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THE BOLSHEVIZATION
OF THE
COMMUNIST MOVEMENT

THE BOLSHEVIZATION
OF THE
COMMUNIST MOVEMENT
AN INQUIRY
INTO THE DEVELOPMENT OF LENINISM
IN CONTRADICTION WITH
SOCIAL-DEMOCRATIC TRADITIONS

By

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Preface

Since the dawn of its existence, the workers' movement has faced one cardinal question; the question of power. The history of capitalism has been the history of the struggle between bourgeois and proletarian for power. This thesis seeks to address that question.

The central aspect of the thesis will be the problem of organization. This problem is the very heart of the class struggle, the principal lever in the proletariat's battle for hegemony.

This thesis will concern the development of the organizational question from Marx and Engels through Bolshevism to the Communist International. The crucial moment in this contention for organization is the creation of the Communist International (Comintern or C.I.) and its struggle to reorient the member sections in accordance with its Bolshevization programme. The thesis will devote the greatest portion of its attention to this. The "moment" is not chosen gratuitously; it represents the most determined and indeed the summit of the attempts of the Comintern, and its Executive Committee (E.C.C.I.), to mould its sections into revolutionary vanguard organizations of the proletariat. Consequently, all the major contra-

dictions facing a Marxist-Leninist movement can be seen in bold relief in this historical nexus.

The designation of the component Parties of the Comintern as sections (a designation which the E.C.C.I. pointedly made at the beginning of all its correspondence with the Parties) is not simply formal. It underlines the fact that the national Parties did not operate in vacuo; but were, at least potentially and theoretically, parts of an organized international movement and subordinate to the international leadership. The events of this period can only be seriously evaluated in the light of Lenin's historic interpolation - the Bolshevik theory of the Party.

The thesis must, of necessity, begin with the historical/theoretical processes grounding the Leninist theory of the Party, i.e. the elaboration of the science of class struggle/proletarian revolution in the face of (bourgeois) distortions. The territory on which this battle achieves its sharpest definition, is the home ground of the proletariat -- the socialist movement of the working class. The period 1848 - 1928¹ will be seen as a period of acute and continuous struggle against the fifth column

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¹The period from the penning of the "Communist Manifesto", to the elaboration of the "Programme of the Communist International".

in the workers movement - revisionism, with its logical conclusion -- the liquidation of the Communist Party.² In this struggle, Marx and Engels provided the objective framework for the development of the class struggle -- the leadership of the proletariat, through proletarian dictatorship to Communism. It remained for Lenin, and subsequently Stalin, to provide the subjective framework, the vehicle for the revolutionization of society.-the workers' vanguard party.

The thesis will be structured as follows. Firstly, an outline will be given of the theoretical and practical groundwork for Leninism, in the works of Marx, Engels and Lenin, and in the maturation of the proletariat movement through to the October Revolution. Secondly, the development of the European Revolution, 1919 - 1923, will be examined. Finally, the interrelationship of the Russian

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²I intend to make use of the lexicon of the Communist International, as it lucidly expresses class categories. Precision is crucial. Lenin was adamant about the significance of precision, or "shades of meaning": "only shortsighted people can consider...a strict differentiation between shades of meaning inopportune or superfluous. The fate of Russian Social-Democracy for many years to come may depend on the strengthening of one of the other 'shade'" - "What is to be done" in V. I. Lenin Selected Works Vol. 2. (London, Martin Lawrence, 1934?). pp. 47-48.

Revisionism signifies the attempt to revise Marxism in a bourgeois spirit, i.e. to replace class struggle with class collaboration. Liquidationism signifies the tendency to negate the vanguard role of a revolutionary party - and thus "liquidate" or dissolve the party and the revolution.

and European Revolution will be considered; together with the intervention of the Communist International in the revolutionary process. The Communist International will be studied, in its attempt to propagate the lessons of the proletarian revolution which had been assimilated by the Bolsheviks.

During the opening period of the 20th. century, the process of uneven development characteristic of capitalism had temporarily placed the Russian proletariat in the van of the world revolution. Thus the necessity for active guidance in the promotion of this revolution devolved upon the Soviet proletariat. As an international extension of the organizational form so successful in Russia, the Communist International was founded in 1919. This period forms the framework for the first chapter.

Given that dialectical processes, specifically class struggles, operate in every sphere of society;³ the struggle between bourgeoisie and proletariat was bound to find its reflection within the Comintern (as indeed had occurred in every previous proletarian organization). The

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³On dialectics, see J. V. Stalin, "Dialectical and Historical Materialism" in "History of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union (Bolsheviks), Short Course". (New York, International Publishers, 1939). pp. 105-132.

struggle for the Bolshevization of Comintern, is an integral part of this internal class contention. The developments in the C.I., 1919-28, will then, be examined as an aspect of the continuing international struggle.

CHAPTER I

THE HISTORY OF ALL HITHERTO EXISTING SOCIETY ...

This analysis has a logical starting point, the class struggle. Although history is powered by a complex constellation of antagonisms, Marxists have long held that the principle antagonism, the ultimate social determinant, is the class struggle. Thus "the history of all hitherto existing society is the history of class struggles"⁴ and thus the centrality of the concept of class struggle, in all Marxist works, as the motor of history.

This recognition charges those who have made it with the task of elaborating a tendential analysis/prognosis of the conditions of the struggle. That is, the crucial question becomes - What are the immanent tendencies in the contemporary class struggle?

In order to further this discussion, it is necessary to provide the question with some logical antecedents. (1) What are classes? (2) What are their interconnections, interrelations? and (3) What is the material basis of the class struggle?

The first two questions may be logically collapsed,

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⁴K. Marx, F. Engels, "Selected Works, Vol. 1." (Moscow, Progress Publishers, 1973). p. 108.

i.e. the existence of classes implies antagonistic class relations, class struggle. The fact of "class" as a social entity which can be (both conceptually and actually) isolated indicates a structure in contradiction. Indeed the fact of "class" presupposes the fact that society is riven into contentious classes.

"...We cannot have two distinct classes, each with an independent being, and then bring them into relationship with each other. We cannot have love without lovers, nor deference without squires and labourers. And class happens when some men, as a result of common experiences (inherited or shared), feel and articulate the identity of their interests as between themselves, and as against other men whose interests are different from (and usually opposed to) theirs."⁵

Thereby in defining class one defines a dynamic contradiction. This point requires clarification. Take Lenin's definition of class:

"Classes are large groups of people which differ from each other by the place they occupy in a historically definite system of social production, by their relation (in most cases fixed and formulated in laws) to the means of production, by their role in the social organization of labour, and, consequently, by the dimensions and method of acquiring the share of social wealth that they obtain. Classes are groups of people one of which may appropriate the labour of another owing to the different places they occupy in the definite system of social economy."⁶

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⁵ E. P. Thompson, "The Making of the English Working Class". (Harmondsworth, Penguin Books, 1968). pp. 9-10.

⁶ V. I. Lenin, "Selected Works, Vol. 9.". (London, Martin Lawrence, 1936). pp. 432-433.

These classes thus exist relative to the means of production in a given social formation. This definition provides classes with a firm material basis - not in derivative terms such as income, status, etc., but in terms of their levels in definite systems of social economy. However, the material grounding of the class structure is itself a structure in flux, in contradiction. The material forces of production, and the corresponding social relations of production are in conflict. Althusser points out that "the contradiction between the forces of production and the relations of production is essentially embodied in the contradiction between two antagonistic classes."⁷

It remains for Marx to delineate the historic and dynamic nature of the forces/relations conflict:

In the social production of their life, men enter into definite relations that are indispensable and independent of their will, relations of production which correspond to a definite stage of development of their material productive forces. The sum total of these relations of production constitutes the economic structure of society, the real foundation, on which rises a legal and political superstructure and to which correspond definite forms of social consciousness. The mode of production of material life conditions the social, political and intellectual life process in general. It is not the consciousness of men that determines their being, but, on the contrary, their social being that determines their consciousness.

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⁷L. Althusser, "Contradiction and Overdetermination" in "For Marx". (New York, Vintage Press, 1970). p. 99.

At a certain stage of their development, the material productive forces of society come in conflict with the existing relations of production, or -- what is but a legal expression for the same thing -- with the property relations within which they have been at work hitherto. From forms of development of the productive forces these relations turn into their fetters. Then begins an epoch of social revolution. With the change of the economic foundation the entire immense superstructure is more or less rapidly transformed.⁸

In capitalist society, the human agents who embody the conflict in the economic base (i.e. the forces and relations of production) are the bourgeoisie and the proletariat. The bourgeoisie are "the class of modern capitalists, owners of the means of social production and employers of wage labour" and the proletariat, "who, having no means of production of their own are reduced to selling their labour-power in order to live."⁹

In what manner does the struggle in the economic base express itself in contemporary class conflict? Social production under capitalism is, in its essence, truly social. In opposition to previous social economies, which existed by virtue of small scale individual/family production, capitalism gathers masses of people together and necessarily intertwines them in factory production; "mass production".

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⁸ K. Marx, "Preface" to "A Contribution to the Critique of Political Economy" in K. Marx, F. Engels, op. cit. pp. 503-504.

⁹ "Manifesto" in Ibid. p. 108.

The "rub", however, is this--the production of commodities, use-values, under this system is not regulated by the capacities inherent in the forces of social production. On the contrary, it is determined by the imperatives of capitalist productive relations--the accumulation of capital or (and which is the same thing) the extortion of surplus value from the proletariat. Use-values are not produced qua use-values, but inasmuch as they embody exchange value.¹⁰ The antagonistic nature of the contradiction between the socialized nature of the productive process and the appropriation of the product through capital finds clear expression in productive crises. These crises illustrate the extent to which capitalist social relations act as a brake on the development of the productive forces. They also engender crises in ideological and political planes which consist of internal and external disjunctions in the power relations of the ruling classes: that is, leadership conflicts, civil wars, international wars, etc. The entire system is thrown into disarray.

"Modern bourgeois society with its relations of production, of exchange and of property, a society that has conjured up such gigantic means of production and of exchange, is like the sorcerer, who is no longer able to control the

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¹⁰ See K. Marx, "Capital Vol. 1." (New York, International Publishers, 1970). pp. 35-93.

powers of the nether world whome he has called up by his spells. For many a decade past the history of industry and commerce is but the history of the revolt of modern productive forces against modern conditions of production, against the property relations that are the conditions for the existence of the bourgeoisie and of its rule." ¹¹

The first phenomenal, human, form of this conflict as a distinct class conflict occurs at the location where capital and labour meet - the point of production.

It is at this point where the struggle over the disposal of surplus value occurs. As described in Capital I this contention manifests itself in terms of struggles over "bread and butter" issues such as the length of the working day, wages, working conditions, etc. This dispute, then, strikes at the very nerve centre of the productive relations of capital, which rest on capital's continued despotism in the extortion of surplus value/surplus labour.

Given these fundamentals, Marx set about analysing the means by which the productive forces set in motion by capital could be unfettered -- how the social revolution was to appear.

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¹¹ "Manifesto" in op.cit. p. 113.

BOURGEOIS AND PROLETARIANS

Following closely on the heels of the bourgeois conquest of political power in France and England in 1830, the class struggle "practically as well as theoretically took on more and more outspoken and threatening forms."¹² The productive crisis of 1825 had opened, for capital, "the periodic cycle of its modern life."¹³ The "workers of the world" struggled for unionization, for suffrage, for the 10 hour day, and at times, such as the 1839 Blanquist revolt in Paris, even challenged the political supremacy of the bourgeoisie.

In 1847, in London, remnants of various continental associations of revolutionaries in exile coalesced to form the Communist League. This League commissioned Marx and Engels to draft its Manifesto which would set out clearly the historic aims of the proletariat in programmatic form. The ensuing document "The Manifesto of the Communist Party" was "the first revolutionary programme of the world's workers."¹⁴

Using the "clue which enables us to discover the reign of law in this seeming labyrinth and chaos: the theory of the class struggle",¹⁵ the Manifesto reasoned that the

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¹² Capital I. p. 15.

¹³ Ibid. p. 14.

¹⁴ W. Z. Foster, "History of the Three Internationals". (New York, International Publishers, 1955). p. 26.

¹⁵ V.I. Lenin, "Marx-Engels-Marxism". (New York, International Publishers, 1935). p. 13.

proletariat was the only revolutionary class in present society, that it alone could undertake the total transformation of social relations, and that in order to achieve this end, workers had to wield political power.

By virtue of the fact that the proletariat is the animator of social production and has no property interests tying it to the present productive system, it alone is capable of carrying the socialization of the productive forces through to its logical conclusion - communism. The proletariat alone is forced into struggles against capital which threaten capital's very raison d'etre in the process of accumulation. From the first times in which the workers strain at the "golden chain which they have wrought for themselves" in terms of strikes, etc., to their more overtly political battles - suffrage, the passage of Factory Acts, etc.; the detachments of the working class gradually cohere to the point where they close ranks in a class formation to "storm the very heavens" -- to seize power.

It must be noted here that the two levels of power - political and economic, intermingle and thus the apparent paradox -- if political power (in the form of the state) is the repository of economic power, the polity must be revolutionized in order to revolutionize the economy. As the economy is characterized by the despotic rule of capital,

the coequation of the spheres of the polity and the economy signifies simply that the state is the expression of the capitalist class' dictatorship. This dictatorship is manifest on two levels: (a) the state is empowered with the legitimate use of forceful coercion and (b) the state legitimizes the existing class structure ideologically, by maintaining, in Gramsci's phrase, the hegemony of the ruling class. The executive of modern state, in the words of the Manifesto is nothing but "a committee for managing the common affairs of the bourgeoisie."¹⁶ The famous tag

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¹⁶ Manifesto, in op. cit., p. 110. On the question of the the State, the seminal works (other than the Manifesto) are Engels' "Origin of the Family, Private Property and the State" (Selected Works 3, pp. 191-337). K. Marx, "Critique of the other Programme" (Ibid., pp. 13-31), and especially V. I. Lenin, "The State and Revolution" (Peking, FLPH, 1967). The central Marxist doctrine on the State, is that the state as a political form arose with the genesis of contending classes, and is the tangible expression of the domination of one class. Thereby as socialism abolishes classes, the state "withers away". Incidentally, it strikes me that modern debates on the State such as the (in-) famous Miliband-Poulantzas debate, miss the main point in their attempt to elaborate the formal mechanism of the state-form of class rule. (On that, see R. Miliband "The State in Capitalist Society" (London, NLB, 1970); N. Poulantzas, "Political Power and Social Classes" (London, NLB, 1975). This may be due to the progressiveedulcoration if the class concept of the state since Dmitrov's 1935 Popular Front formulation, and Mao's "New Democracy" revisionism - which ignored the concept of the state as a class dictatorship.

expressing the class content of the revolutionary proletarian state is "the dictatorship of the proletariat".¹⁷

In an understated letter to Weydemeyer in 1852, Marx mentions that his discovery of the inexorability of the transition to the dictatorship of the proletariat is one of the few real novelties in his research:

"And now as to myself, no credit is due to me for discovering the existence of classes in modern society or the struggle between them. Long before me bourgeois historians had described the historical development of this class struggle and bourgeois economists the economic anatomy of the classes. What I did that was new was to prove: 1) that the existence of classes is only bound up with particular historical phases in the development of production, 2) that the class struggle necessarily leads to the dictatorship of the proletariat, 3) that this dictatorship itself only constitutes the transition to the abolition of all classes and to a classless society."¹⁸

Lenin followed this up by using the acceptance of the dictatorship of the proletariat as one of the points of demarcation by which a Marxist was to be defined:

"The theory of the class struggle was not created by Marx, but by the bourgeoisie before Marx, and generally speaking it is acceptable to the bourgeoisie.... To limit Marxism to the theory of the class struggle means curtailing Marxism, distorting it... A Marxist is one who extends the acceptance of the class struggle to the acceptance of the dictatorship of the proletariat".¹⁹

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¹⁷The term originated with Blanqui - and in the Class Struggles of 1848-1850, French proletarians used it as a slogan, in graffiti, etc. See, K. Marx "The Class Struggles in France" in Selected Works I, pp. 186-300.

¹⁸K. Marx, F. Engels, "Selected Correspondence". (Moscow, Progress Books, 1965). p. 69.

Subsequent battles in the Communist League, and in the First International pivoted about the question of proletarian dictatorship. Marx and Engels fought for this principle against tendencies such as the Proudhonists who proposed a proto-fascist method of state organization representing and ameliorating the interests of all classes; the Bakuninists who proposed to disarm the workers at the moment of revolution by negating any state form and the Lassalleans, who had a liberal conception of the state as an entity independent of classes.

One of the sharpest battles was enjoined following the demise of the 1871 Paris Commune and the publication of Marx's "Civil War in France."²⁰ Until the Commune, Marx and Engels had been able to formulate the demand for the proletarian dictatorship, but had not been able to clearly adumbrate the objective mechanism for the realization of this state-form. The Paris Commune, as the world's first workers' dictatorship, provided the key; "the working class cannot simply lay hold of the ready-made state for its own purposes."²¹ -- i.e. the bourgeois state could not be

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¹⁹ Quoted in L. H. Gould, "Marxist Glossary". (San Francisco, Proletarian Publishers, 1974). p. 22.

²⁰ "Selected Works 2". pp. 178-245.

simply appropriated - it had to be smashed. In the face of the revolutionary support for the Commune within the International, and the hysterical press campaign of denunciation which was stirred up, opportunist labour "misleaders"²² in Britain abandoned the International and anarchists began fomenting factional disruptions. The heterogeneity of the IWA prepared the ground for its disintegration when confronted by a revolutionary situation. It was, in Engel's words, a "naive conjunction of all factions".

The intensity of the struggles between Marxists and opportunists did not abate with the dissolution of the IWA. The workers organizations which formed in the wake of the International, and eventually grouped around the German Social Democratic Party (SDP), in the Second International (1889) were, in the main, unable to assimilate the core imperatives of Marxism - the necessity for smashing the bourgeois state and the establishment of the dictatorship of the proletariat.

This may be explained as follows - there was a chink in the armour of Marxism which facilitated the entry

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²¹ K. Marx, F. Engels, "Preface to the German Edition of the Communist Manifesto in 1872" in "Selected Works I", p. 99. The significance of the inclusion of this sentence in the Preface to the Manifesto, lay in the fact that this was the major political point which Marx and Engels felt it was necessary to change. They mention that the formulation in the Manifesto had "become antiquated".

of foreign (class) elements into the workers parties. No clear organized body of theory existed on the subjective mechanism - the organizational forms necessary for the achievement of socialism. Therefore the organizations which did exist were prone to the resultant disease - reformism/revisionism.

Marx and Engels were provoked to quite "violent"²³ expostulations against revisionism in addresses to the German SPD such as: the Critique of the Gotha Programme, in 1875, the Circular Letter to Bebel, Liebknecht, Bracke and others in 1879, the Critique of the Erfurt Programme, in 1891, and in numerous personal letters.

In reply to the Gotha Programme's demand for the "free basis of the state", Marx writes:

"Between capitalist and communist society lies the period of the revolutionary transformation of the one into the other. Corresponding to this is also a political transition period in which the state can be nothing but the revolutionary dictatorship of the proletariat."²⁴

Marx and Engels attack the degeneracy of the SPD in the circular letter:

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²²The term is W. Z. Foster's, used in his book, "Misleaders of Labor". (New York, International Publishers, 1930). To describe the reformists and labour aristocrats who had arisen in the ranks of the workers.

²³The term is Engels' and is used in his Forward to Marx's "Critique of the Gotha Programme". ("Selected Works 3", pp. 9-31). To express his, and Marx's disgust at the "retrograde step manifested by this draft programme." p. 9.

²⁴"Selected Works 3", p. 26.

"The people who came out as bourgeois democrats in 1848 could just as well call themselves Social-Democrats now. To the former the democratic republic was as unattainably remote as the overthrow of the capitalist system is to the latter, and therefore is of absolutely no importance in present day practical politics; one can mediate, compromise and philanthropise to one's heart's content. It is just the same with the class struggle between proletariat and bourgeoisie. It is recognized on paper because its existence can no longer be denied, but in practice it is hushed up, diluted, attenuated." 25

In addition to mentioning that the Erfurt programme neglected the proletarian dictatorship, Engels criticized the SPD's opportunism:

"In the long run such a policy can only lead one's own Party astray. ... What can result from this except that at the decisive moment the Party suddenly proves helpless and that uncertainty and discord on the most decisive issues reign in it because these issues have never been discussed?...

This forgetting of the great, the principal considerations for the momentary interests of the day, this struggling and striving for the success of the moment regardless of later consequences, this sacrifice of the future of the movement for its present, may be "honestly" meant, but it is and remains opportunism, and "honest" opportunism is perhaps the most dangerous of all!" 26

Marx's and Engels' remonstrations were to no (immediate) avail. In fact, the SDP leadership suppressed the Critique of the Gotha Programme, held back the Critique

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²⁵ "Selected Correspondence", p. 325.

