character of the Russian Revolution and its party, with descriptions of the bolshevik organization and its tactics. He deals with the Hungarian "soviet" regime, the German revolution, the Chinese revolution, and the many events of the diverse labor movements of various countries. He does not distinguish between the different bolshevik factions, who differ only on unessentials, but he makes clear the wide gap dividing the Russian and the Western labor movement. In opposing Lenin's position to that of Rosa Luxemburg, he makes clear that the problems of the proletariat are others than those visualized by the Bolsheviks. The world revolution has failed because of the historical immaturity for such a change. The bolshevistic world revolutionary attempts he finds only ridiculous.

Because of the author's previous political attitude (he was a member of the Communist Party), and his present position, it is natural that, despite all his criticism of bolshevism, he should still defend it not against the right, but against the left. The Western European "ultra-lefts" who even in 1920 were able to predict the course of the C. I., are even now in retrospect looked upon by Borkenau as the "crazy fringe" of the left labor movement. This is somehow surprising, since he himself is forced to acknowledge that the views of the "ultra-lefts" concerning

the difficulties facing the proletarian revolution in the West were "infinitely nearer to the facts than Lenin's belief that only a revolutionary party using appropriate tactics is needed in order to reach the goal." From the position that the working class is neither able nor willing to make its revolution, Borkenau rejects the bolshevik idea that the history of the failures of communism is a history of betrayals. The concept of "betrayals" Borkenau sees as a consequence of the Bolshevist Party structure and tactic, which always require a scape-goat in the event of failure, as well as for purposes of party control. Though this is undoubtedly true it is still incorrect to reject political betrayals altogether. Borkenau goes even so far as to declare that had "all the socialist leaders (of Germany) sided with the revolutionaries the majority of the proletariat would simply have left them for some moderate party." This is contrary to all the facts. The socialist leaders could maintain control over the broad masses occasionally only by proclaiming that socialism was to be realized. Too often socialist and communist leaders and organizations placed themselves at the head of a workers' movement in order to break it. Though it is true that the German fiasco cannot be explained solely by betrayal, it is incorrect to deny that the actual betrayals considerably influenced the course of events. The masses were not non-socialistic; they were without self-initiative because of their previous education; and they unfortunately left the decision to their leaders in the conviction that these leaders would best know how to improve their conditions. This belief of the masses may show inexperience but certainly not an absolutely conservative attitude.

Despite its many shortcomings, of which only a few are mentioned here, the book is nevertheless an important asset to the understanding of recent labor history. Because of its many qualities, which we must let the reader find for himself, it will better serve the purposes of the "crazy fringe" of the left labor movement than the present political attitude of its author.

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