²⁶ "Selected Works 3", pp. 434-435.

of the Erfurt Programme for ten years, and adulterated Engels' 1895 Preface to "The Class Struggles in France" (removing its most revolutionary passages). The effect of the censorship wrought on Engels' "Preface", was to completely reverse its meaning.

The opportunist degeneration of the SDP was expressed in Bernstein's classic revisionist formulation "the movement is everything, the aim, nothing". The Party emphasized gradualist demands, but was not even willing to fight resolutely for these. For example, when the question of the general strike as an anti-war tactic was raised at International Congresses, the general strike itself was in principle condemned. This opportunism gradually congealed into "social-chauvinism" -- "socialism in words, chauvinism in deeds"²⁷ as the various sectors of the 2nd. International called for workers to rally to the defense of "their" fatherlands, "their" bourgeoisies, in the eventuality of war.

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²⁷The formulation is Lenin's, and he used it to brand the 2nd. International leadership which supported "its" nations in the First World War.

PROLETARIANS AND COMMUNISTS

One of the earliest (and clearest) examples of the revisionist bacterium to be isolated, was diagnosed by Lenin in Russia in the opening years of the 20th. Century. (As I intend to show later, Russia had a peculiar proclivity towards producing strains in the workers' movement at an early stage, which were later to "internationalize" themselves.) This revisionist tendency was known as Economism. Economism contained, in embryo form, most of the contradictions which plagued all varieties of revisionism.

"Economism was the main nucleus of compromise and opportunism."²⁸

The basic tenet of the Economists was that the working class had no interest in political formations and should confine itself to spontaneous "economic" activities. The Economists were, in fact, a contradiction in terms -- if the "economic" struggles of workers spontaneously evolved into socialism, why have a party? Why indeed did the Economists exist as a political group?

Despite these confusions, the Economists did not formally deny the need for a party, but instead proposed that the party should tail the working class movement. This policy became known as "khvostism" or tailism. The party

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²⁸ "History of the CPSU (b)", p. 23.

in such a scheme, was superfluous.

The Economist conviction and the conviction that lay at the base of the practice of the 2nd. International was that the consciousness of the working class would gradually (and miraculously) evolve towards socialism without political organization. The corollary, of course, was that the evolution of society into Socialism was a spontaneous and gradual process. All that "Marxists" needed to do was to garner more and more votes in Parliament, counsel workers against precipitous political action, and attempt to mollify the bourgeoisie.

The "Marxist" justification for this liquidationist policy was the "theory of the productive forces". (This theory will reappear many times throughout this thesis -- as it did throughout history -- as one of the main buttresses of revisionism.) The theory proposed that, since Marxism holds that the development of ideas corresponds with the development of the material forces of production -- these forces, in their maturation, would mechanically trigger revolutionary consciousness in the workers.

However, this theory is based on a distortion of Marxism - mechanistic materialism. It assumes that, since Marxism holds economic conditions to be decisive, economic decisions are the only decisive factors. Engels had to cope with this problem after the formation of the 2nd.

International:

"...According to the materialist conception of history, the ultimately determining element in history is the production and reproduction of real life. More than this neither Marx nor I have asserted. Hence if somebody twists this into saying that the economic element is the only determining one, he transforms that proposition into a meaningless, abstract, senseless phrase. The economic situation is the basis, but the various elements of the superstructure -- political forms of the class struggle and its results, to wit: constitutions established by the victorious class after a successful battle, etc., juridical forms, and even the reflexes of all these actual struggles in the brains of the participants, political, juristic, philosophical theories, religious views and their further development into systems of dogmas -- also exercise their influence upon the course of the historical struggles and in many cases preponderate in determining their form."²⁹

Consciousness is therefore not a simple reflection of the economic base, but rather a complex refraction of it. The "ultimately determining element" has to pass through a series of distorting lenses - politics, tradition, religion, etc. before it appears in ideological-conscious forms. The revisionists³⁰ could only perceive a simple one-to-one cause and effect relationship between economic development and the formation of ideas.

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²⁹ "Selected Correspondence", p. 417.

³⁰ I intend to use this term interchangeably with the terms Menshevik, Economist, opportunist, etc. It expresses the same content, a bourgeois skewing of Marxism, but the term "revisionists" will be used to apply more to the "philosophical" angle of this renegacy.

"What these gentlemen all lack is dialectics. They always see only here cause, there effect. That this is a hollow abstraction, that such metaphysical polar opposites exist in the real world only during crises, while the whole vast process goes on in the form of interaction - though of very unequal forces, the economic movement being far the strongest, most primordial, most decisive - that here everything is relative and nothing absolute - this they never begin to see. As far as they are concerned Hegel never existed. ..."³¹

In fact the "distorting lenses" filter and block the consistent elaboration of revolutionary ideas amongst the proletariat. This problem is divisible into two aspects - one defined by Marx in terms of the hegemony of bourgeois ideas, one defined by Lukacs in terms of the phenomenon of reification consequent to any "immediate" conscious appropriation of reality. These aspects are conflated by Lenin in his restatement of the central problem: the spontaneous growth of consciousness in the working class suffers from ineluctable barriers which curtail its development into revolutionary consciousness. Thus posed, the problem indicated a solution - the injection of a fully conscious element into the movement, capable of overcoming the barriers of spontaneity - the vanguard party of the proletariat.

Marx's position on bourgeois hegemony is simply

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³¹ "Selected Correspondence", p. 425.

that by virtue of its monopoly in the means of production (material and ideological), the ruling class is able to elaborate and disseminate a world view consonant with its position as ruler. This worldview both legitimizes the power of the ruling class and delegitimizes those who seek to overturn this power.

"The ideas of the ruling class are in every epoch the ruling ideas, i.e. the class which is the ruling material force of society, is at the same time its ruling intellectual force. The class which has the means of material production at its disposal, has control at the same time over the means of mental production, so that thereby, generally speaking, the ideas of those who lack the means of mental production are subject to it. The ruling ideas are nothing more than the ideal expression of the dominant material relationships, the dominant material relationships grasped as ideas; hence of the relationships which make the one class the ruling one, therefore, the ideas of its dominance. The individuals composing the ruling class possess among other things consciousness, and therefore think. Insofar, therefore, as they rule as a class and determine the extent and compass of an epoch, it is self-evident that they do this in its whole range, hence among other things rule also as thinkers, as producers of ideas, and regulate the production and distribution of the ideas of their age: thus their ideas are the ruling ideas of the epoch."³²

This subjection to ruling class ideas creates in the subordinate classes a false consciousness of their situation. The lack of congruity between this appreciation of reality and the reality which inevitably asserts itself,

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³² K. Marx and F. Engels, "The German Ideology". (New York, International Publishers, 1973). p. 64.

provides the basis for the supercession of false consciousness. However, the ruling class' hold on the means of mental production serves fundamentally to block any broad spontaneous crystallization of revolutionary consciousness.

The obverse aspect of this problem is provided by Lukacs - any 'immediate', spontaneous appreciation of reality is bound to be essentially bourgeois as it is subject to the phenomenon of reification. This phenomenon is a specific characteristic of capitalism - in a social system governed by the laws of commodity production/exchange, the lives of men must appear to be ruled by the movement of commodities - i.e. things. Capitalism subordinates the human character of its productive relations to the character of market relations between inanimate objects.

"There it is a definite social relation between men, that assumes, in their eyes, the fantastic form of a relation between things. In order, therefore, to find an analogy, we must have recourse to the mist-enveloped regions of the religious world. In that world the productions of the human brain appear as independent beings endowed with life, and entering into relation both with one another and the human race. So it is in the world of commodities with the products of men's hands. This I call the Fetishism which attaches itself to the products of labour, so soon as they are produced as commodities, and which is therefore inseparable from the production of commodities."³³

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³³ "Capital 1", p. 72. Also, for a complete discussion of the problem see F. Perlman, "Commodity Fetishism" given as an introduction to I. Rubin, "Essays on Marx's Theory of Value". (Montreal, Black Rose Books, 1973).

The individual's attempt to immediately appropriate and understand social reality is 'immediately' confounded by the intervention of reification/fetishism.

"The individual can never become the measure of all things. For when the individual confronts objective reality he is faced by a complex of ready-made and unalterable objects which allow him only the subjective responses of recognition or rejection. ...For the individual, reification and hence determinism (determinism being the idea that things are necessarily connected) are irremovable." ³⁴

Lenin proceeded to draw together the twin threads of the problem; the hegemony of bourgeois ideas and the limitations of spontaneity. The limitations placed on the immediate assimilation of reality by the proletariat are defined by the nature of its most advanced "spontaneously evolved" economic organizations, the trade unions.

In effect Marx had posed the problem in 1865, inasmuch as the role of trade unions was restricted to making sorties against the superficial symptoms of capitalism-- the tendency towards lengthening the working-day, lowering wages, increasing unemployment, etc. The unions thus confined the struggle to the battle front already delineated by capitalism and so refused to go beyond those lines and fight the root cause in the system itself.

"Trades Unions work well as centres of resistance against the encroachment of capital.

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³⁴G. Lukacs, "History and Class Consciousness". (Cambridge, Mass., The M.I.T. Press, 1972). p. 193.

They fail partially from an injudicious use of their power. They fail generally from limiting themselves to a guerilla war against the effects of the existing system, instead of simultaneously trying to change it, instead of using their organized forces as a lever for the final emancipation of the working class, that is to say, the ultimate abolition of the wages system. ...Instead of the conservative motto, "A fair day's wage for a fair day's work", they ought to inscribe on their banner the revolutionary watchword, "Abolition of the wages system!"³⁵

Lenin proposed that while workers engaged only in spontaneous "economic" struggles, their conscious development was restricted to the outlook of trade unionism. "The spontaneous movement does not engender socialism from itself".³⁶ In order for the proletariat to supercede simple trade unionism, an intervening factor is required -- a mediator between the immediate appropriation of reality and reality itself. This mediator is the vanguard party of the proletariat which exists to "combine the working class movement with socialism".

The theory of socialism is "engendered outside of the spontaneous movement, from the observation and study of the spontaneous movement by men who are equipped with up-to-date knowledge".³⁷ The Party is the conscious

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³⁵ "Selected Works 2", pp. 75-76. This was part of a report given by Marx to the General Council of the First International in 1865, under the title, "Wages, Price and Profit."

³⁶ J. V. Stalin, "Collected Works 1". (Moscow, FLPH, 1946). p. 44. This is from a letter from Stalin to M. Davitashvili, written in 1904, attacking Plekhanov, and upholding Lenin's ideas.

³⁷ Ibid.

ingredient in the class struggle, an organization of revolutionary propagandists and agitators. It is the "highest form of class organization of the proletariat".³⁸ Conterminous with this understanding of the role of the subjective factor in the revolution is Lukacs' observation that the Party presupposes the actuality of the revolution. It is axiomatic that the Marxist-Leninist conception of a revolutionary party would have been historically irrelevant in a pre-revolutionary phase.

"The party, as the strictly centralized organization of the proletariat's most conscious elements - and only as such - is conceived as an instrument of class struggle in a revolutionary period."³⁹

From these bases all the strategic and tactical orientations of the revolutionary Leninist party flow. Revisionism succeeds only in ignorance of these foundations, e.g. the "productive forces theory" denies the actuality of the revolution, the gradualist "parliamentary socialist" tradition rejects the necessity for the promotion of proletarian class consciousness.

The theories of Marx and Engels, and Lenin's

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³⁸ J. V. Stalin, "Collected Works 5", p. 184. This is taken from Stalin's systematization of Leninism, given as a lecture series at Sverdlov University in 1924, "The Foundations of Leninism".

³⁹ G. Lukacs, "Lenin - A Study on the Unity of His Thought". (London, NLB, 1972). p. 26.

propositions, lie on the same logical and historical continuum. They represent the summation of proletarian experience, given voice in a struggle on two fronts: against the bourgeoisie and against their ideological reflections in the socialist movement. Lenin was acutely aware of the problem framed in the 11th. "Thesis on Feuerbach"; "The philosophers have only interpreted the world, in various ways; the point, however, is to change it."⁴⁰: indeed the title of Lenin's seminal work on the Party poses it as a question: "What Is To Be Done?"⁴¹

The penning of "What Is To Be Done?" in 1902 represents the beginning of an organic break (in Althusser's lexicon an "epistemological break") with the opportunism of the sclerotic 2nd. International. This cannot have been readily apparent as such in 1902. The book, a passionate polemic against Economism, can have caused little more than a susurrus in European Marxist circles, which were still involved in the Bernstein debates. Lenin was an obscure leader of a small party, the Russian Social Democratic Labour Party, RSDLP, and the Economists a mere "groupuscule". The work was, however, shortly to come to the attention of

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⁴⁰"Selected Works 1", p. 15.

⁴¹V. I. Lenin, "Selected Works 2", pp. 27-193. The title is taken from a work by Chernyshevsky.

the leading lights of the German SDP as Lenin demonstrated that he "meant business" and was obdurately prepared to provoke a split in the Party over the issues he had raised, in 1903.

There are six crucial points of theory raised in "What Is To Be Done?", some of which have already been discussed. Firstly, that to restrict the proletariat to trade union struggles against capital meant abandoning, in practice, the goal of socialism. Secondly, that if the political movement of the working class merely swam in the wake of the economic movement, the Party would become a passive, indeed irrelevant factor in the class struggle, and would act as a brake on the movement. Thirdly, that to dogmatically assert the inherent superiority of spontaneity as against the careful cultivation of revolutionary theory and consciousness meant to abandon the party to opportunism: -"without a revolutionary theory there can be no revolutionary movement".⁴² Fourthly, that socialist consciousness did not mechanically issue from the spontaneous struggles of workers, and thus neglect of the dissemination of socialist ideas meant the surrender of the workers to the influence of bourgeois ideas.

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⁴²V. I. Lenin, "Selected Works 2", p. 47.

"...the only choice is: either bourgeois or socialist ideology. There is no middle course (for humanity has not created a "third" ideology, and, moreover, in a society torn by class antagonisms there can never be a non-class or above-class ideology). Hence, to belittle socialist ideology in any way, to deviate from it in the slightest degree means strengthening bourgeois ideology." 43

Fifthly, the Economists were not a revolutionary party but a party of social reform which, by accepting the ground rules of capital in the conflict, betrayed proletarian interests. Lastly, Economism was not an accidental feature in Russia, but was a form of the revisionist stream in the 2nd. International.

The famous disjunction in the RSDLP occurred at its Second Congress in 1903 in a dispute over a superficially innocuous paragraph in the Party rules. The question was whether Party members should be bound to work in a Party organization or not. Lenin argued that a member should be obliged to work in a Party organization, whereas Martov maintained that a member merely had to accept the Party programme, and in fact "any striker" might enrol.

This polemic encapsulated the gulf between Marxism and opportunism on the question of organization. The ramifications of the dispute were thus not restricted

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⁴³Ibid., p. 63.

within the confines of the RSDLP, but reverberated throughout the International. The Congress concretized the split between Martovists and Leninists who constituted themselves as Mensheviks (minority) and Bolsheviks (majority), respectively.

The seminality of the organizational article under discussion became clear with the progress of events - the Bolsheviks and Mensheviks split into separate organizations with fundamentally opposing class lines. Lenin's formulation was predicated on his recognition of the necessity for the formation of the Party as an organized vanguard detachment, whereas Martov envisaged the Party as an amorphous "tailist" grouping, open to a pseudo-socialist element.

The inner-Party struggle intensified, and Lenin both sharpened and deepened his conception of Bolshevism against the Mensheviks who had launched themselves into a full scale factional attack on the leadership, a "revolt against Leninism".⁴⁴ Bolshevism was given greater definition in 1904 in Lenin's trenchant polemic "One step forward, Two steps back".⁴⁵ One of the most vital points voiced in

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⁴⁴The phrase is Martov's. It is cited in the History of the CPSU (b), p. 44.

⁴⁵"Selected Works 2", pp. 405-467. The subtitle is "The Crisis in Our Party".

this work was that the party had to be a disciplined, organized front in order to itself organize and lead the workers struggle. To view the party as a heterogeneous agglomeration of sympathizers, signified a retreat to opportunism. The party leadership in the latter conceptualization would only exist to ameliorate disputes between varying elements who stood at different stages of political development, i.e. the party would straddle Left and Right - and would have difficulty remaining in the proletarian camp.⁴⁶

By this time the sounds of battle had echoed as far away as Germany and an arbitration committee, including Kautsky and Bebel, was set up to establish unity in the RSDLP. Lenin bitterly opposed this attempt to reconcile the two irreconcilables, although Martov agreed to it. The committee was never able to produce any conclusive results; the Russian Revolution of 1905 quashed the attempt. It did, predictably, manage to give support to Martov's side in the

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⁴⁶"The Menshevik concept of party organization weakened both these poles, confused them, reduced them to compromises and united them within the party itself. The Mensheviks shut themselves off from the broad strata of the exploited masses...but united in the party the most diverse interest groups, thus preventing any homogeneity of thought and action...a party so organized becomes a confused tangle of different interest groups. Only through inner compromise does it ever manage to take any action, even then, either follows in the wake of the more clear undered or more instinctive groups within it, or remains forced to look on fatalistically while events pass it by." G. Lukacs, "Lenin", pp. 31-32.

controversy; for example, by refusing to publish Lenin's account in Die Neue Zeit (the SDP weekly), and Kautsky's public declarations of support for Menshevism. The leaders of the 2nd. International must have understood that Leninism had struck through to the quick of their organizational malaise.

Sensing an organizational split on the eve of the 1905 Revolution, the Bolsheviks, de facto constituted themselves as a separate body with their own central committee, and press. Consequently, positions on both sides hardened, and organizational differences gave rise to tactical differences. The Bolsheviks worked to organize the working class as a militant revolutionary formation, the Mensheviks argued that as the present revolutionary phase had a bourgeois-democratic character, the proletariat had no independent role to play and should not antagonize the liberal bourgeoisie. The workers were, however, cool towards Menshevism and engaged in armed struggle against Tsarism. They even went as far as the embryonic discovery of the organizational forms necessary for the implementation of proletarian dictatorship - workers councils - Soviets of workers deputies. "The Bolsheviks regarded the Soviets as the embryo of revolutionary power."⁴⁷ Characteristically

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⁴⁷ "History of the CPSU (b)", p. 79.

the Mensheviks saw Soviets merely as supra-class organs of local administration!

The 1905 Revolution clearly exposed the political and class nature of the two groupings claiming to represent the RSDLP. Plekhanov showed his hand as an anti-working class elitist in his reply to the Bolshevik analysis of the Moscow uprising. While the Bolsheviks maintained that the uprising demonstrated that it was within the power of the proletariat to successfully wage an armed struggle, Plekhanov stated "they should not have taken to arms". Lenin replied:

"On the contrary, they should have taken to arms more resolutely, energetically and aggressively; it should have been explained to the masses that peaceful strikes by themselves are useless, and that fearless and ruthless armed fighting was required. The time has come when we must at last openly and publicly admit that political strikes are insufficient; we must carry on the widest agitation among the masses in favour of an armed uprising and make no attempt to obscure this question by talk about "preliminary stages", or by throwing a veil over it. To conceal from the masses the necessity for a desperate, sanguinary war of extermination as the immediate task of future revolutionary action means deceiving both ourselves and the people." 48

Thus Menshevism and Bolshevism became firmly entrenched as antipodal class bodies.

To briefly recapitulate - the solution to the problem

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48 "Selected Works 3", p. 348. This is in "Lessons of the Moscow Uprising". Similarly, during the struggle, Stalin had written "What do we need in order to really win? We need three things: first - arms, second - arms, third - arms and arms again." (History of the CPSU (b), p. 81).

of organization, which had heretofore manifested itself in vacillation and opportunism in tactical questions, was not clearly worked out until 1902. Lenin's intervention signified the necessary breakthrough, and was to become formalized following the abandoning of opportunism in Russia, with the October Revolution and the attempt to isolate and abandon opportunism on a world scale - the break with the 2nd. International and the constitution of the 3rd.

The axis of Lenin's break must be charted both temporally and spatially. The questions which need to be answered following the above observations are:

- 1) why was the temporal location of the break the first decade of the 20th. Century? and
- 2) why was its spatial location Russia?

The first question can be answered in one simple sentence: the development of imperialism opened the historical period of proletarian revolutions. Lenin evolved a detailed analysis of imperialism, as a new stage, indeed the "Highest Stage" of Capitalism in his 1916 work of the same name. He identified the imperialist epoch as a special stage in the development of capitalism, a corollary of the growth of monopoly capitalism, and a stage which "sublated" or removed to a higher level, the contradictions inherent in earlier phases of capitalism.

Lenin delineated five essential features of this new epoch, which demonstrated its substance as the articulation

of tendencies immanent in the pre-monopoly era:

"1. The concentration of production and capital, developed to such a high stage that it created monopolies which play a decisive role in economic life. 2. The merging of bank capital with industrial capital and the creation on the basis of this "finance capital", of a financial oligarchy. 3. The export of capital, which has become extremely important, as distinguished from the export of commodities, 4. The formation of international capitalist monopolies which share the world among themselves. 5. The territorial division of the whole world by the greatest capitalist powers is completed."⁴⁹

Thus, imperialism cannot be taken merely as an arbitrary aggressive policy of this or that government, formulated at the level of the polity. It is firmly rooted in the economic machinery of the capitalist system. Although representing a leap in the maturation of capitalism, Lenin reasoned that the epoch of imperialism was simultaneously its dialectical negation; the epoch of proletarian revolutions. "Why? Because imperialism carries the contradictions of capitalism to their last bounds, to the extreme limit, beyond which revolution begins."⁵⁰ Stalin ranks three main levels of contradiction which are sharpened by imperialism. Firstly, the contradiction between labour

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⁴⁹V. I. Lenin, "Imperialism, the Highest Stage of Capitalism". (New York, International Publishers, 1939). p. 89.

⁵⁰J. V. Stalin, "Collected Works 6", p. 74.

and capital, which achieves greater definition with the increased concentration of capital, (and the formal merging of capital with the State apparatus). Secondly, the contradictions between various cliques of financiers and imperialists in the world-wide dilation of capitalist competition. Thirdly, the contradiction between the imperialist "metropolises" and the colonial "hinterlands".⁵¹

Imperialism, therefore, realizes Lukacs' tag about "the actuality of the revolution". Given that Lenin gauges the years 1870-1900 as the period of (relatively) peaceful expansion and consolidation of monopoly capitalism and that "for Europe, the time when the new capitalism definitely superceded the old can be established with fair precision; it was the beginning of the twentieth century";⁵² the opening decade of this century required the elaboration of proletarian praxis which would 'actualize' the revolution.

This praxis, given form by Lenin, was therefore the necessary response of Marxism to the opening of a new historical period. Stalin's definition of Leninism "in the last analysis" is:

"...Marxism of the era of imperialism and the proletarian revolution. To be more exact, Leninism is the theory and tactics of the proletarian revolution in general, the theory and tactics of

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⁵¹ Ibid., pp. 74-76. Interestingly enough, in Mao's pamphlet, "On Contradiction", he changes the order of these contradictions (Peking, FLPH, 1968), giving primacy to the national aspect.

⁵² V. I. Lenin, "Imperialism", p. 20.

the dictatorship of the proletariat in particular."⁵³

Stalin also points out that Marx and Engels did in fact give the general outlines of the idea of a proletarian vanguard Party, but Lenin developed these outlines further "and applied them to the new conditions of proletarian struggle in the period of imperialism".⁵⁴

The second question concerns Russia as the locus of the revolutionary juncture personified in Lenin and embodied in Bolshevism. The answer is found in a generic invariant of Marxism, a law which achieves particular force with the transition to the "epoch of finance capital": the uneven development of capitalism.

Unevenness itself is lodged in the heart of Marxist dialectics. As mentioned before, Marxism cannot view social events in terms of simple cause and effect; it views complex

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⁵³ J. V. Stalin, "Collected Works 6", p. 73. This definition of Leninism provoked some contention in the debates with the Oppositions during the years 1924-28. Stalin had provided an internationalist definition of Leninism, whereas others, Zinoviev, for instance, wished to make Leninism a purely Russian national phenomenon. I shall examine the debates in greater detail in the next chapter, which will be concerned with the struggle for Leninism in the Comintern.

⁵⁴ J. V. Stalin, "Interview with Foreign Workers' Delegations". (Moscow, CPSFW, 1934). p. 9. I chose this translation, rather than the one in the Collected Works, because it appears to be superior - it is far more detailed, for one thing. The interview itself was given to a delegation of American workers in 1927. (Stalin and the Central Committee had felt that it was necessary for the Workers' State in Russia to make itself accountable to workers anywhere. To this end, the American workers were provided with factory statistics, oppositional documents, minutes of party meetings, etc.).

dialectical oppositions as motive factors. Also, in recalling Stalin's consideration of imperialism as the eve of the proletarian revolution, it will be noted that he defines three layers of contradiction. Thus, the structure under observation cannot merely be considered a structure "in contradiction", but is a structure containing a complex of oppositions, each of which relates to the others in terms of domination-subordination. Levels of contradiction may be established amongst which are primary and secondary contradictions, etc.

Althusser phrases it "the complex whole has the unity of a structure articulated in dominance."⁵⁵ If it is further taken that every contradiction is articulated relative to every other contradiction in this unity, the conclusion is that dialectical contradiction itself presupposes/defines unevenness.

In moving from the abstract to the concrete, how is this unevenness inscribed in capitalist development? As a simple empirical observation, the prevalent anarchy of production and the contradictions within the capitalist class

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⁵⁵ "For Marx", p. 202. Little work has actually been done on Marxist dialectics per se. The foremost works are Engels "Anti-Duhring". (Moscow, Progress Books, 1970). Lenin's "Philosophical Notebooks", (Selected Works Vol. 11). Stalin's "Dialectical and Historical Materialism", and, despite its' errors, Mao Tse Tung's "On Contradiction".

termed "competition" generate uneven development amongst individual enterprises, individual branches of industry and individual countries. The transition to imperialism and the growth of monopoly sharpens the contradictions between capitalists in the arena of the world market.

"Finance capital and the trusts are aggravating instead of diminishing the differences in the rate of development of the various parts of the world economy."⁵⁶

Imperialism's acceleration of the rate of development of contradictions and the process of uneven development, focused "all the historical contradictions then possible in a single State,"⁵⁷ Russia. The contradictions, fusing into a revolutionary rupture in Russia, were becoming "over-determined".⁵⁸ In the mid-nineteenth century Marx and Engels felt that the revolution centred in Germany, which, they believed, was verging on a bourgeois revolution to be followed (uninterruptedly) by a socialist revolution. (Stalin mentions that this circumstance served as the probable reason why Germany was the birthplace of scientific socialism, and Marx and Engels its theorists). Already in 1882, Marx and

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⁵⁶V. I. Lenin, "Imperialism", p. 93.

⁵⁷L. Althusser, "For Marx", p. 96.

⁵⁸Ibid., p. 99. The term is Althusser's, and signifies a (supersaturated) fusion of contradictions into a revolutionary rupture.

Engels felt that the revolutionary front had moved from Germany to Russia. "Russia forms the vanguard of revolutionary action in Europe."⁵⁹

Similarly, Lenin had (prophetically) recognized that the foetal revolution in Russia was undergoing a transformation to maturity in 1902"

"History has now confronted us with an immediate task which is more revolutionary than all the immediate tasks that confront the proletariat of any other country. The fulfillment of this task, the destruction of the most powerful bulwark not only of European but also (it may now be said) of Asiatic reaction would place the Russian proletariat in the vanguard of the international revolutionary proletariat."⁶⁰

The over-ripe nexus of contradictions converging on Russia included the contradiction between: developed industry (e.g. the Putilov works in Petrograd - the largest factory in the world) and medieval agriculture; feudal political structures and a capitalist economic base; proletarian class struggles and autocratic repression; revolutionary peasantry and the capitalist dislocation of social relations in the countryside; Russian capitalism and Tsarist "military-feudal imperialism"⁶¹; British and French Imperialism and Russia;

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⁵⁹ "Selected Works 1", p. 101. Also, see Marx's Letters to Engels, Nov. 13, 1859, Feb. 13, 1863 and Sept. 27, 1877.

⁶⁰ "Selected Works 2", p. 50.

⁶¹ The term is Lenin's.

Russian interests in imperialist expansion (in Turkey, China, Persia, etc.) and the interests of British and French Capital; the revolutionary intelligentsia and Tsarist oppression; etc. That is, the three contradictions outlined by Stalin as the main contradictions exacerbated by imperialist development focused con forte in Russia.

It follows that uneven development made Russia the crucial front of the world revolution and, thereby, the Russian proletariat, the vanguard of the world proletariat. Russia set the stage for the historic "epistemological break".

These two notions; imperialism actualizing the revolution and uneven development, had profound effects on both the development of the revolution in Russia, and its development on a world scale. As will be shown, the sharpest confrontations over those principles occurred between the Leninists and Mensheviks, particularly the Mensheviks within the Comintern: the Trotskyites and Bukharinites.

This discussion of the locus of the world revolutionary pole of attraction in Russia interrupted the narrative history of the Bolshevik theory of the Party, in 1905. It was at this point that the Bolshevik tendency definitely crystallized into an autonomous organizational entity as opposed to Menshevism. However, the "march of time" could not be expected to cease in 1905, with the defeat of the First Russian Revolution and the organizational rupture with

opportunism. Intense struggles, witnessing the condensation and reflection of all contradictions in the world revolutionary movement in Russia telescoped into a brief period, occurred throughout the space from 1905. to the 1917 revolutions and to the ebb of the world revolution in 1923. These struggles served both to amplify and clarify Bolshevik theory as Bolshevism progressively estranged itself from Menshevism and Second International revisionism in general. (It is probably safe to say that not until 1924, with the publication of Stalin's "Foundations of Leninism" did a mature codification of Bolshevism appear.)⁶²

The formal rupture with the Mensheviks came at the Prague Congress of RSDLP in 1912. Until this point, Menshevism had been busily consolidating a swift retreat from any semblance of obligation to the proletariat which it might have had. In the Stolypin period of reaction following the reflux of the 1905 revolution, the Bolsheviks went underground and fortified their illegal Party organization. The Mensheviks argued for the liquidation of the illegal Party and for close collaboration with the liberal-bourgeois Cadets. They saw the temporary ebb of the revolution as something ineradicable and so were prepared to compromise with any

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⁶² Even Althusser grudgingly admits the usefulness of the "Foundations". It does, in fact, provide the basis for his argument in "Contradiction and Overdetermination", op. cit.

force, including the Stolypin regime. To this end they offered to renounce the party programme in exchange for the Tsar's consent to their appearance as a legal party. Trotsky formed his own faction, the August Bloc, and attempted to straddle both poles, the Bolsheviki and the Liquidationists (a rather delicate act). Stalin was moved to write about Centrism (the position of Trotskyism):

"Centrism, is a political concept. Its ideology is one of adaptation, of subordination of the interest of the proletariat to the interests of the petty-bourgeoisie within one common party. This ideology is alien and abhorrent to Leninism."⁶³

The struggle came to a head at the 1912 Congress. The Mensheviks were expelled from the Party and the Party renamed itself "Russian Social Democratic Labour Party (Bolsheviks)." "The Party strengthens itself by purging its ranks of opportunists."⁶⁴ Lenin wrote to Gorky: "At last we have succeeded, in spite of the Liquidator scum, in restoring the Party and its Central Committee. I hope you will rejoice in this fact."⁶⁵

During the years 1912-1914, the Bolsheviki developed their base, legally and illegally, in all existing workers'

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⁶³ Quoted in "History of the CPSU (b)", p. 136.

⁶⁴ The sentence in Lassalle's, and is approvingly quoted by Engels, Lenin, Stalin and others.

⁶⁵ V. I. Lenin, "Collected Works 29". (New York, International Publishers, 1945). p. 19.

organizations through tightly knit cells, and fractions, of party members receiving direction from the centre.⁶⁶ One of the most outstanding victories won by the Bolsheviks at the time, was the Election of the Executive Committee of the St. Petersburg Metal Workers Union where out of 3,000 votes cast, only 150 went to the Mensheviks.

The discovery of the cell and fraction form of Party organization was, most certainly, one of the outstanding organizational innovations of the Bolsheviks. Given the repressive nature of the autocracy, and the incessant switching from legal to illegal status, the most flexible and secure framework for the Party was the Party cell/fraction based in industry. All the Bolshevik workers in one plant would constitute a cell, and all the cells in one branch of industry, or in one workers' organization (e.g. a trade union) would constitute a fraction.

These cells were the crucial limbs and bases of the Bolshevik Party. They performed a twofold function - firstly, they firmly rooted the Party in the working class, locating at the cardinal points of its existence - the factories; secondly, they bore the Party's line to the masses - ideologically and organizationally. The cell, or nucleus,

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⁶⁶ Party fractions are the organizational forms required by Bolshevism. The acceptance or rejections of the use of Party fractions in industry forms one of the key lines of demarcation separating Bolshevik and reformist organizations. As will be shown, one of the sharpest struggles waged by the Comintern against truculent Social Democratic (i.e. opportunist) elements in its member sections centred on the fraction question.

was the strategic foundation of the Party organization. Cell members discussed issues of the day, Party lines and factory problems, always in an effort to win the workers, in their particular locale.

The Party was thus able to embody "the highest form of proletarian class organization" by forming a living link between all sectors of the class. Only this form could prepare the workers for power, and marshal their forces for swift and decisive plans.

The Party's watchword then, was industrial concentration. Even a small Party, such as the Bolsheviks, could prepare for victory, given correct ideology and correct organization. The organizational form demanded by an outlook calling for the seizure of power by the industrial proletariat is factory cells, primarily in key industries - metallurgy, transport, etc. The Bolsheviks then structurally demarcated themselves from the revisionists, who maintained territorial forms of organization, in order to prepare for parliamentary power.

The entrenchment of the Bolsheviks in the factories, literally made them an unbeatable force. When the time was propitious for the workers to rise, the cells could merely proliferate throughout the class, and, organically connected to a vital centre, could coalesce the workers' ranks for action.

Lenin's "orders of the day" in January, 1909, are as follows:

"From this evaluation of the principle of Party organization logically follows the line of organizational policy adopted by the conference. To strengthen the illegal Party organization, to create Party cells in all spheres of work, to set up first of all, "entirely Party committees consisting of workers, even if their number be small, in each industrial enterprise", to concentrate the functions of leadership in the hands of leaders of the Social Democratic movement from among the workers themselves - such is the task today. Needless to say, the task of these cells and committees must be to utilize all the semi-legal and, as far as possible, legal organizations, to maintain "close contact with the masses", and to direct work in such a way that Social Democracy responds to all the needs of the masses. Every Party cell and workers' committee must become a "base for agitation, propaganda, and practical organizing work among the masses", i.e. they must go where the masses go, and try at every step to push the consciousness of the masses in the direction of socialism, to link up every specific question with the general tasks of the proletariat, to transform every act of organization into one of class consolidation, to win by dint of energy and ideological influence (not by their ranks and titles of course) the leading role in all the proletarian legal organizations. Even if these cells and committees be small at times, they will be linked together by Party tradition and Party organization, by a definite class programme; and two or three Social Democratic members of the Party will then be able to avoid becoming submerged in an amorphous legal organization, and to pursue their Party line under all conditions, in all kinds of situations, to influence their environment in the spirit of the whole Party, and not allow the environment to swallow them up." 67

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⁶⁷V. I. Lenin, "Collected Works 15", pp. 353-354.

This is an eloquent account of the practical functions of a Leninist revolutionary; of how in practice, a vanguard movement operates.

In 1914, the First Imperialist War broke out. This was the war which clearly expressed the moribund nature of imperialism, and its entrance into its terminal phase. Capitalism could no longer thrive through peaceful expansion; in the saturation of the world market the growth of one capitalist could only be accomplished at the expense of the others. So capital was obliged to embark on ventures of massive destruction, to restructure the world market and destroy the productive forces in order to reanimate its life cycle: boom, bust, crisis, war, and so on.

History itself tends to "make or break" people, and great historical events confirm or explode the sets of opinions people have about history. Thus the First World War delivered the coup de grace to the atrophic Second International. As Engels had foreseen, the SDP had proven unprepared for the "decisive moment". Kautsky's fantastic scheme of "ultra-Imperialism" - the peaceful coalescence of all Imperialists into a super-Imperialist world state - dissolved.⁶⁸ The attempts not to frustrate the bourgeoisie

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⁶⁸ Lenin's, "Imperialism" and N. Bukharin's "Imperialism and World Economy", (New York, Monthly Review Press, 1975), were both directed against Kautsky's Utopian "Ultra-imperialism" system.

by means of political strikes, sharpening extra-parliamentary struggles, etc., had left the bourgeoisie coolly unimpressed. They were not willing to abandon their struggle against the proletariat merely because the erstwhile leaders of the proletariat had abandoned their struggle against the bourgeoisie. The massive confusion and lack of purpose within the International was clearly evinced by the chasm which yawned between its (occasional) revolutionary pronouncements and its cringing opportunist actions.

In view of the gathering war clouds, the 2nd. International had, in 1912, called a extraordinary conference in Basle, to discuss proletarian anti-war action. Basle produced an anti-war resolution unanimously adopted by the International, which thunderously exclaimed:

"Let the governments be mindful of the fact that, with European conditions and the attitude of the working class as they are, they cannot let loose a war without causing danger to themselves. Let them recall that the Franco-German war was followed by the revolutionary outbreak of the Commune, that the Russo-Japanese war set in motion the revolutionary forces of the peoples of the Russian Empire, and that competitive military and naval armaments have accentuated in an unprecedented fashion the class antagonisms in England and on the continent and have unchained vast strikes. It would be sheer madness for the governments not to realize that the very thought of the monstrosity of a world war would inevitably call forth the indignation and the revolt of the working class. The proletarians consider it a crime to fire at each other for the benefit of the capitalists' profits, the ambition of dynasties, or the greater glory of secret diplomatic treaties." 69

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⁶⁹ Cited in Foster, op. cit., pp. 217-218.

Lenin, with his usual perspicacity, read the Manifesto and remained skeptical; "They have given us a large promissory note; let us see how they will meet it."⁷⁰ Of course, not only were they not able to meet it, but they flagrantly abrogated each one of its promises. On August 4, 1914, the German Social Democratic Party's 110 parliamentary representatives voted unanimously for war credits, declaring "in the hour of danger we shall not desert the fatherland."⁷¹

Philip Scheidmann presented the war as a defense against Tsarist Russia:

"The chief guilt for the present war rests upon Russia. At the very time when the Tsar was exchanging dispatches with the German Kaiser, apparently working for peace, he allowed the mobilization to go on secretly, not only against Austria, but also against Germany. ...We in Germany have the duty to protect ourselves. We have the task of protecting the country of the most developed Social-Democracy against servitude to Russia. ...We Social-Democrats have not ceased to be Germans because we have joined the Socialist International."⁷²

The French, British, Belgian and American pro-war Social Democrats, however, blamed Germany as the threat to "their nations". Thereupon the Second International collapsed under the weight of its own contradictions. The

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⁷⁰ Cited in O. H. Gankin and H. H. Fisher, "The Bolsheviks and the World War". (Stanford, 1940). p. 79.

⁷¹ Cited in J. Lenz, "The Rise and Fall of the Second International". (New York, 1932). p. 128.

⁷² Cited in Foster, op. cit., p. 230.

profligate leadership attempted to "cover their nakedness" with involuted rationalizations - amongst which Kautsky's must rank as the most sophisticated. He proclaimed that the war was indeed imperialist, but that the duty of social-democrats was to defend "their" imperialists: the situation was too complex for co-ordinated proletarian action, "national defense" was the order of the day. But nothing could obscure the fact that the revolutionary bombast spouted by the 2nd. International in 1912 had only served to prepare the proletariat for its great betrayal in 1914.

Engels, in a letter to Lafargue predicting a world war, stated:

"Therefore the socialists in all countries are for peace. If nevertheless war comes, then one thing is certain, This war, where fifteen and twenty million armed men would slaughter one another and lay waste Europe as never before, this war must either bring about the immediate victory of Socialism or so shatter the old order of things from top to bottom, and leave behind such a heap of ruins, that the old capitalist society will become more impossible than ever before, and the social revolution, though it might be set back for ten or fifteen years, would, however, in this case also have to conquer and in so much the more speedy and thorough fashion." 73

Lenin, in full accord with Engels, issued the revolutionary war slogan for proletarians: "turn the imperialist war into a civil war". (Trotsky produced his

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⁷³ Cited in R. Palme Dutt, "The Internationale". (London, Lawrence and Wishart, 1964). pp. 127-128.

usual vapid attempt to bridge the antagonists with the "neither victory nor defeat" slogan). Germany had ceased even de jure to be the centre of the socialist movement.

We again encounter the factors: imperialism as the eve of the revolution, and uneven development, as decisive in the degeneracy of the Second International.

"The collapse of the Second International is the collapse of opportunism which was growing on the soil of a specific (the so-called 'peaceful') historic epoch now passed, and which practically dominated the International in the last years. The opportunists had long been preparing this collapse by rejecting the socialist revolution and substituting for it bourgeois reformism; by repudiating the class struggle with its inevitable transformation into civil war at certain moments, and by preaching class collaboration; by preaching bourgeois chauvinism under the name of patriotism and defense of the fatherland and ignoring or repudiating the fundamental truth of socialism early expressed in The Communist Manifesto, namely, that the workers have no fatherland; by confining themselves in their struggle against militarism to a sentimental, philistine point of view instead of recognizing the necessity of a revolutionary war of the proletariat of all countries against the bourgeoisie of all countries; by turning the necessary utilization of bourgeois parliamentarism and bourgeois legality into a fetish of this legality and into forgetfulness of the duty to have illegal forms of organization and agitation in times of crises."⁷⁴

Imperialism also provides the material base for this opportunism/revisionism: the evolution of a labour aristocracy. From the superprofits gleaned in the exploitation

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⁷⁴ Lenin, "Collected Works 18", pp. 80-81.

of the colonies, the imperialists are able to "buy off" certain sectors of the proletariat at "home"; the trade union leaders, higher job categories, etc. These sectors are thus paid agents of the ruling class in the camp of the proletariat. I would hasten to add that the bribed elements appear to me to be ex-proletarian, or petty-bourgeois, who merely happen to be in the location of the proletariat. This seems to explain their vacillating class interest.⁷⁵

As the Second International did not conceive of itself as a revolutionary organizational unity, and had no organizational strictures regarding its composition as a body of professional revolutionaries, it flung its doors open to any opportunist labour "leader" who wished for a political career. People like Karl Legien, the German trade union leader, who opposed strikes per se, were then able to become a powerful force.

Given the collapse of the German centre, it devolved upon Lenin to muster the revolutionary oppositionists of the Second International, and other internationalist forces,

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⁷⁵ On this point, see Engels' letter to Marx, October 7, 1858, wherein he talks of "the English proletariat becoming more bourgeois", and says that "for a nation which exploits the whole world this is, of course, to a certain extent justifiable." Also, Engels to Marx, August 11, 1881, and especially Lenin, "Imperialism", Chapter 8.

for the creation of a new Communist International. Two conferences were organized, in Zimmerwald, in 1915, and in Kienthal, in 1916. Both of these experiences served as harbingers of the difficulties to come in the organizing of a new movement. The participants were of a mixed character - Bolsheviks, Trotskyites, Left Social Democrats, etc. Although they were unable to produce anything conclusive (they rejected the Bolshevik notion of revolutionary defeatism), they served as a nucleus for the 3rd. International. The experience did demonstrate, nevertheless, that the task of eradicating Social Democratic influence and building Bolshevism was to be quite arduous.

Although the Bolshevik Party had been unable to decisively influence the internationalist sector of the 2nd. International, an event was to occur which visibly thrust the Bolsheviks into the forefront of the world revolution; the October Revolution in Russia.

YOU HAVE NOTHING TO LOSE BUT YOUR CHAINS

The high pitch of class struggle prevailing prior to the outbreak of war in Russia, did not slacken during the war years. On the contrary, the tensions within the country were exacerbated to the utmost as a result of the unpopularity of the war and the government, the ineptitude of the political and military leadership, the worsening of conditions, etc. The Tsar had seen the war as a possible palliative for the revolutionary ferment. His miscalculation merely gave weight to the axiom that one of the conditions for revolution was the inability of the governing classes to govern.

In January, 1917, a massive political strike movement broke out across Russia--in Baku, in Nizhni-Novgorod; one-third of Moscow workers struck, the Putilov works struck, etc. The Bolsheviks organized massive demonstrations calling "Down with the Tsar", and "Down with the War". On March 10, a general strike occurred, the troops fraternized with the workers and by March 12, 60,000 soldiers had joined the demonstrators. The workers opened the jails, freed revolutionaries and locked up tsarist functionaries. By March 14, the Revolution had succeeded and the Tsar was overthrown. A Provisional Government was set up which realized de jure, the de facto bourgeois government of Russia which had been operative but which was screened by

Tsarism. The Bolsheviks, whilst maintaining their close ties to the working masses, were somewhat disoriented by the new situation, and there was a certain recrudescence of Menshevism within the ranks of the Party. It was felt that the Provisional government should be at least conditionally supported to give bourgeois liberalism time, in Russia, in which to play out its historic role - the fatalistic productive forces theory again! At the extreme right of this tendency stood Rykov who called for support of the Provisional Government and the partisans of war.

In April, Lenin traumatized the Party by declaring (on his-triumphal-return from exile) to a group of workers "Long Live the Socialist Revolution". He went to the Party and presented his famous "April Theses", in which he argued that the workers had created operational councils, Soviets, which were to be the basis of a new form of republic, a workers' republic, thus power should be transferred to the Soviets. He proposed that the name of the party be changed to the Communist Party, and that a Third, Communist International should be formed. There was a marked internal struggle in the Central Committee during which Lenin submitted (but later withdrew) his resignation. The theses were finally endorsed with the opposition of a few, such as Zinoviev, Kamenev, and Rykov. Bolshevizing the Bolshevik Party itself was proving to be not altogether straightforward!

The Party set itself the task of winning a majority in the Soviets.

In June, 1917, the Provisional Government, subservient to the needs of the British and French Imperialists launched a full scale offensive in the world war. They hoped that this decisive act would shift the centre of gravity away from the Soviets which had already assumed the status of an alternative government, the "dual-power" period.

The offensive collapsed and the Russian workers and soldiers became extremely indignant. The Soviets (which were still controlled by the Mensheviks, firmly entrenched in the camp of the counter revolution) temporarily discredited themselves as oppositional centres of government by not responding to the bourgeoisie's challenge. The anger of the proletariat spilled over into the streets and in July, huge, spontaneous, armed demonstrations occurred. The Bolsheviks considered the action premature, but were bound to give it support. The Provisional Government ruthlessly suppressed the demonstrators, and with the open connivance of the Mensheviks and the populist Socialist Revolutionaries, outlawed the Bolshevik Party and called for the arrest of Lenin on a charge of high treason. During the revolutionary ferment the industry concentration policy definitely proved itself, and the Bolshevik ranks swelled with insurrectionary workers. In Petrograd, for example, in January, the Party had less than 2,000 members. by the opening of the April Party

Conference, membership had risen to 16,000, and by June it had reached 32,000, with an additional 2,000 soldiers enrolled in the Bolshevik Military Organization and 4,000 soldiers enrolled in a Bolshevik Military support group. That was but the tip of the iceberg. Just prior to the July uprisings, the Mensheviks and S.R.'s had tried to reassert their weakening hegemony by calling for mass demonstrations of workers' fidelity on June 18 in Petrograd. 400,000 workers turned out and marched carrying solely Bolshevik banners.

If it may be said that 1902 provided the theoretical break with Menshevism; 1905 the organizational break - with its formalization in 1912; April, 1917 was the strategic break; and July, 1917 the final tactical break with Menshevist opportunism. The Party, at its 6th. Congress turned decisively towards the forceful seizure of power by the proletariat.

"The peaceful period of the revolution has ended, a non-peaceful period has begun, a period of clashes and explosions."⁷⁶

Stalin, in full cognizance of the fact that the revolutionary maelstrom was being given tangible form in the shape of the Russian proletariat, the advance guard of world revolution; made the following observation (which became

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⁷⁶ Quoted in "History of the CPSU (b)", p. 197. (The quote is Stalin's.)

the key point in the "socialism in one country" debates of the mid-Twenties):

"The possibility is not excluded that Russia will be the country that will lay the road to socialism... We must discard the antiquated idea that only Europe can show us the way. There is dogmatic Marxism and creative Marxism. I stand by the latter."⁷⁷

This represented the total discarding of the Social Democratic "productive forces" dogma - politics was now in command. The productive forces (especially the proletariat) had long since ripened. (In a forthcoming section on Trotskyism and the Comintern, I shall dilate on the "socialism in one country" arguments).

The revolutionary unity of the Party was concretized at the Sixth Congress, and marked by the formalization of the principle of democratic centralism in the Party's rules. This signified: -that all directing bodies of the party, from top to bottom, should be elected; that Party bodies should periodically give accounts of their activities to their respective Party organization; that strict discipline should prevail, whereby the minority would be subordinate to the majority; and that the decisions of higher Party bodies were binding on all lower bodies and on Party members generally.

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⁷⁷V. I. Lenin, J. V. Stalin, "The Russian Revolution". (New York, International Publishers, 1930). p. 146. The quote is taken from a speech of Stalin's at the 6th. Congress.

Also at the Sixth Congress, the Mezhrayontsi (Trotskyite) group were admitted, having pledged obeisance to the Party programme and having agreed to abandon their syncretic activities. This was, in all probability, a mistake on the part of the Bolsheviks, as although some of the Mezhrayontsi became Bolsheviks (Voladarsky, and Uritsky, for example), Trotsky was never able to, and soon slipped back into Centrism, and finally Menshevism.

In the following three months the Soviets and the working class began to swing en masse away from Menshevism and towards Bolshevism. On August 31, the Petrograd Soviet endorsed Bolshevism, and the Socialist Revolutionary and Menshevik Presidium resigned. On September 5, the Moscow Soviet turned to Bolshevism. With the Bolshevization of the Soviets and the raising of the demand "All Power to the Soviets" together with the demand "Land to the Peasants" (who were already making large numbers of land seizures) the Mensheviks and populists attempted to stem the revolutionary tide by convening a Pre-Parliament. The Bolsheviks, against the wishes of their parliamentary fraction (including Kamenev and Teodorovich), boycotted the Pre-Parliament.

On October 10, the Bolsheviks agreed that having secured a majority in the most important Russian Soviets, they should issue a call for an armed uprising within the next few days. Kamenev and Zinoviev were opposed to this

move and actually "scabbed" by informing the Mensheviks of the decision. Trotsky felt the uprising should be postponed. Nevertheless, on the night of October 24, the revolution began, and on October 25, the Bolsheviks issued a manifesto "To the Citizens of Russia" announcing that state power had passed into the hands of the Soviets. The Second All-Russian Congress of Soviets opened in the evening of October 25 and formed a Soviet Government, electing Lenin Chairman of the Council of People's Commissars. The Mensheviks withdrew from the Congress. The world's first proletarian dictatorship on a national scale had been realized.

It must be emphasized that the centralized striking force embodied in the Bolshevik Party proved to be the ideal weapon for the commission of revolution. Its organizational form enabled it to be highly manoeuvrable - once the revolution had been pinpointed it was able to marshal its forces for a decisive blow. Given also that revolutionary moments crystallize and then dissipate, only a disciplined force which could accept central direction could "seize the moment". Bolshevism thus proved to be a revolutionary force, and October began the process of the disintegration of Menshevism and populism as forces in the working class.

Although the revolution represented the condensation of revolutionary "moments" in the world struggle into a "super-moment" of insurrection: a point of overdetermination;

the process of clarifying Bolshevism did not cease.

The Constituent Assembly, slated to convene in January, 1918, and containing a majority of Mensheviks and S.R.'s presented a problem:

"We see in the rivalry of the Constituent Assembly and the Soviets the historical dispute between the two revolutions, the bourgeois revolution and the socialist revolution. The elections to the Constituent Assembly (based on electoral lists made before the November revolution) are an echo of the first bourgeois revolution in February (March), but certainly not of the people's, the socialist revolution." ⁷⁸

Hence, when the Assembly voted down a resolution calling for the recognition of the Soviet Government as the legitimate state power, it was officially dissolved, on January 26. This, predictably, caused an outcry from the social chauvinists of the West, who had suddenly rediscovered "democracy", and were shocked at revolutionaries using state power coercively, i.e. in a revolutionary manner, especially against their confreres, the Mensheviks.

In December, 1917, Lenin, in the name of the Central Committee ordered Trotsky and the Soviet delegation at Brest-Litovsk to conclude a peace treaty with Germany. Trotsky sabotaged the negotiations and refused to sign a treaty on Germany's terms, whereupon Germany advanced, seizing vast areas of land and forcing the Soviet Government in February,

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⁷⁸ V. J. Lenin, "The Proletarian Revolution and the Renegade Kautsky". (New York, International Publishers, 1934). p. 51.

1918, to sign a treaty on far more onerous terms than the ones Trotsky had refused. Promptly Bukharin, Ossinsky and others in the Moscow Party Regional Bureau passed a resolution of no-confidence in the Central Committee and declared that rather than conclude peace with Germany "we consider it expedient to consent to the loss of Soviet power."⁷⁹

In this tense atmosphere, the Seventh Party Congress convened in March, 1918. This congress endorsed the policy of the Central Committee and censured the Trotskyites and Bukharinites who had ignored party discipline. The Brest peace, although delivered at great cost, granted the party a brief respite in which to consolidate the proletarian dictatorship. To abandon the revolution "for the sake of the revolution" as the oppositionists demanded was sheer sophistry. The "ultra-revolutionary" slogans again concealed liquidationist opportunism.

The Congress also carried out an important demand voiced in the April Theses -the name of the Party was officially changed to Russian Communist Party (Bolsheviks) - RCP (B). They thus dissociated themselves from Social Democracy which as a term was scientifically inapposite, and as a political formation had gone over to the Bourgeois camp. They had "cast off the soiled shirt and donned a clean

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⁷⁹Quoted in "History of the CPSU (b)", p. 218.

one." The term "Communist" was the only correct one to describe the Party's aim:

"In starting on socialist changes, we must clearly set out before ourselves the goal to which they are directed in the final analysis, namely, the creation of a communist society."⁸⁰

By the time of the Seventh Congress, two of Lenin's major demands in the April Theses had been met--the Soviets wielded power and the name of the Party had been changed. The demand for the creation of a fully Communist International had not yet been met, however, this was soon to be accomplished.

The breaching of the imperialist front by the October Revolution had sparked revolutionary upheavals across Europe. In November, 1918, sailors in Kiel mutinied and a revolution broke out in Germany in which the Kaiser was overthrown. Germany now had to sue for peace and the Soviet Government could annul the Brest-Litovsk treaty. Soviets sprang up in Germany, but the tide of revolution there caught in interminable eddies, due to the absence of the subjective factor - a Bolshevik Party (I shall amplify this point in the following chapters). The revolutionary movement continued to drive through Europe. Hungary declared a Soviet government, and in most European nations Communist groupings rose on the crest of the wave of rebellion.

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⁸⁰ Quoted in Dutt, op. cit., p. 159.

A material basis now existed for the creation of a Third International; for the formation of a world Bolshevik organization in which the Soviet Party could give leadership to the world socialist revolution. In March, 1919, on the initiative of the Bolshevik party, the Third, or Communist International was founded and held its first congress.

"The congress adopted a manifesto to the proletariat of all countries, calling upon them to wage a determined struggle for the dictatorship of the proletariat and for the triumph of Soviets all over the world."⁸¹

This provides a logical point at which to break off the narrative. The creation of the Comintern formalized the contingency of the Russian Revolution and the World Revolution. From March, 1919, all internal Party questions became intertwined with the problems of the International Communist Movement. The Comintern was conceived as Bolshevism writ large, as the World Party of the Proletariat.

Therefore, in the remainder of the thesis, the development of the Comintern will be viewed as a direct continuation of the struggle for revolutionary Leninism which had its first impulse in Russia. The victory of Bolshevism in 1917 did not signify the total rout of Menshevism - the "theory of the productive forces", and miscalculations about imperialism were quite resilient tendencies (even within the

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⁸¹ "History of the CPSU (b)", p. 232.

Russian Party). Given the uneven development of the revolution itself this was inevitable. In subsequent chapters, I shall, therefore, examine the Comintern's attempt to generalize the Russian experience (which was, necessarily, the international experience of the proletariat centred in Russia) and lessen the birth pangs of the Communist movement in other countries. As will be seen, this attempt met with stubborn resistance. The experience of "Bolshevization" provides an interesting object lesson, in a twofold fashion:-

- (1) it demonstrates the extreme obstinacy and tenacity of social-democratic survivals in the Communist Parties and
- (2) it demonstrates the difficulties faced by the Comintern in its attempt to become Bolshevism writ large, struggling against the Mensheviks in its own ranks.

This chapter has attempted to elucidate a number of key issues- (1) that Leninism was a continuation and elaboration of Marxism under the conditions of imperialism; (2) that Leninism did not materialize out of thin air, but on the contrary, it was hammered out, and tempered in intense struggle; (3) that this struggle focused its greatest force against the fifth column in the workers movement, Menshevism; (4) that since the uneven development of capitalism made the Russian proletariat the world revolutionary vanguard, the Russian experience could be generalized on a world scale; (5) following the previous point, that the struggle with

opportunism in Russia was merely an aspect of, and in actuality an advance condensation of the same struggle on a world scale--thus Menshevism is equivalent to Kautskyite revisionism, Trotskyism, etc.

Therefore, the preceding analysis of the development of revolutionary theory through Marx and Engels to Lenin was necessitated by the central thread which will run throughout my thesis: the character of the struggle against revisionism. The examination of the experience of Bolshevizing the Comintern merely serves to--(1) isolate one "moment" in this struggle, and (2) analyse the "moment" using the Leninist investigative apparatus--the theory of the Party.

IN WHAT RELATION DO THE COMMUNISTS STAND TO THE
PROLETARIANS AS A WHOLE?

It is necessary for me to append to this chapter a brief conspectus of the organizational physiognomy of the Bolshevik Party.

"The Party is the vanguard of the working class and consists of the best, most class-conscious, most active, and most courageous members of that class. It incorporates the whole body of experience of the proletarian struggle. Basing itself upon the revolutionary theory of Marxism and representing the general and lasting interest of the whole of the working class, the Party personifies the unity of proletarian principles, of proletarian will and of proletarian revolutionary action. It is a revolutionary organization, bound by iron discipline and strict revolutionary rules of democratic centralism, which can be carried out thanks to the class-consciousness of the proletarian vanguard, to its loyalty to the revolution, its ability to maintain inseparable ties with the proletarian masses and to its correct political leadership, which is constantly verified by the masses themselves." 82

This statement, from the 1928 Programme of the Communist International, encapsulates the main features of the Leninist Party. The vanguard party has to fulfill the following tasks: (1) Organize the working class as a revolutionary formation; (2) Disseminate proletarian theory throughout the class, i.e. continually raise the theoretical level and the consciousness of the proletariat; (3) draw workers together as a class formation, irrespective of nationality, i.e. it is internationalist and therefore the

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82. "The Programme of the Communist International", in IMPRECORR, Vol. 8, No. 92, December 31, 1928, p. 1766.

class experience of any national sector is international in content; (4) the Party must be coherent enough to represent this international experience to the proletariat in an organized, relevant fashion; (5) the Party must militarily prepare the class for action, e.g. by promulgating an awareness of the tactics of the opposition, of proletarian tactics, of the art of insurrection, etc.; the Party must unify the working class, given that it is split across certain lines—industry, nationality, sex, etc.

The adumbration of organizational imperatives thus flows from such an understanding of the tasks of the vanguard. The question of organization is then indissolubly linked with the question of politics.

"Political questions cannot be mechanically separated from organization questions, and anybody who accepts or rejects the Bolshevik Party organization independently of whether or not we live in a time of revolution has completely misunderstood it."⁸³

The dual task of the Party as the homogeneous expression of class consciousness, and of the proletarian universalization of this consciousness calls forth a dialectical organizational structure, both democratic and

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⁸³ cited in G. Lukacs. "Lenin", p. 26. This explains the overarching importance given to questions of organization in the 1924-1934 period. All Communist Parties had their own organizational bulletins; ECCI, the CI and IMPRECORR regularly put out documents on organization.

centralist. This form combines the strictest unity of action and outlook, with the widest initiative and independent activity of the Party membership. Democratic centralism requires that after a decision has been democratically reached, whether by a Party Committee or Convention, this decision is binding on all members of the Party, even the minority section in disagreement with it.

In order for the Party, therefore, to arrive at correct decisions which can be rendered operative with the maximum degree of cohesion, the Party as a whole must practice criticism - self criticism. This must take the form of complete freedom of discussion prior to the decisive majority vote. A Party which spent its entire time criticizing a certain point, would of necessity be incapable of resolute practical work. Thereby majority decisions close the discussion of the particular issue.

Contiguous with the principle of democratic centralism, is the principle that the Party cannot tolerate factions. A factional group in the Party disrupts its unity of will and action, turns the attention of the Party inward and transforms the Party into a debating group.

"...factionalism interferes with the training of the party in the spirit of a policy of principles; it prevents the training of the cadres in an honest, proletarian, incorruptible revolutionary spirit, free from rotten diplomacy and unprincipled intrigue. Leninism declares that a policy based on principles is the only correct policy. Factionalism, on the contrary, believes that the only

correct policy is one of factional diplomacy and unprincipled factional intrigue." ⁸⁴

In order to put the above principles into effect, the Party must be highly disciplined. This discipline must be based on a voluntary submission to Party decisions, itself based on a thorough understanding of the Party line, "Only conscious discipline can truly be iron discipline." ⁸⁵

The obvious danger inherent in this strictly unified, monolithic structure, is that the structure may become ossified - a formal shell instead of a living organism. The solution to this problem lies in practicing self criticism which, paradoxically, may be best be practically realized through the centralized structure. The efficacy of self criticism is guaranteed only by the Party maintaining close and deep ties with the working class. It is only on this basis that the Party's work may be checked, criticized and rectified. Centralism insures that this process is as swift as possible.

"Struggle between the old and the new, between the moribund and that which is being born - such is the basis of our development. Without pointing out and exposing openly and honestly, as Bolsheviks should do, the shortcomings and mistakes in our work, we block our road to progress. But we do want to go forward, we must make one of our foremost

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⁸⁴ J. V. Stalin, "Speeches on the American Communist Party". (San Francisco, Proletarian Publishers, 1975). p. 28.

⁸⁵ Quoted in J. Peters, "The Communist Party - A Manual on Organization". (New York, Workers Library Publishers, 1934). p. 28.

tasks an honest and revolutionary self-criticism. Without this there is no progress." 86

The Party edifice - democratic centralism, etc. - is built on a base - the working class. The base does not merely sustain the edifice, on the contrary, the Party structure exists so that the Party may mould the proletariat into a revolutionary unity with maximum efficiency. How is the Party rooted in the working class, and how does this process of rooting fulfill the Party's prime political/organizational tasks? The Party's proletarian base for revolution is consolidated by means of fractions; Party cells, primarily operating in basic industry.

As was alluded to above, the Bolshevik Party used the system of Party Fractions in the factories from its inception. In fact, material circumstances in the shape of the illegal conditions forced on the Party, prompted the Bolsheviks to concentrate their activity on tightly knit factory groups receiving central direction.

"The illegal condition of the Bolshevik Party prompted it to establish Party groups in the factories, where it was easier and more convenient to work. The Party structure of the Bolsheviks thus began with the factories and thus yielded excellent results both during the years of reaction, after the February revolution, and particularly during the October Revolution

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⁸⁶ J. V. Stalin, "Report to the 15th. Congress of the CPSU (b) 1927", in "Collected Works 10", p. 341.

of 1917, the civil war and the great construction of socialism." 87

The Fraction structure thus knits together diverse sectors of the working class and provides the Party with a stable base. This form also provides for the maximum amount of manoeuverability, it can easily accommodate the passage from illegal to legal forms of existence and vice-versa. 88

The above can by no means, be regarded as an exhaustive study of the party structure. I have, however, attempted to elaborate the pivotal points of Bolshevik organization. These points will reappear throughout the thesis as they provide the keys to the organizational/political problems of the Comintern and its member sections. Particularly, the question of Party fractions will be given much greater attention in a subsequent chapter, as it formed

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⁸⁷ O. Piatnitsky, "The Bolshevization of the Communist Parties of the Capitalist Countries by Eradicating Social-Democratic Traditions". (London, Modern Books, 1933). p. 11.

⁸⁸ It should be mentioned that the democratic centralist and fraction based structure cannot exist on national divisions within the Party. As we shall see, the CI itself attempted to be an international workers party, tolerating no national factionalism in its ranks. It is therefore not conceivable that the sections of the CI should have a federalist structure. However, this structure did arise (in the U.S. for example) and a struggle with ECCI occurred. It is tribute to the regressiveness of the Maoites and Trotskyites of today, that they have resuscitated the federal Party structure. At this point in history one can only label such ignorance of one of the fundamental structures in the Communist Manifesto (that Communists promote the "common interests of the entire proletariat, independently of all nationality". - "Selected Works 1", p. 120), racism.

one of the crucial points of contention between the Comintern Executive, and the member sections.

To conclude this section, the Party demands maximum unity and flexibility. Only this format can enable the Party to make the transitions from legality to illegality, from incorrect to correct lines, from peaceful preparations for revolution to revolution itself and to socialist construction, with the utmost celerity. The Party structure also enables it to act as a military formation and concentrate its forces with deliberation at decisive moments. Obviously the fraction structure is key, here, in mobilizing workers speedily for revolutionary action. The Bolshevik Party implies a revolutionary unity. It is precisely this fact that was never grasped by the majority of Comintern sections around the world. I intend to provide some hypothetical explanations for the failure of the Communist Parties in this regard.

"We are marching in a compact group along a precipitous and difficult path, firmly holding each other by the hand. We are surrounded on all sides by enemies, and are under their almost constant fire. We have combined voluntarily, precisely for the purpose of fighting the enemy, and not to retreat into the adjacent marsh, the inhabitants of which, from the very outset, have reproached us with having separated ourselves into an exclusive group and with having chosen the path of struggle instead of the path of conciliation. And now several among us begin to cry out: let us go into this marsh! And when we begin to shame them, they retort: How conservative you are! Are you not ashamed to deny us the right

to invite you to take a better road! Oh yes, gentlemen! You are free not only to invite us, but to go yourselves wherever you will, even into the marsh. In fact, we think that the marsh is your proper place, and we are prepared to render you every assistance to get there. Only let go of our hands, don't clutch at us and don't besmirch the grand word "freedom"; for we too are "free" to go where we please, free not only to fight against the marsh, but also against those who are turning towards the marsh." 89

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V. I. Lenin, "Selected Works 2", p. 33.

CHAPTER II

WHAT IS NOT TO BE DONE - GERMANY AND HUNGARY

The gravitational centre of the thesis will shift, henceforth, to the Comintern and its struggles to constitute a World Communist Party. It must be emphasized that this is a political, not a geographic move - although the arena is now global, the proscenium is still centred in the heart of the world revolution, Soviet Russia.

The remaining chapters will therefore trace the trajectory of revolutionary Bolshevism as it emerges from the Russian Revolution and becomes inscribed in the world proletarian movement. The questions to which the Soviet workers had already found answers were necessarily to be repeated outside Russia. The struggles with Menshevism which actually encorpified Lenin's Party were to be mirrored throughout the International. The main antagonist, Menshevism, formed a global cartel, and assumed positions in two locations - firstly, in the state apparatus of European capitalism as the prime representatives and executors of bourgeois power amongst the workers; and secondly, within the revolutionary territory itself - the Comintern.

For the capitalist class, unexpected factors had beclouded its post-war horizons. The war had not simply brought about a redistribution of markets in preparation for the next turn of the trade cycle. It had not fulfilled

expectations as regards the liquidation of the political and economic crisis which had necessitated the war in the first instance. The Revolution in Russia supervened during the war and when Europe's rulers turned their attention from the imperialist war fronts abroad, to the class war fronts at home they discovered the reverberations of this event on all sides. Europe's workers, returning home from the carnage, discovered that their efforts in the "war to end wars" had not improved their lot. Instead of returning to better jobs, they found no jobs, instead of finding "stabilization" in their respective countries, they found corruption and decay in all the state structures. In the midst of this, the blast from Russia's revolution sounded a clarion call.

Revolutionary workers rose in Germany, Austria, Hungary, Italy and the Balkans, mass strikes and Soviet movements developed in England, France and the Continent. Even the United States, which had emerged from the war relatively unscathed, was hit by an unprecedented strike wave.

However, whilst the example of the Russian Revolution could inspire the world's proletariat, it could not provide for them, tout court, what they had sorely lacked during the years prior to the conflagration - tested Leninist vanguard organizations. Here revolutionary élan, or opportune

revolutionary circumstances, did not guarantee the success of an uprising.

Before, and during, the foundation of the Comintern in 1919, two major upheavals occurred which were to leave indelible imprints in the communist movement, and were harbingers of the difficulties to come in evolving a general staff for the world revolution. The failure of these, the German and Hungarian Revolutions, made the need for the creation of an organization to disseminate the lesson of Russia all the more pressing. These lessons, accrued by the Soviet proletariat, could facilitate the speedy construction of Bolshevik movements worldwide.

Therefore, the next section will deal briefly with the experiences of the German and Hungarian proletariat before considering the birth and infancy of the new International.

GERMANY - HERE IS THE ROSE ...

The story of the 1918-1919 German revolution must begin with the person of its most outstanding leader, Rosa Luxemburg. Luxemburg's history is chequered, her politics a curious admixture of correct revolutionary insights and blind conservative opportunism. Whilst standing in the revolutionary wing of European Social Democracy against Bernstein, she launched into a shrill polemic against Lenin's concept of party organization, in 1904; i.e. in the midst of the Lenin-Martov controversy. In an article titled "Organizational Questions of the Russian Social Democracy" she attacks Lenin's plan for a centralized party organism, and his idea of the party as a conspiratorial vanguard. Her solution was "unification" - the reconciliation of Leninists, Martovists, and whoever else, in one organization:

"at the inception of the mass party - the co-ordination and unification of the movement and not its rigid submission to a set of regulations." 90

Her dislike of disciplined centralism co-existed

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90. R. Luxemburg, "The Russian Revolution" and "Leninism or Marxism". (Ann Arbor, University of Michigan, 1972). p. 95. The "Leninism or Marxism" title is not Luxemburg's. It is a misleading attempt by anti-Communist Social Democrats to attack Bolshevism, using Luxemburg. On the German Revolution, see also: F. Borkenau, "The Communist International". (Ann Arbor, University of Michigan, 1962). pp. 134-161. P. Frohlich, "Rosa Luxemburg", (London, Oxford University Press, 1966). W. T. Angress, "Still Born Revolution". (Princeton, Princeton University Press, 1963). R. Fischer, "Stalin and German Communism". (Cambridge, Harvard University Press, 1948). pp. 3-88.

with her determinist interpretation of Marxism, especially in regard to the Party problem. Luxemburg's version of the "productive forces theory", which managed to be both "spontaneist" and tailist at one and the same time was that the Party could not be "mechanically" embedded in the proletariat, steeled in an arduous struggle to constitute the vanguard. In her theory the Party could come into its own not at the preparatory stages, but only in the midst of a revolution.

"In a word, historically, the moment when we will have to take the lead is not at the beginning, but at the end of the revolution."⁹¹

This conceives of the revolution in a most mechanistic way, not as a process, an unfolding dialectic, but as an isolated moment. One wonders how workers are expected to follow the leadership of a group of revolutionaries who only materialize when the barricades are up and the battle is already joined!

Given this fundamental confusion, Luxemburg was still astute enough to condemn the Kautskyite centre when Kautsky conjured up his "Ultra-Imperialism" phantoms, and of course, when Social Democracy capitulated before the bourgeoisie in its "Great Betrayal" of 1914.

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⁹¹R. Luxemburg. Cited in International Communist Current "International Review", #2. July, 1975. p. 1.

Nevertheless, Luxemburg's theoretical turgidity was to make the inexorable split with the revisionists (which the Bolsheviks had long since made) all the more problematic.

Luxemburg and her group (Jogisches, Meyer, etc.) had not formed an independent party at the time of the opening of the war. Even during the slaughter, whilst she espoused leftist positions, her group remained as a mere tendency within the (now moribund) Second International. It made its appearance as a grouping, called Internationale, in April, 1915, and demonstrated its Luxemburgist timidity at the Zimmerwald Conference (much to Lenin's dismay):

"Under no circumstances should the impression be given that this conference wants to split and form a new International."⁹²

As the bloodshed progressed and a split became more obligatory, the Internationale group further consolidated to form the Spartakusbund in 1916. Its position still vacillated, and Meyer stated at Kienthal:

"We want to create the ideological base...of the new International, but we don't want to commit ourselves on the organizational level because everything is still in a state of flux."⁹³

Thus the organizational question is "impenetrable" until the spontaneous movement, the productive forces, or

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⁹² Ibid.

⁹³ Ibid., p. 2.

whatever, are ripe. This was reflected on both national and international levels. While German Left groups such as Arbeiterpolitik and Lichtstrahlen were publishing Bolshevik articles and calling for a split, the Spartakusbund still adhered to the Sozial Demokratische Arbeiter Gemeinschaft (Social Democratic Work Collective) in the Reichstag. The Spartacists were issuing opaque declarations such as:

"A struggle for the party but not against the party...a struggle for democracy in the party, for the rights of the rank and file, for the comrades of the party against the leaders who have forgotten their duties... Our watchword is neither split nor unity, new nor old party, but the reconquest of the party at the base by the rebellion of the rank and file... The decisive struggle for the party has begun." ⁹⁴

This, in March, 1916, was on a smooth continuum with Luxemburg's "neither split nor unity" confusion in the Junius brochure ⁹⁵ of the previous year, the programmatic document of the Spartacists. Lenin's prescient comment "on the Junius Pamphlet" (July, 1916) was:

"Why the International group took this step backward, we do not know. A very great defect in revolutionary Marxism in Germany as a whole is its lack of a compact illegal organisation that would systematically pursue its line and educate the masses in the spirit of the new tasks; such an organisation would also have to take a definite stand towards opportunism and Kautskyism. This is all the more necessary now, since the German revolutionary Social-Democrats have been deprived of their last two daily papers: the one in Bremen (Bremen Burgerzeitung), and the one in Brunswick (Volksfreund), both of which have gone over to the Kautskyists. That

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⁹⁴ Ibid., p. 4.

the "International Socialists of Germany" (I.S.D.) group alone remains at its post, is definitely clear to everybody."⁹⁶

The I.S.D. in Arbeiterpolitik had stated in March, 1916, that:

"We consider that a split, both on the national and international level, is not only inevitable but an indispensable precondition for the real reconstitution of the International, for the reawakening of the proletarian movement. We consider that it is inadmissible and dangerous to hold back from expressing this profound conviction in front of the labouring masses."⁹⁷

The Spartakusbund still continued to adhere to the USPD (Independent German Social Democracy), a party which had slightly differentiated itself from the crude imperialism of the Scheidmann leadership, but which still gave support to the partisans of war. The revisionists Kautsky, Haase, Lebedov, Hilferding and Bernstein led the USPD.

The fact that the Luxemburg group still harboured dangerous illusions about "unity" with the opportunists struck the German Internationalist left a grave blow. In August, 1917, they went as far as to convene a meeting with the purpose of forming a new party, without the Spartakusbund.

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⁹⁵R. Luxemburg, "The Junius Pamphlet". (London, The Merlin Press, 1970).

⁹⁶V.I. Lenin, "Collected Works 19", p.201. (My emphasis).

⁹⁷"International Review", p. 2.

Arbeiterpolitik even wrote the following obituary for the Luxemburgists:

"The Internationale group is dead...a group of comrades have formed themselves into an action committee for the construction of a new party." 98

The urgency of the situation and the perilous nature of the policy of uniting with the Kautskyite "Centre" prompted the same organ to further state that:

"The idea of building a party with the centrists is a dangerous utopia. The left radicals, whether the circumstances have prepared them for it or not, must, if they want to fulfill their historic task, build their own party." 99

The intervention of the Russian Revolution a mere two months after this meeting, intensified the contradictions in the compromise stand of the Spartakusbund. Their Kautskyite "allies" opposed the overthrow of the Kerensky regime and thus entrenched themselves more firmly in the imperialist camp.

The Arbeiterpolitik group saw the situation as the necessary jolt which could galvanize the Spartakusbund out of its torpor. Arbeiterpolitik, in December, 1917, bitterly pointed to the autonomous existence of Bolshevism in Russia as the decisive factor in the success of the revolution (in clear opposition to the irresolution of the Luxemburgists).

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 98 Ibid., p. 3.

99 Ibid.

"Uniquely and solely because in Russia there is an autonomous party of left radicals which from the beginning has raised the flag of socialism and fought under the banner of social revolution. If at Gotha one could out of good will still find reasons for the attitude of the Internationale group, today all semblance of justification for association with the Independents has vanished. Today the international situation makes the foundation of a radical left party an even more urgent necessity.

For our part we are firmly committed to dedicating all our strength to creating in Germany the conditions for a Linksradikalen Partei. We therefore invite our friends of the Internationale group, in view of the weakness of the Independents over the last nine months and in view of the corrosive repercussions of the Gotha compromise (which can only prejudice the future of the radical movement in Germany) to break unambiguously and openly with the pseudo-socialist Independents and to found an autonomous radical left party." 100

Despite everything, it took one further year, until December 30, 1918, before the constitution of the German Communist Party (KPD). In this year the objective conditions and the spontaneous crystallizations of mass revolutionary discontent cried out for an independent organization, even if gauged according to Rosa Luxemburg's historic timetable. The year 1918 began, in a Germany embroiled in the midst of a World War, with a massive strike wave involving upwards of 1,000,000 workers, a shop stewards' movement in Berlin and other industrial centres, country wide protest movements against the predatory Brest-Litovsk agreement, bread riots

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¹⁰⁰ Ibid., p. 4. At Gotha the Spartakists joined with the USPD. (My emphasis).

and troop insubordination and desertions. The trade-unions, which had been reduced by the war to a membership of 2,000,000, were now expanding and proleferating rapidly, to embrace 8,000,000 by the end of 1919.

On November 5, 1918, in an atmosphere of general abhorrence of the war, and of the plummeting fortunes of the Kaiser's war machinery, sailors of the Grand Fleet at Kiel forsook the opportunity to "die gloriously" with their fleet to stop the military hardware from falling into Bolshevik hands. Virtually mirroring the famed 1905 Potemkin incident in Odessa, this rioting ignited a national conflagration. Soviets arose throughout the land, and on November 7, a Soviet headed by Kurt Eisner took power in Vienna. Two days later, the German Government folded and the Kaiser fled.

On November 10, the Workers and Soldiers Councils of Berlin declared that "The old Germany is no more... The Workers and Soldiers Councils (Soviets) are now the bearers of political Sovereignty."¹⁰¹ Although the German Soviets still had a counter revolutionary majority (the SPD) at the helm, the proletariat had obviously outstripped its erstwhile leaders with alacrity. Besides, the alternatives were as yet intangible, as the revolutionaries had not cohered to

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¹⁰¹ H. Laidler, "Socialism in Thought and Action". (New York, International Books, 1920). p. 261.

to form a vanguard.

The revisionists, by no means willing to relinquish their death-grip over the masses, performed an intricate two-step around the revolution. As bullets ricocheted on the walls outside, the leading SPD trade-union leader Karl Legien, and billionaire Hugo Stinnes held a meeting on how best to resuscitate capitalism by providing cosmetic reforms. Thus, the Social Democrats issued statements "in favour" of Soviet Power - they could not do otherwise - and at the same time proposed to set up a counter-revolutionary National Assembly (a parallel to Russia's Constituent Assembly), to counteract the power of the Soviets.

Kautsky explained why the SPD had to pay lip service to the recognition of Soviet Power:

"In November, 1918, the Revolution was the work of the proletariat alone. The proletariat won so all-powerful a position that the bourgeois elements at first did not dare to attempt any resistance." 102

In the National Assembly subterfuge, Ebert, Noske, Scheidemann and Landsberg represented the SPD and Haase, Dittman and Barth, the USPD. Liebknecht had been asked to join the Assembly, to provide it with a fig leaf of revolutionary legality. Liebknecht refused.

At a later date, the Social Democratic leaders were

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¹⁰² K. Kautsky, "The Dictatorship of the Proletariat", (London, RKP, 1972). p. 31.

quite open about their enmity for the Revolution.

Scheidemann declared, in a 1922 libel suit:

"The imputation that Social Democracy wanted or prepared the November revolution is a ridiculous, stupid lie of our opponents."¹⁰³

The revisionism of the SPD from the 1870's onward had turned them firstly into open imperialists, in 1914, and now into counter-revolutionary stormtroops, in 1918-1919. This directly ensued from their mechanical opposition of the concepts "dictatorship" and "democracy" (most clearly evinced in Kautsky's "The Dictatorship of the Proletariat").¹⁰⁴ This, in turn, was consequent to their ignorance of the Marxist theory of the State, and the concept of proletarian dictatorship.

Therefore, while proclaiming its fidelity to the proletarian revolution, the Social Democratic junta maintained the bureaucracy and the institutions (including the Ministries of War, the Navy, Foreign Affairs, Finance and the Interior) of the ancien regime, and disarmed the proletariat - forcibly.

The founding congress of the KPD found two tendencies, a left and a right, represented in it. The left included Liebknecht, and the right, Luxemburg and Levi. The split centred on the issue of immediate armed insurrection, the left in favour, the right opposed. However, the rank and

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¹⁰³ R. P. Dutt, "Fascism and Social Revolution". (New York, International Publishers, 1935). p. 129.

¹⁰⁴ op. cit.

file were in no mood to temporize, and events precipitated the newborn KPD into making a bid for power.

The National Assembly removed Eichhorn, a popular Leftist, from his position as military commander of Berlin, and the KPD and the Left USPDists rallied to his support. A general strike spread throughout the country. The Social Democrats now showed their hand, and demonstrated the true meaning behind their dislike of the concepts of armed revolution and proletarian dictatorship, and their taste for "peaceful transition to socialism". Noske, Social Democratic Minister of Defence, mobilized the most reactionary forces in Germany, the former officers of the Kaiser, to quash the popular movement. His aim was to "save Germany from Bolshevism" and that therefore he stated, "someone has to be the bloodhound. I shall not shirk the task."¹⁰⁵

At that point Rosa Luxemburg's anti-Leninist theories bore their bitter fruit. The convention of the KPD could not solve its organizational malady at one stroke. The Party did not have even an elementary industrial concentration policy. It was dominated by adherents of the "glorious isolation", theory, i.e. keep aloof of mass organizations such as trade unions, and attempt to win people by mere

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¹⁰⁵Foster, p. 280.

propoganda alone. This simply left the KPD hopelessly isolated from the mass of workers - with revisionist or compromising elements in control. Again the lessons of Russia had not percolated down in Germany. The result of Luxemburg's distaste for organization and centralization, was that, at the crucial moment, the KPD was in total confusion. It could no less seize the hour than seize anything. In Berlin, no one knew what was going on in the Ruhr, and vice versa. The KPD's organ Rote Fahne (Red Flag) as much as admitted this:

"the non-existences of a centre charged with organizing the working class cannot last..... It is vital that the revolutionary workers set up directing organisms capable of guiding and utilizing the combative energy of the masses." 106

The Party could not even formulate a coherent plan for marshalling their workers to capture strategic points. Following the flight of the Government into the suburbs, their main target appears to have been the hated Social Democratic paper Vorwaerts, hardly the fulcrum of power. Rosa Luxemburg had also faulted the Bolsheviks for their use of revolutionary terror against counter revolution. This timidity also produced its disastrous results as factions of the KPD balked at revolutionary violence. The result of Luxemburg's pacifism and "anti-authoritarianism"

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106 "International Review", p. 7.

was her murder, the murder of Liebknecht, Jogisches, and others, the outlawing of the KPD, wholesale arrests and executions of workers, and the first in a series of defeats for the German Revolution, culminating in the Hitler regime of 1933. Despite Lenin's warnings, and the example of victorious Bolshevism, German revolutionaries could not be prevented from looking on the true face, the Medusa face of Social Democracy. Incredible as it might appear, the 1919 revolution had not completely driven home to the European Communists the lesson of the necessity for a complete and clean break with the "bloodhounds" of the Second International, but more on this later.

HUNGARY: THE SOVIET REPUBLIC

Although the Hungarian Soviet Republic took place following the founding of the Comintern, it will be considered first, because it both corroborates and deepens the lessons of the German experience, with regard to the necessity for a relentless war on International Menshevism. The Hungarian Revolution also coloured the organizational and tactical strictures of the Comintern, which were to be effected at the Second World Comintern Congress in 1920, i.e. following the Hungarian defeat.

The Austro-Hungarian Empire had been blown apart by the vicissitudes of the world war. The many national minorities of the region, Poles, Czechs, Slovenes, Serbians, Montenegrins, Croatians and Hungarians, rose and set up separate bourgeois republics at the close of the war. In December, 1917, Soviets sprang up in Hungary and on January 18, 1918, railworkers struck and 150,000 demonstrated against the war shouting "long live the workers councils!" and "greetings to Soviet Russia." In the summer of 1918, Soviets arose in Budapest, sailors mutinied, and mass demonstrations were held under anti-war, and pro-national self determination banners. In the break up of the Empire, the aristocracy lost its lands. In this ferment the old regime toppled under mass pressure, without much resistance. Count Karolyi, a bourgeois pacifist-democrat, assumed power

on October 31, 1918. His Government was a coalition of bourgeois forces, not in the least of which was the Hungarian Social Democratic Party.

The Karolyi regime was faced with a number of problems; making an effective peace, democratization, agrarian reform, and a dual power situation with the Soviets. A mere four days after Karolyi's accession to power, on November 3, the Entente signed an armistice with a representative of the Austro-Hungarian monarchy, in Padua. The Hungarian regime was scandalized and insisted on negotiations for a separate peace. On November 7, officials met with a Hungarian delegation in Budapest, and signed an armistice whose terms were far more predatory than those of the November 3 agreement. This was the Government's first public humiliation. Others were to follow in rapid succession as the Government's and the bourgeoisies' star waned.

The Minister of Defence, Linder, resigned on November 8, and Bartha, who took his position, immediately tried to overturn the power of the soldiers' Soviets. On November 13, he declared: "I will not tolerate Soldiers Councils". By December 4, mass indignation had forced him not only to tolerate the Soviets, but to recognize the the Soldiers Councils as the sole legitimate power in the army. Bartha resigned on December 11.

At this time the landed aristocracy revolted against incipient attempts to bring about land reform. The Government's faltering steps towards bourgeois democracy came to a halt - it lacked the power to even convoke a National Assembly. The infant Communist Party in December began to take roots in the masses (via Bolshevik style factory cells), with its opposition to the Social Democratic opportunist, and demands for Soviet power. In the months following, it grew rapidly.

On March 20, 1919, Entente Lieutenant Colonel Vix, chief of the Budapest armistice commission, presented the demoralized and unpopular Karolyi regime with a further territorial ultimatum. As the bedrock of the regime was its professions of faith in the Entente's good will, the Government was placed in an insoluble dilemma. It could not accept the terms, which would lead to a rising of the populace against it, and it could not reject the terms, as the Government did not have the prestige to, or the capability of organizing resistance. This caused the Karolyi government's dissolution. No one remained strong enough to fill the vacuum but the proletariat, which formed a Government on March 22.

Before detailing this struggle, I intend to retrace my steps somewhat, to cover the pre-revolutionary history of the Hungarian Communist movement. The Hungarian Social

Democratic Party (HSDP) presented much the same visage as its confreres throughout Europe in the first two decades of this century. It was a party dedicated to gradualism, revisionism and opportunism. The highest pinnacle to which it could raise its sights was "universal suffrage". Socialism was simply not on the agenda. The party's spinal column and sole organizational framework was the trade unions, and their spineless leadership. As in most European countries dissident Internationalist elements did exist in the party, but also as in Europe, these elements did not have the audacity of the Bolsheviks in actually creating a schism, or the penetration of the Bolsheviks, in discovering new party forms. The dissidents, however, were to form the nucleus of the future Communist Party, and included such figures as Szabo, who excoriated the leadership for its "parliamentary cretinism"; his followers Lukacs and Revai, and Alpari who entered into a full blown struggle with the leadership which ended with his expulsion and his call for a new party to "engage in a merciless struggle with the ruling classes."¹⁰⁷

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¹⁰⁷ R. L. Tokes, "Bela Kun and the Hungarian Soviet Republic". (New York, Praeger Publishers, 1967). p. 15. On the Hungarian Revolution, see also: D. Caitell, "The Hungarian Revolution of 1919 and the Reorganization of the Comintern in 1920" in Journal of Central European Affairs XI. (January-April, 1951), 27-38; A. C. Janos and W. B. Slottman, (eds.). Revolution in Perspective (Berkeley, University of California Press, 1971); I. Volgyes (ed.). Hungary In Revolution 1918-1919, (Lincoln, University of Nebraska Press, 1971).

As the German Social Democracy was the guiding light for all other sections of the Second International, so did the HSDP follow the SPD in its mobilization of workers for the war. Only one faction in Hungary managed to promulgate a revolutionary manifesto, and this was the "Zimmerwald - affiliated Hungarian Socialist Group" led by Mosolygó and Szabo. In November, 1917, they proclaimed "war on War" which "was the slogan of the Petrograd and Moscow proletariat who now call on us..."¹⁰⁸ This group was instrumental in organizing the workers councils of December, and the rail strike of January, 1918. In February, they proposed to depose the leaders of the HSDP, again not thinking in terms of a split, or perceiving the gravity of the situation, although they had, at least verbally, recognized the disease:

"Hungarian socialist leaders are socialists in name only; in fact, they are merely bourgeois democrats."¹⁰⁹

By the time of the Karolyi government, revolutionary socialist elements were in notable discomposure, being undecided about tactical orientations towards the HSDP and Karolyi. This situation was not to be alleviated until the return of the Hungarian Bolshevik group from Russia, to split the HSDP and form a new party.

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¹⁰⁸ Ibid., p. 34.

¹⁰⁹ Ibid., p. 43.

The founders of Hungarian Communism, Bela Kun and Tibor Szamuely, found their way to Bolshevism via a Russian prisoner-of-war camp. Following the February Revolution, Kun had applied to join the Tomsk Bolshevik organization and had been accepted, together with other Hungarian POW's.

Thousands of POWs, Hungarians in particular, actually took part in the October Revolution, in a stirring display of proletarian internationalism.

Under the (dubious) tutelage of Bukharin, Kun and others formed a study circle to prepare themselves for return to Hungary and for the formation of a Leninist vanguard. On March 24, 1918, Kun and his comrades formed the Hungarian Group of the Russian Communist Party (Bolsheviks), the first such group to be formed in Russia. In October, before leaving for Hungary, Kun stated to the Hungarian group:

"We communist Bolsheviks who for decades have been fighting for the liberation of the proletariat, and also those who as young men here in Russia learned the way of emancipating the working class, most decisively forever broke with the social-democracy, for today it is the party...of the counter-revolution.

...it is our duty to form the Communist Party of Hungary...

...(the party's) organizational principles must be the same as those of the Russian Communist Party... because the Russian dictatorship of the proletariat is the cornerstone of the new revolutionary International. The Russian Communist Party today is a unified, strictly disciplined party - the type we need ourselves." 110

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 110 Ibid., p. 237.

History was to demonstrate the veracity of Kun's proclamation. Kun arrived in Budapest at the end of October into the middle of a maelstrom. He sought to conflate all revolutionary leftists under the Bolshevik flag, and largely succeeded in so doing. On November 24, Kun completed the secession of the disaffected from the HSDP and convened a foundation conference for the HCP.

During the next four months, the HCP carried on energetic propaganda against the Karolyi regime, against the sycophancy of the HSDP, and for a proletarian dictatorship. The Vörös Ujság (Red Gazette) accused the HSDP of making "its peace with the aristocracy, with the bourgeoisie, and with the bankers." It also pointed to the fact that for the HSDP the bourgeois and the proletarian revolutions were synonymous, therefore, that according to them, "the revolution has been won."¹¹¹ Once more, the revisionists were aping their German counterparts by supporting the bourgeois regime as against the soviet power, and by misrepresenting the situation as "socialism".

The HCP did, however, evidence one grave confusion, in their attempt to pressure the HSDP so that it would "move to the left". This certainly underestimated the extent to which the party, and especially its leadership, was committed

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¹¹¹Ibid., p. 99.

to the bourgeoisie.

In spite of this, the Party did not hesitate to launch a vigorous campaign for recruitment, and for control of the soviets. Even bourgeois historians have been compelled to admit the resounding success of this campaign. The Party showed that it had indeed learned something from the Bolsheviks - industrial concentration work. From the instant that the Party was created it sedulously carried out a campaign to win the industrial proletariat, particularly the proletarians in heavy industry. This corresponded, of course, to the strategy of the Bolsheviks in their industrial fraction work.

Thus the membership and propaganda drive concentrated on the trade unions of metal workers, construction workers and railroad workers, on workers in armaments, munitions and heavy industry in Budapest, on miners and steelworkers throughout Hungary, on the Soldiers Soviets, former POWs, veterans organizations and the unemployed. In recruiting, the Party gave top priority to the three major trade unions, and even assigned five Central Committee members to organize a systematic campaign in the Metal Workers Union. This was especially fruitful, given that this union had a long and militant history of strikes - with no support from the HSDP.

The recruitment of munitions workers was successful, as was the recruitment of miners. In Hungary's economy the mining industry was key, as all industry depended on coal to

function. In one incident, in December, Rudas went on a speaking tour amongst Salgotarjan miners. Following his oratory the miners organized an armed insurrection, taking over the town before being crushed by police (backed by the HSDP). The Soldiers' Soviets were conquered, and, as mentioned above, gained the power to oust two defence ministers.

Propaganda methods of the HCP included leafletting, speaking, and even guerilla theatre. Szanto recalls:

"Another method of agitation was to send two well-instructed comrades to busy streetcorners and have them argue about the internal situation, the Russian Revolution, trickery of the counter-revolution, and any other issues bearing relevance to the dictatorship of the proletariat. One comrade represented the communists, the other, the Social Democratic Party... Soon there was a public meeting...and the "communist" debater invariably "won". ...Sometimes the listeners were close to beating the comrade impersonating the Social Democrat." 112

By January 7, 1919, barely six weeks after its first appearance, the HCP had 4,000 members, a majority of whom were industrial proletarians. This was more than the HSDP could take. The suffering party was already rent by the fact of trying to look socialist while acting capitalist, and the merciless agitation of the HCP exposed their every manoeuvre. A left group within the party appeared and the HCP called for a further split. The HSDP executive reacted

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112 cited in Ibid., p. 112.

by banning the Communist fraction from participation in the Workers' Councils. (The HCP, unfortunately, left the Council without trying to "illegally" infiltrate it). The HSDP supported all police actions against Communist workers, revitalized fascist military formations, and fought against attempts to build a socialist movement amongst the peasantry. The HSDP empowered Bohm to send munitions to White Ukrainians fighting Soviet Russia. At this point the HCP began propagandizing for armed insurrection:

"To hell with bourgeois democracy! To hell with a parliamentary republic which makes it impossible for the masses of the proletariat to act....Long live the republic of the councils of the workers, soldiers, and village poor which will assure the rule of the exploited. ...To arms, proletariat!"¹¹³

On February 20, a demonstration attacked the editorial office of Nepszava, the HSDP paper. In the ensuing struggle six policemen were killed. The HSDP used this as their necessary excuse, and jailed 42 Communist leaders, including Bela Kun. However, this action did nothing to elevate the prestige of the revisionists amongst the workers. The command of the HCP was left in the hands of a Second Central Committee, under Szamuely, who were to prepare an uprising. Despite the imprisonment of the leadership, the Party continued to grow by leaps and bounds. Reports of the beating of Kun in jail

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¹¹³ Cited in Ibid., p. 113.

outraged the masses and on March 18, a demonstration of several thousand ironworkers resolved to fight for the release of the Communists with arms, if necessary. These thousands then joined the HCP. The following day a printers' strike paralyzed the press.

This was the day of the Vix vote, and the dissolution of Karolyi's "Peoples' Government". The vacuum remained to be filled. At this point the twist in the story occurs, and the Communists, after valourously leaping from summit to summit, ever upward, lose their footing.

The armed proletarian masses were waiting in the wings and were not about to tolerate any revanchist plot; the seizure of power was within their grasp. The Social Democrats could not simply bow and leave the stage, they wanted to retain at least a certain degree of currency as bourgeois servitors in the workers camp. They also could not form a government alone, as this would, in short order, be "recalled" by the armed masses. The only realistic path open to the Social Democrats was a devious one, but one which they were to travel. They performed a drastic volte face and proclaimed their interests and those of the Communists to be harmonious, and called for the dictatorship of the proletariat. What was the reaction of Communists, who, for four months prior to the collapse, had vilified the "bourgeois socialists", had won their base away from them, and had prepared armed action?

Kun, from jail, on hearing of the HSDP's unity talk, proposed that they accept his maximum programme - adherence to the Comintern, dictatorship of the proletariat, nationalization of all private property, etc. No doubt he was surprised to discover that the revisionist leadership acceded to all his proposals.

Therefore, under the aegis of the Communist programme, not only did the Social Democrats and the Communists unite, they solidified into one body, one party, despite the clamour of the Communist left (Szamuely, etc.). On March 22, 1919, the Hungarian Soviet Republic was declared.

Not a drop of blood was shed, and yesterday's violent antagonists became today's "comrades". It is no wonder that the left in Hungary, and the Russian Central Committee approached the "revolution" with some trepidation. Szamuely stated that not only was unification "immoral", but it "spelled the doom of the Soviet Republic."¹¹⁴

Lenin exercised extreme caution following the declaration of the Soviet Republic and wired the following message to Kun on March 23:

"Please inform us what real guarantees you have that the new Hungarian Government will actually be a communist, and not simply a socialist, government, i.e., one of traitor-socialists.

Have the Communists a majority in the government? When will the Congress of Soviets take place? What does the socialists' recognition of the dictatorship of the proletariat really amount to?"¹¹⁵

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¹¹⁴ Cited in Ibid., p. 149.

¹¹⁵ V.I. Lenin, "Collected Works 29", p. 227.

A couple of days later Lenin hesitantly recognized Soviet Power in Hungary, again with reservations:

"The first communication we received about it gave us some grounds for fearing that, perhaps the so-called socialists, traitor-socialists, had resorted to some deception, had got round the Communists, the more so that the latter were in prison. And so, the day after the first communication about the Hungarian revolution was received, I sent a wireless message to Budapest, asking Bela Kun to come to the apparatus, and I put a number of questions to him of such a nature as to enable me to make sure that it was really he who was speaking. I asked him what real guarantees there were for the character of the government and for its actual policy. Comrade Bela Kun's reply was quite satisfactory." 116.

However, the Bolsheviki did not abstain from criticizing this disastrous conciliation with the opportunists, even as the united party was in power. Articles in the Communist International repeatedly called for a split. Bela Kun was oblivious to the warnings and strove for unity at all costs. His blindness appears to derive from some remnants of Luxemburgism in his outlook. Despite the fact that Kun and his group had learned enough from the recent German debacle to build a strong organization concentrated in the industrial proletariat, they partially retained Luxemburg's distaste for organization (especially Lukacs), not understanding its necessity following the seizure of power. Also, in spite of accounts of the "terrorist Kun" given

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116 Ibid., p. 242.

in bourgeois histories,¹¹⁷ he retained Luxemburg's antipathy for revolutionary terror - this seemed to be justified in the light of the fact that the bourgeoisie had, quite peacefully, dumped power in the lap of the proletariat. The circumspection of the Szamuely leftists did nothing to alter Kun's outlook. Szamuely, in fact, had personally argued for armed insurrection in Berlin in December, against Rosa Luxemburg, and was quite jumpy about winning power at a prison conference table comedy rather than in the drama of the barricades.

While the revolution carried out sweeping socialization measures, Kun was forced into deeper and deeper compromises in order to mollify the Social Democrats. Leftists (including Szamuely) were removed from commanding positions in the Soldiers' Soviets, and in the police, to be replaced by Social Democrats. (In fact, Kun asked Bohm to replace Szamuely!)

In addition, Szamuely and Korvin had authority over Hungary's Cheka, the "Lenin-Boys", and these were disbanded by Kun. The political police were placed in the warm hands

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¹¹⁷ See, for example, Committee on Un-American Activities, "The Communist Conspiracy Part 1 Section D", p. 80; H. Ebon, "World Communism Today". (New York, Whittesley House, 1948). pp. 78-81; F. Borkenau, "World Communism". (Ann Arbor, University of Michigan Press, 1962). pp. 108-134. These are some of the more hysterical examples of the genre.

of former bourgeois police detectives. Given the crucial role of the Cheka in the Soviet Union, as guarantors of the revolution against bourgeois conspirators, this was a death-blow.

In June, certain rifts began to open, in a debate over the Comintern's demand that the united party change its' name to "the Hungarian Communist Party." The Social Democrats now maintained that they wanted to remain aloof from being associated with the Russian "dictatorship". They further maintained that those who would secure the revolution by means of revolutionary violence were "mentally deranged".¹¹⁸

The debate over the Party name became a struggle over aims and tactics of the revolution. The Social Democrats preached "freedom" for the capitalists to continue their exploitation, for capitalist propaganda to continue unabated. The Communists correctly countered that the suppression of the capitalists, rather than capitulation to them, was the only way to prevent further bloodshed. The revisionists went further and brought racist notes into the proceedings, arguing against the name "Communist" as it was associated with "Galician Jews". After the revisionists ruled out the possibility of a purge, the Communists gave

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¹¹⁸ in Tokes, op. cit., p. 176.

up (and gave in).

The Communists had abandoned their earlier reliance on the proletarian masses which had been so spectacularly successful, for attempts to consummate the revolution through parlour debates with anti-Semites and bourgeois apologists. In this respect, the Communists themselves had sunk to the level of the revisionists. The only excuse they now had for maintaining the coalition was opportunism, and lack of faith in the capacities and potential of the masses. The Party adopted the compromise name "Socialist-Communist Party of Hungary". The Social Democrats also refused to stop publishing Nepszava, their reformist newspaper.

The revisionists, not content with having disorganized the Party, now tried their hand at open counter-revolution, and at their instigation an uprising of demobilized soldiers occurred in late June in Budapest, under anti-Communist and anti-Semitic banners. Though this rising proved to be abortive, the Social Democrats now began to rethink their tactics, and wonder if the time was right to stop the charade and openly campaign for the restoration of capitalism. Some left the coalition, and the Communists reacted by reviving the "Lenin-Boys" to deal with the counter-revolution. The remaining revisionists could not tolerate this and, with the knowledge of

Bela Kun, dispatched a counter-revolutionary section of the army to disarm the Chekists at gun point. This left the proletarian dictatorship naked and impotent to deal with the counter-revolution.

Social Democrats concluded a secret agreement with the Entente powers and domestic counter-revolutionaries, and, with the support of the Second International, troops from Austria and Rumania dismembered the fledgling Soviet Republic on August 1, 1919.

During its 133 days of existence, despite the shrill cries of the craven Social Democrats, only 234 counter-revolutionaries were executed. In the months to follow, a fascist dictatorship was installed under Peidl - a Social Democrat. This gave rise to the Horthy regime which carried the revanche through to World War 2. As against the "bloodshed" caused by the Communists, in the following years hundreds of thousands (including Szamuely, Korvin, Laszlo, etc.) were to lose their lives, through the White terror, anti-Semitic pogroms and witch hunts. (In 1919-1921 alone, 1,600 Communists, Militants and Jews were executed, and 100,000 sent to Concentration camps.) Again, the Revolution's timidity about the use of revolutionary terror bore bitter fruit.

For those who would see, the lessons of the Hungarian Revolution were crystal clear. The Communist

International, through the Bolsheviks, appropriated these lessons quickly.

"The lessons of our Hungarian communist brothers should not go unheeded. Their party opened the door to yesterday's Social Democratic compromisers We trusted the solemn vows of the Hungarian Social Democrats to support the Soviet government...

Communists of all countries must now take this severe lesson into account. In this difficult but great period of acute struggle, which is everywhere changing into civil war, the least digression, the smallest error, the most minute compromise with the opportunists may lead to fateful consequences. The Third International should once and for all do away with the weaknesses peculiar to the Second International. Not the slightest concession to opportunism! Not the least trust in the old generation of prostitute leaders! We must understand that the old official social democracy is our mortal foe. This is the lesson to be derived from the Hungarian events." 119

These lessons were to be enshrined in one of the seminal documents in Comintern history: the Twenty-One Conditions of Admittance to the Communist International, which I shall be concerned with in the next chapter.

This account of the history of German and Hungarian experiences has the intention of elucidating some key lessons. Firstly, by way of negative example, the correctness of Bolshevik tactics. In the instances where the Parties concerned followed the Bolshevik prescription, they were remarkably successful; as in the industrial concentration

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119 "Two Dates" in The Communist International, Vol. 1, #5, August, 1919, p. 13.

policy of the HCP from December 1918 to March 1919.

Secondly, that an autonomous, centralized Leninist vanguard should exist, without any Luxemburgist-Kunist confusions about "unity" with the bourgeoisie. Thirdly, the absolute need for centralization and discipline in these Parties. Fourthly, it is axiomatic that the Party must be oriented towards, and place its trust in, the (primarily industrial) proletariat. This connects with the policy of industrial concentration and fraction building, and with an outlook opposed to compromises with the enemy. Fifthly, the necessity for clear revolutionary strategy, prior to the outbreak of revolutionary uprisings. This was noticeably absent from the programme of the KPD. Finally, it is apodictic that there must be mass based revolutionary terror. The KPD organized none, and the HCP gave up on it after arguing with the revisionists. The HCP should have taken their case to the masses, and organized them for the commission of Red Terror, as did the Russian Chekists, under Dzerzhinsky.

While opportunism and non-violence gave the revolution a "soft" and "broad democratic" visage, it is precisely this that emboldened the counter-revolution and made its attack all the more sanguinary. The Germans and Hungarians not only forgot/ignored the lessons of Russia regarding the need for a complete rupture with Menshevism, they forgot one of the cardinal lessons of the Paris Commune -

"Would the Paris Commune have lasted a single day if it had not made use of this authority of the armed people against the bourgeois? Should we not, on the contrary, reproach it for not having used it freely enough?"¹²⁰

¹²⁰ K. Marx and F. Engels, "Selected Works 2", p. 379.

CHAPTER III

"LET EACH STAND IN HIS PLACE"

After the Second International had been shattered in 1914, it appeared impossible for its constituent organizations to be reunited. The sections had actually organized workers of their respective countries for mutual slaughter - German Social Democrats versus French, British, etc. However, they had consistently responded to a "higher" calling than that of service to the working people - in 1914, they became the (unexpected) bulwarks of imperialism. In 1918, and afterwards, they were to be needed again, to bring the rebellious masses back into the fold, away from Bolshevism, and to bolster the existing order. Thereby, at the close of 1918, plans were afoot to resuscitate the "mouldering corpse"¹²¹ of the Second International, to unify the former combatants on the only available common platform, counter-revolution. This body met at Berne, in February, 1919.

In the midst of this activity, the Bolsheviks grasped the need to give shape and direction to the storm gathering strength in the international workers' movement. As armed clashes between bourgeois and proletarian, were

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¹²¹The expression is Rosa Luxemburg's, and is quoted with approval by Lenin, on a few occasions.

occurring all across the European continent, on January 24, 1919, under the auspices of the Russian Communist Party, eight Marxist parties (of Poland, Hungary, Germany, Austria, Lettland, Finland, the Balkans, and the U. S.) sent out a call to 39 Left organizations worldwide, for a world congress to establish a Third, Communist International.¹²² This call clearly outlined the divergence of the "bankrupt" Second, and the "new revolutionary" Third International.

Two years before the eclipse of the First International, Engels wrote this prophetic note to Sorge:

"I believe that the next International, after Marx's writings have exercised their influence for some years, will be directly Communist, and will proclaim precisely our principles."¹²³

Engels was off by one International, but, nearly forty-five years after he made this statement, the Communist International was born. On March 2-6, 1919, the founding congress of the Comintern was held, with the representatives of nineteen parties and groups. This figure may seem small until one considers the circumstances of armed intervention and international blockade of the Soviet Union, which made

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¹²²J. DeGras (ed.), "The Communist International Vol. 1". (London, Cass and Co., 1971). pp. 1-5.

¹²³K. Marx and F. Engels, "Selected Correspondence", p. 289

the convocation of the congress itself problematic. The following organizations took part - the Communist Party (C.P.) of Russia, C.P. of Germany, C.P. of Germany-Austria, C.P. of Hungary, the left Social Democratic Party (S.D.P.) of Sweden, the S.D.P. of Norway, the opposition Swiss S.D.P., the U. S. Socialist Labour Party, the Bulgarian "Tesniaki", the C.P.'s of Poland, Finland, Ukraine, Latvia, Lithuania, White Russia, Estonia, Lettland, Armenia, and German colonies in Russia.¹²⁴

The agenda of the Congress included the Programme of the Communist International, a report on bourgeois democracy and the dictatorship of the Proletariat (from Lenin) and a report on the Communist attitude towards the Socialist Parties and the forthcoming convention at Berne to revivify the Second International. From the outset, the Bolshevik leaders of the Comintern sought to constitute the new International as an autonomous proletarian body, completely dissociated from the bourgeois "socialists" of the Social Democracy.

"The foundation of the Communist International is the more imperative since now at Berne, and possibly later elsewhere also, an attempt is being made to restore the old opportunist International and to rally to it all the confused and undecided elements of the proletariat. It is therefore essential to make a sharp break between

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¹²⁴ O. Piatnitsky, "The Twenty One Points of the Communist International". (London, Modern Books, 1934). p. 4.

the revolutionary proletariat and the social-traitor elements." ¹²⁵

Lenin opened the proceedings by honoring the memories of Karl Liebknecht and Rosa Luxemburg, who had recently been murdered.

The Programme of the Communist International, First Congress, concerned itself with the conquest of political power by the proletariat, the establishment of the proletarian dictatorship through Soviets, the expropriation of the bourgeoisie, the socialization of production, and the march towards a "communist commonwealth".

Lenin elaborated a series of theses on "Bourgeois Democracy and The Dictatorship of the Proletariat." ¹²⁶ This was necessitated by the anti-Soviet propaganda being disseminated by the dregs of the Second International. Kautsky in particular, had penned a vicious attack on Bolshevism, and even on the concept of the dictatorship of the proletariat, in his book of the previous year "The Dictatorship of the Proletariat." ¹²⁷ In this volume, an attempt to mask the profligacy of Social Democracy, Kautsky

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¹²⁵ Cited in J. DeGras, "Vol. 1", p. 17.

¹²⁶ V.I. Lenin, "Collected Works 28", pp. 457-475.

¹²⁷ Kautsky, op. cit.

argued that Marx's advocacy of proletarian dictatorship was no more than a slip of the pen. Thus Bolshevism based itself wholly on a slight error made by Marx, in Kautsky's terms "das Wortchens" - "a little word". From this monstrosity, Kautsky could go on to censure Lenin for his use of ruthless methods against the bourgeoisie and land owners, and to trumpet the eternal glories of parliamentarism. This, at a time when Kautsky's beloved German Parliament was affixing bayonets against the popular upsurge of the workers.

Lenin's theses attacked the platform of "abstract democracy" from which the renegade socialists assailed the Bolsheviks. Lenin demonstrated that this line merely upheld bourgeois dictatorship, while denying proletarian democracy, i.e. the workers' dictatorship.

"Firstly, this argument employs the concepts of "democracy in general" and "dictatorship in general", without posing the question of the class concerned. This non-class or above-class presentation, which supposedly is popular, is an outright travesty of the basic tenet of socialism, namely, its theory of class struggle, which socialists who have sided with the bourgeoisie recognize in words but disregard in practice. For in no civilised capitalist country does "democracy in general" exist; all that exists is bourgeois democracy, and it is not a question of "dictatorship in general", but of the dictatorship of the oppressed class, i.e., the proletariat over its oppressors and exploiters, i.e., the bourgeoisie, in order to overcome the resistance offered by the exploiters in their fight to maintain their domination." 128

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128 V. I. Lenin, "Collected Works 28", p. 457.

At the Congress Lenin also discussed why it was that a relatively backward country like Russia could lay the foundation for world revolution, and lead the new International.

The report on the Berne conference condemned the Second International for renegacy and, no less trenchantly, castigated the "Centre" (Kautsky, Adler, Turabi, MacDonald) for promoting unity between the revolutionary left, and the counter-revolutionary old guard.

"After the murder of Liebknecht and Luxemburg the "centre" again preached the same 'unity', that is, the unity of communist workers with the murderers of the communist leaders, Liebknecht and Rosa Luxemburg....

The congress of the Communist International considers the 'International' which the Berne conference is trying to establish a yellow strike-breaking international which is and will remain nothing but a tool of the bourgeoisie."¹²⁹

Thus the Communist International was constituted, at its First Congress, as a direct descendant of the International of Marx and Engels. Interestingly enough, only one delegate had voted against the formation of a new International, Hugo Eberlein from Germany, apparently acting under instructions from Rosa Luxemburg. Her death had seemingly done nothing to shake the Germans of Luxemburgism.

The Congress set up a standing Committee, the

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¹²⁹J. DeGras, "Vol. 1", p. 25.

Executive Committee of the Communist International, E.C.C.I., to act as a Central Committee, for a World Party, directing affairs between congresses. Thus the 1919 World Congress succeeded in laying the foundations for a World Proletarian Party. However, its organizational foundations were yet to be laid, and the coalescence of the radical left into a monolithic world structure was to occur over a period extending into the early 1930's.

In the interval between the First and Second Congress, the C.I. was joined by the Italian Socialist Party, the Swedish League of Youth, the C.P. of East Galicia, the Socialist Party of Alsace-Lorraine, the Ukrainian Federation of Socialist Parties, the British Socialist Party, the Bavarian Independent Party, Communist organizations in Bohemia, Lorraine, and Mexico, The International Congress of Working Youth, and others.

Other organizations were split between the Second and Third International, with large membership sections leaving for the Third. This category includes the French Socialist Party, the Danish Social Democrats, and the Spanish Socialist Party. Even in the staid British Labour Party the issue of affiliation with the Comintern was raised, but it merely remained, so to speak, "raised", i.e. up in the air.¹³⁰

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¹³⁰ O. Piatnitsky, "The Twenty One Points of the Communist International", pp. 5-6.

Also, in this period, between March, 1919, and July, 1920, the world revolution still fitfully surged ahead, unable to consolidate itself anywhere outside Russia. In addition to the Hungarian Soviet Republic, Soviet Republics were formed in Bavaria (April 13 to May 1, 1919) and Slovakia (June 16 to July 5, 1919). The course of the Revolution in Bavaria was a tortured and circuitous one.¹³¹

As elsewhere during the revolutionary ferment in Germany in January, 1919, in Bavaria power oscillated precariously between Workers' Soviets, and Parliament (in which the S.P.D. and U.S.P.D. held a considerable number of seats). Eisner, the Prime Minister, was shot on the 21st. of February by an aristocrat. This event sparked revolutionary aspirations in the proletariat, who began to demand a Soviet Government. Two events occurred, analagous to the March events in Hungary. Parliament, lacking popular support, dissolved, and the Social Democrats made a 180 degree pirouette and proclaimed themselves in favour of a Soviet Republic. The S.P.D., the U.S.P.D. and the Peasants' Alliance formed a Government.

Within one week, this Government decided to convene

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¹³¹ On the Revolution in Bavaria, see: Institute of Marxism-Leninism, "Outline History of the Communist International". (Moscow, Progress Publishers, 1971). p. 62; Borkenau, op. cit., pp. 148-151; R. Levine-Meyer, "Levine". (Farnborough, Saxon House, 1973).

the defunct Parliament. The Bavarian proletariat accepted this as a tossed gauntlet, and the Social Democratic executive, executing dizzying turns, followed workers' demands for the immediate proclamation of a Soviet Republic.

Again, as in Hungary, the Communists were being offered the position of 'fig leaf' in the "Soviet Republic". During deliberations in the Government, on April 4, Levine, a Communist leader, took the floor to demonstrate that he was more astute than his Hungarian counterparts.

"I have just learned of your plans. We Communists harbour profound suspicion of a Soviet Republic initiated by the Social Democrat Minister Schneppenhorst and men like Durr, who up to now have combated the Soviet system with all their power. At best we can interpret their attitude as the attempt of bankrupt leaders to ingratiate themselves with the masses by a seemingly revolutionary action or, worse, as a deliberate provocation. We know from our experience in North Germany that the Social Democrats often attempted to provoke premature actions which are the easiest to crush...

...A Soviet Republic cannot be proclaimed at a conference table, it is founded after a struggle by a victorious proletariat. The proletariat of Munich has not yet entered the struggle for power...

After the first intoxication the Social Democrats will seize upon the first pretext to withdraw and thus deliberately betray the workers. The Independents will collaborate, then falter, begin to waver, to negotiate with the enemy and turn unwittingly into traitors. And we Communists will have to pay for your undertaking with the blood of our best...

We don't sit at the same table with Schneppenhorst, the Nuremberg Noske, nor with Durr, who demanded the use of gas-bombs against striking workers!"¹³²

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¹³²R. Levine-Meyer, "Levine", op. cit., p. 90.

The "socialist internationalist" Schneppenhorst wittily polemicized: "Punch the Jew on the jaw."¹³³ The principled stand taken by the Communists, however, did delay the proclamation of the bogus republic by a few days, to April 7.

During the brief existence of this mockery of sovietism, the Communists maintained their implacable opposition. The workers were not armed, the bourgeoisie were not disarmed. The factories remained wholly in capitalist hands whilst the "Soviet" Government attempted cosmetic changes, such as the building of a "revolutionary" university. In the meantime, the U.S.P.D. attempted to go over, en bloc to the Communist Party, including the U.S.P.D. leadership, i.e. a replay of the Hungarian blunder. Luckily for the Communists, the U.S.P.D. leadership reversed itself almost immediately, and decided against fusion.

Outside Bavaria, Noske, and the main body of the S.P.D., was preparing to bring down the curtain on this comedy, and restore "normal" S.P.D. parliamentarism. In the face of the activity, and agitation of the Communists, the impotence of the "Soviet" masquerade, and the impending military intervention, the working class rallied to the Communist Party.

Only six days after the proclamation of the sham

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¹³³ Ibid.

"Soviet Republic", on April 13, the Communist Party called a General Strike and seized power. The Social Democrats seized the railway station and the Munich garrison, in an abortive counter-revolutionary putsch. This had the effect of further consolidating the base of the genuine Soviet regime, in the proletariat.

Nevertheless, the regime had been tardy in suppressing the counter-revolution, and even enlisted the support of the old leaders of the U.S.P.D. These characters began sowing dissent and panic among less stable elements, but were not subjected to government repression (despite the looming threat of war). The U.S.P.D. leadership resorted now to unabashed demagoguery, making anti-Semitic, anti-Communist speeches, and even negotiating with the German SPD centre for a transfer of power. Lenin penned a letter to Bavaria, on April 22, which is worth repeating in toto:

"We thank you for your message of greetings, and on our part whole-heartedly greet the Soviet Republic of Bavaria. We ask you insistently to give us more frequent, definite information on the following. What measures have you taken to fight the bourgeois executioners, the Scheidemanns and Co.; have councils of workers and servants been formed in the different sections of the city; have the workers been armed; have the bourgeoisie been disarmed; has use been made of the stocks of clothing and other items for immediate and extensive aid to the workers, and especially to the farm labourers and small peasants; have the capitalist factories and wealth in Munich and the capitalist farms in its environs been confiscated; have mortgage and rent payments by small peasants been cancelled; have the wages of farm labourers

and unskilled workers been doubled or trebled; have all paper stocks and all printing-presses been confiscated so as to enable popular leaflets and newspapers to be printed for the masses; has the six-hour working day with two or three-hour instruction in state administration been introduced; have the bourgeoisie in Munich been made to give up surplus housing so that workers may be immediately moved into comfortable flats; have you taken over all the banks; have you taken hostages from the ranks of the bourgeoisie; have you introduced higher rations for the workers than for the bourgeoisie; have all the workers been mobilised for defence and for ideological propaganda in the neighbouring villages? The most urgent and most extensive implementation of these and similar measures, coupled with the initiative of workers', farm labourers' and - acting apart from them - small peasants' councils, should strengthen your position. An emergency tax must be levied on the bourgeoisie, and an actual improvement effected in the condition of the workers, farm labourers and small peasants at once and at all costs.

With sincere greetings and wishes of success.

Lenin" 134

Needless to say, none of these measures had been taken by the irresolute Bavarian Communists, and not even three weeks after its proclamation on May 1, the Soviet Government was overwhelmed by outside intervention and internal subversion. A Social Democratic government was set up, which murdered Levine and instituted a White Terror, whilst proclaiming:

"The political struggle will be decided not by brute force of arms but by honest spiritual wrestling. To restore peace and order everyone must see to it that arms are surrendered immediately. The whole population of Munich is called upon to collaborate honestly, confidently and actively.

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134 V. I. Lenin, "Collected Works 29", p. 134.

For right and justice! For freedom and Socialism!
 Vollhals, Police Commissioner
 Schilling, Military Governor." 135

Once more, the proletarian movement paid a high price for its' misconception about the Social Democrats, and for its revolutionary timidity.

In the face of all setbacks, and reversals, however, the German proletariat appeared to be ineluctably propelled towards revolution. On March 13, 1920, the Social Democratic Berlin Government fled ignominiously before a Rightist coup d'etat, a dress rehearsal for 1933. Generals installed an ultra-rationalist regime under a Prussian official named Kapp. This was the infamous Kapp Putsch, in which the German bourgeoisie learned their first lessons about fascist intrigue.¹³⁶ The German bourgeois head, and both of its limbs - the Kappists and the Social Democrats, were quite unprepared for the consequent events. Having banked on the utter demoralization of the proletariat following its defeats of the previous two years, the ruling class was stunned by a massive general strike and a workers' uprising in reaction to the Putsch.

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¹³⁵ R. Levine-Meyer, "Levine", p. 204.

¹³⁶ There are a number of accounts of the Kapp Putsch, among the most useful being: E. H. Carr, "The Bolshevik Revolution 3", pp. 176-181; R. Fischer, "Stalin and German Communism". (Cambridge, Harvard University Press, 1948). pp. 117-148. (this is a very personalized account, from a "lapsed-Communist"/Trotskyist position); and International Communist Current, "International Review", pp. 11-12.

In the Ruhr, the striking workers armed themselves and formed a "Red Army" consisting of between 80,000 and 120,000 workers, with an artillery unit and a small air force. For the first couple of days of the uprising the KPD Zentrale¹³⁷ floundered whilst in Chemnitz and the Ruhr, Communists were in the thick of the battle. In the Ruhr, Communists were calling for a proletarian dictatorship and in Chemnitz under Brandler, on March 15, Communists and Social Democrats entered into an anti-Kapp coalition Government. The Red Army had gathered strength by forming units in each town to fight against the Reichswehr. The insurgent towns then combined their proletarian brigades against towns still held by the bourgeoisie. Until the 21st. of March, the proletariat had the offensive - the strike was successful and the Reichswehr had been pushed back along the Rhine from Remscheid to Wessell.

On March 20, the machinery of Social Democratic betrayal and Communist gullibility began to creak its gears into action. With the demise of the Putsch, the central Social Democratic trade union executive (the ADGB) called off the strike, and two days later, the U.S.P.D. and the S.P.D. followed suit. Obviously the situation was getting out of hand, thousands upon thousands of armed workers were

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¹³⁷ Central Committee.

clearly going for more than a rerun of the Social Democratic form of bourgeois rule.

On March 24, the Social Democratic Government, after having cautiously peered out of its hiding place, came to an agreement at Bielefeld with the S.D.P., the U.S.P.D. and even a section of the KPD. In return for some concessions a cease fire was proclaimed; workers were disarmed; there was to be freedom for workers who had committed "illegal" acts. The larger part of the "Red Army" ignored this treachery. On March 30, the Social Democratic Government issued an ultimatum to the working masses. - either accept the Bielefeld agreement, or the full fury of the Reichswehr (recently quadrupled with the addition of the Freikorps) would be unleashed.

The KPD, throughout this, was plagued by the clear absence of centralism. It simply could not weld together the ranks of the proletariat against the counter-revolution. This lack of Bolshevik firmness and direction is evinced by the capitulation of a section at Bielefeld, and by the fact that Brandler, at Chemnitz, saw his role as being a buffer between the insurrectionary Communists, and counter-revolutionary Social Democrats. The Zentrale further muddled matters on March 26, by issuing the slogan of "loyal opposition", i.e. in the case of a Social Democrat - U.S.P.D. coalition government, the KPD would remain in "loyal opposition":

"We understand loyal opposition in the following way: no preparation for the armed seizure of power, full freedom for the Party's agitation for its goal and its solutions." 138

This was decided in the very midst of an armed rising! Thus the offensive dissipated, and, even at its height, the KPD had given no thought to its co-ordination. As soon as the Social Democrats were firmly back in the saddle, they tore up the Bielefeld agreement and loosed a White Terror campaign against the masses.

In 1927, the Comintern was to have adduced the following lesson from the events:

"There is not one single instance where a mis-carried attempt to revolt has not resulted in the most gruesome White Terror against the workers. Germany alone offers many evidences of this, to say nothing of Bulgaria, Hungary and Rumania. One need only to remember the White Terror after the March fighting in the Ruhr district of 1920. In spite of the understanding of Bielefeld, in which the representatives of the Government gave their sacred promise that the participants in the fighting would be "pardoned", hundreds of workers were simply murdered by the bloodthirsty bourgeoisie." 139

In Moscow, immediately after the Social Democratic recuperation Bela Kun diagnosed the situation as the first occasion on which "the democratic counter-revolution found

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138 This statement was printed in Rote Fahne under the direction of Paul Levi. ("International Review", p. 12).

139 A. Lange, "The Road to Victory" in "The Communist Conspiracy", p. 306. This was one of the first "instruction manuals" issued by the Comintern on the "Art of Armed Uprising".

in Germany an anti-democratic competitor."¹⁴⁰ He, and other Bolsheviks, denounced the KPD's "loyal opposition" formula.

The fluctuations of the European Revolution must be seen as the backdrop for the operation of the historic Second World Comintern Congress. This Congress was the one to produce substantial documents on the organizational unity of the World Communist Movement, and which truly began the struggle to solidify the disparate tendencies into a powerful world organization.

In preparation for this congress, Lenin had penned a work designed to penetrate the fog surrounding the European Communists, to confront their inability, or refusal, to learn from the events in Russia, so as not to drag the Revolution from one catastrophe to the next. Lenin's "Left-Wing Communism: An Infantile Disorder"¹⁴¹, took the form of an attack on those who held to a narrow "national revolutionary" standpoint, and those comrades (like the Spartacists) who had refused to attempt to win the leadership of the masses in industrial concentration, through unions, etc. Via this attack, Lenin was able to give some cardinal lessons on tactics to the worlds' Communists. The first four sections

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¹⁴⁰Cited in E. H. Carr, "The Bolshevik Revolution 3", p. 179.

¹⁴¹V. I. Lenin, "Selected Works 2", pp. 571-645.

of this work consist of object lessons in Russian Bolshevism, under the headings: "In What Sense Can We Speak of the International Significance of the Russian Revolution?"; "One of the Fundamental Conditions for Success of the Bolsheviks"; "The Principal Stages in the History of Bolshevism"; and "In the Struggle Against What Enemies Within the Working Class Movement did Bolshevism Grow Up and Become Strong and Steeled?".

Lenin wrote that, in vivid contrast to the organizational indetermination of the European Communists:

"Certainly, almost everyone now realizes that the Bolsheviks could not have maintained themselves in power for two and a half months, let alone two and a half years, unless the strictest, truly iron discipline had prevailed in our Party, and unless the latter had been rendered the fullest and unreserved support of the whole mass of the working class, that is, of all its thinking, honest, self-sacrificing and influential elements who are capable of leading or of carrying with them the backward strata."¹⁴²

Lenin further pointed to the unequivocal need to assimilate the lessons of Bolshevik history, in order to grasp the organizational question:

"As a trend of political thought and as a political party, Bolshevism exists since 1903. Only the history of Bolshevism during the whole period of its existence can satisfactorily explain why it was able to build up and to maintain under the most difficult conditions the

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¹⁴²Ibid., p. 573.

iron discipline that is needed for the victory of the proletariat." ¹⁴³

Lenin further underscored the fact that Russian Bolshevism was the world vanguard of the workers' movement because:

"Bolshevism passed through fifteen years (1903-17) of practical history in which wealth of experience has had no equal anywhere else in the world. For no other countries during these fifteen years has had anything even approximating to this revolutionary experience, this rapid and varied succession of different forms of the movement - legal and illegal, peaceful and stormy, underground and open, circles and mass movements, parliamentary and terrorist." ¹⁴⁴

Lenin went on to say that, generally speaking, on the most important questions of the revolution, "all countries will inevitably have to go through what Russia has gone through." ¹⁴⁵ Lenin further stated that the principal enemy against which Bolshevism fought, and thus became tempered, was opportunism, i.e. Social Democratism. This, of course, is one of the foremost themes of this thesis.

The study finished by proposing that in all countries, prior to the revolution, the working class would experience a struggle between Communism and Menshevism.

By the time of the opening of the Second Comintern

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¹⁴³ Ibid., p. 574.

¹⁴⁴ Ibid. p. 575.

¹⁴⁵ Ibid.

Congress (July 19 to August 23, 1920), Lenin's booklet had been widely circulated, and the lessons of the recent disasters in Europe were beginning to pierce the Social Democratic cloud enshrouding the leadership of European Bolshevism. These lessons, however, had their greatest impact on the CPSU leadership, who understood them as confirmations of the veracity of Leninism by way of negative example.

The First Comintern Congress had laid the groundwork for the new International, the Second was to set the machinery in motion - with maximum speed. Zinoviev stated at the opening:

"What was the Third International at its foundation in March, 1919? Nothing more than a propaganda association; and this it remained throughout its whole first year... Now we want it to be not a propaganda association, but a fighting organ of the international proletariat." 146

He further stated that this change implied organizational transformation; instead of a series of national parties, the International must become "a single Communist Party having branches in different countries." 147

Lenin opened the Congress by introducing "Theses on the Basic Tasks of the Communist International." 148

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¹⁴⁶ cited in E. H. Carr, "The Bolshevik Revolution 3", p. 194

¹⁴⁷ Ibid.

¹⁴⁸ V. I. Lenin, "Collected Works 31", pp. 184-202.

These theses directly addressed the problems confronting European Communism to which its leaders were blind, even after the fall of Hungarian Sovietism:

"One mistake which is very grave and constitutes an immense and immediate danger to the success of the cause of proletarian emancipation, is that a section of the old leaders and of the old parties of the Second International - some yielding half-unconsciously to the wishes and pressure of the masses, and some deliberately deceiving the masses in order to retain their function of agents and assistants of the bourgeoisie within the working class movement - declare their qualified or even unqualified adherence to the Third International, while actually remaining in all their practical party and political work, on the level of the Second International. Such a state of affairs is absolutely intolerable, because it leads to downright corruption of the masses, detracts from the Third International's prestige, and threatens a repetition of the same acts of treachery as were perpetrated by the Hungarian Social Democrats, who so hastily assumed the title of Communists."¹⁴⁹

The theses went on to explain the necessity for a conscious Communist vanguard to interject in the working class, and raise Communist consciousness. Lenin also indicated that the Bolshevik leadership had begun to realize that the European situation was worse than they had anticipated in 1919, i.e. that the floundering of the world revolution was solely explicable in terms of the lack of Bolshevik organizations, anywhere outside Russia.

"The present stage in the development of the international communist movement is marked by the fact that in the vast majority of capitalist

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¹⁴⁹ Ibid., pp. 184-185.

countries, the proletariat's preparations to effect its dictatorship have not been completed, and in many cases, have not even been systematically begun...

Hence, from the point of view of the international proletarian movement, it is the Communist parties' principal task at the present moment to unite the scattered Communist forces, to form a single Communist Party in every country (or to reinforce or renovate the already existing Party)...

The ordinary socialist work conducted by groups and parties which recognise the dictatorship of the proletariat has by no means undergone that fundamental reorganisation, that fundamental renovation, which is essential before this work can be considered communist work and adequate to the tasks to be accomplished on the eve of proletarian dictatorship." 150

Lenin further stated that Communists must expose ruthlessly, the Centrists, with whom there were more than "theoretical" differences. There could be no inconsistencies in exposing the counter-revolutionary "Centre" even in the Communist Parties themselves.

The next set of theses, "On the Role of the Communist Party in the Proletarian Revolution",¹⁵¹ provoked heated debate, during which European Communist leaders (especially from Holland and Britain) reacted violently against proposed world centralization, and Soviet Russian leadership. Lenin was called a dogmatist, to which he replied that if each Party was allowed to do as it pleased, the International would be unnecessary.¹⁵² The Second International had

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¹⁵⁰ Ibid., pp. 188-189.

¹⁵¹ Cited in J. DeGras, "Vol. 1", pp. 127-136

¹⁵² Ibid., p. 127.

operated without rigorous centralization, and had collapsed when faced with decisive problems. This set of theses iterated and reiterated the lessons of Bolshevik history; the need for an independent party, for struggle against Menshevism, for industrial concentration, and so forth. The Bolsheviks had begun to work assiduously, literally untiringly, to shake the Communist leaders of their recalcitrance.

The Second Congress was therefore faced with a two-pronged problem; firstly, the attempts of Social Democratic parties, under rank and file pressure, to don the garb of respectability by adherence to the Comintern, and secondly, the refractory nature of Social Democratic survivals (belittling the need for a vanguard party, collaboration with Social Democracy, lack of industrial concentration work, etc.) in the fledgling communist parties. Lenin decided to tackle the two dilemmas by a frontal assault, by drawing up a list of admission conditions, a set of rules and obligations, for parties wishing to join the Third International; the famous "21 Conditions".

The two most dubious organizations which had entered into negotiations with the Comintern, with a view to joining, were the Independent Social-Democratic Party of Germany (the USDP) and the French Socialist Party. In the case of the former party, large membership sections had entered

into conjoint struggles with the Communists during the revolutionary events in Germany. These mass sectors exercised great pressure on the centrist leadership (Crispien, Dittman, Hilferding, Kautsky, Breitscheid), compelling them to negotiate entry into the C.I. Frossard, Secretary of the French Socialist Party, was quite candid about the fact that the Party's attempt to affiliate was merely a ruse intended to brake the militancy of the membership. He even openly stated, in L'Humanité, that affiliation meant no more than superficial change to the F.S.P., that its reformism would continue, unrestrained:

"As for the policy of our Party, it is obvious that it remains the same as before... Elections take place. If circumstances arise, the Third International does not in any way hinder the formation of a bloc, sometimes even during the first round of the elections." 153

Even the resolution on the tasks of the Comintern had recognized the insincerity of these parties and had stated that:

"...they are not Communists as yet and frequently even are in direct opposition to the fundamental principles of the Third International, namely, the recognition of the dictatorship of the proletariat and the Soviet power instead of bourgeois democracy." 154

For the union of these parties with the Comintern,

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153 in Piatnitsky, "The Twenty One Conditions...", p. 7.

154 in Ibid., p. 8.

the theses elaborated six stringent membership conditions, over and above the "Twenty One Conditions":

"(1) the publication of all the resolutions passed by all congresses of the Communist International and by the Executive Committee in all the periodical publications of the Party; (2) their discussion at the special meetings of all sections and local organisations of the Party; (3) the convocation after such discussion of a special congress of the Party for the weeding out of all elements which continue to act in the spirit of the Second International. Such a congress to be called together as soon as possible within a period of four months at most following the Second Congress; (4) expulsion from the Party of all members who persist in their adherence to the Second International; (5) the transfer of all periodical papers of the Party into the hands of exclusively Communist editors; (6) the parties wishing to join the Third International but which have not yet radically changed their old tactics must, above all, take care that two-thirds of their central committee and the chief central institutions consist of such comrades who have declared their adherence to a party of the Third International even before the Second Congress." 155

Point (5) must have stung the reformists particularly.

In the F.S.P., for example, the editorial policy of L'Humanite gave the highest proportion of space in leading articles to the "Centre" (Frossard and Cachin) and an equal, though lesser amount of space, to the Left (Loriot) and Right (Renaudel). Thus L'Humanite was far from a vanguard organ for mass mobilization; it merely disseminated three conflicting viewpoints, giving predominance to the vacillations of the centre.

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155 Ibid.

THE TWENTY ONE POINTS

The preamble to the "Twenty One Conditions"¹⁵⁶ demonstrated that these conditions were drafted specifically in view of the advances of the "centre" (W.S.D.P., F.S.P., etc.) and in view of the failures of the revolution in Europe. The conditions direct especial attention to the Hungarian Revolution, and most of the points made refer in some way or another to this experience.¹⁵⁷

"No communist should forget the lessons of the Hungarian Revolution. The Hungarian Proletariat paid a high price for the fusion of the Hungarian communists with the so-called 'left' social-democrats."¹⁵⁸

The preamble repeated the necessity for the Communist International to make an irremediable break with Social Democracy, and openly proclaimed that the paramount aim of

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¹⁵⁶ These were penned by Lenin, with the exception of the Twenty-First Condition, which was proposed by Bordiga to scare off the Rightists. Ibid., pp. 27-32, and also see E. H. Carr, "The Bolshevik Revolution 3", pp. 198-199.

¹⁵⁷ According to Tókes (in "Bela Kun and the Hungarian Soviet Republic") at least eleven of the twenty-one stipulations "bore direct or indirect relevance to the mistakes in Hungary", including: the need to centralize the newspaper editorial board (the dichotomy of Nepszava and Voros Uszag); the removal of reformists from responsible posts; agitprop in the countryside (this was neglected); renunciation of social pacifism; creation and maintenance of communist cells in workers organizations, and factories (the HCP did not attempt to illegally work in the Budapest Workers Council after being kicked out); periodic purges of the party; the drafting of a communist programme (Kun failed to secure this after a fight with the Social Democrats); the binding character of C.I. decisions on the sections (the refusal to accept the Party name suggested by the C.I.); etc., see Tokes, pp. 221-222.

of the Conditions was to prevent Social Democratic elements from worming their way into the International

"The Communist International is threatened by the danger of dilution by unstable and irresolute elements which have not yet completely discarded the ideology of the Second International."¹⁵⁹

The first condition gave primacy to the existence of a Party press, run by reliable Communists, publishing genuinely Communist agitational and propaganda material.

"The dictatorship of the proletariat...should be advocated in such a way that its necessity should be apparent to every rank and file working man and woman..."¹⁶⁰ Given the fact that in the Social Democratic parties, and in (most of) the sectors of the Comintern with Social Democratic survivals a sort of federalism existed, and the Party periodicals were not subject to central discipline, the C.I. demanded that Party publications be subordinated to the control of the Central Committee. The first condition closed by emphasizing that the sections of the Comintern must "systematically and mercilessly denounce in the press, at meetings, in trade unions and co-operatives, not only the bourgeoisie, but its assistants, the reformists of every colour and shade."¹⁶¹

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¹⁵⁸ in Piatnitsky, "The Twenty One Conditions...", p. 27.

¹⁵⁹ in Ibid.

¹⁶⁰ Ibid., p. 28.

¹⁶¹ Ibid.

In the second point of the conditions it was made obligatory for all parties to "systematically and regularly remove from all responsible posts in the Labour Movement (the Party organization, editorial board, trade unions, parliamentary fraction, co-operative societies, municipalities, etc.) all reformists and followers of the 'Centre' and to have them replaced by Communists, even at the cost of replacing, at the beginning, 'experienced' men by rank and file working men."¹⁶²

Given that the Social Democratic parties valued their legal existences, their abilities to confront workers at the polls, more highly than the very lives of their members (and even entered into counter-revolutionary compromises to protect their legality) the third point was clear. It made it a duty for legal parties to form parallel illegal organizations and for illegal parties to combine legal and illegal forms of work. The fourth point was that Communists must carry on "energetic propaganda in the army."¹⁶³ All revolutions have included the mass desertion of soldiers to the ranks of the revolutionists. This process was necessarily facilitated by propagandizing for the workers' cause amongst their class brothers, the soldiers. "The abandonment of such work would be equivalent to a betrayal

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¹⁶² Ibid.

¹⁶³ Ibid., p. 29.

of revolutionary duty and would be incompatible with membership in the Third International."¹⁶⁴ Needless to say, for the Social Democrats, the army was bourgeois sacred ground, and agitation amongst the soldiers would be tantamount to attacking the bourgeoisie, something no "self respecting" Social Democrat could imagine!

The sixth condition obliged all parties to expose not only social patriotism, but also "hypocritical social pacifism" to "systematically demonstrate to the masses that without the revolutionary overthrow of capitalism no international arbitration courts; no talk of disarmament, no 'democratic' reorganization of the League of Nations will save mankind from new imperialist wars."¹⁶⁵

Against the USDP, and the FSP, and in mind of the KPD and the Hungarian Party, the seventh condition called "unconditionally and peremptorily" for a "complete and absolute break with reformism and with the policy of the 'centre'... with the least possible delay."¹⁶⁶

Contrasting with the Second International ("for whom in fact only white skinned people existed") which supported the imperialist policy of its respective nations, the eighth point required parties to carry out anti-imperialist, anti-colonialist policies, and to cultivate fraternal attitudes

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¹⁶⁴ Ibid.

¹⁶⁵ Ibid.

¹⁶⁶ Ibid.

towards oppressed nationalities in the colonies.

An error which had cropped up in many European parties, following the sorry lead of the Spartacists, was a revolt against doing any work in trade unions. This was only the reverse of the medal from open reformism. Without sedulous work amongst the masses, especially in industry, no matter in what unions, the working class is left in the warm clutches of the bourgeoisie - through the reformists. Abandoning work in the unions is in effect abandoning the proletariat to the union leadership, i.e. the capitalist class. Again the lessons of victorious Bolshevism had to be drawn, and the constituent sections of the Comintern were to be ordered to organize their parties on the basis of factory cells (see chapters 1, 4), the elementary form of Bolshevik organization. The ninth point stated that:

"9. Every party that desires to belong to the Communist International must carry on systematic and persistent Communist work in the trade unions, in workers and industrial councils, in the co-operative societies, and in other mass organisations. Within these organisations it is necessary to create Communist groups, which by means of practical and stubborn work must win over the trade unions, etc., for the cause of Communism. These cells should constantly denounce the treachery of the social-patriots and the vacillations of the "Centre" at every step. These Communist groups should be completely subordinate to the Party as a whole." 167

The eleventh condition required the parliamentary

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¹⁶⁷Ibid., p. 30.

groups in each party to be subordinated to the Central Committee, and for Parliament to be used solely as a platform for revolutionary agitation and propaganda.

The twelfth condition required all sections to organize on a basis of democratic centralism;

"12. Parties belonging to the Communist International must be built up on the principle of democratic "centralism". At the present time of acute civil war, the Communist Party will only be able fully to do its duty when it is organised in the most centralised manner, if it has iron discipline, bordering on military discipline, and if the Party centre is a powerful, authoritative organ with wide powers, possessing the general trust of the party membership." 168

The thirteenth condition required a regular cleansing ("purging") of petty bourgeois elements from the Party apparatus. The fourteenth condition required Parties to unconditionally support any Soviet Republic in its struggles against counter-revolutionary forces. The fifteenth condition required that Parties joining the Comintern must revise their old programmes and present them for approval to a Comintern Congress, or to E.C.C.I.

The sixteenth condition obliged sections to submit to the decisions of the Congress of the Communist International, and of E.C.C.I. This formally made the C.I. into a World Party, united and centralized, in contradistinction to the

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Second International. Many parties wished to retain their autonomy, however, and this was a contentious point until the end of the decade. The seventeenth condition required sections to take the name "Communist Party", as the Bolsheviki had done, to dissociate themselves from the old "'Social Democratic' or 'Socialist' Parties which have betrayed the cause of the working class."¹⁶⁹

The twentieth condition required that the Central Committee and leading bodies of the Parties should consist, to the extent of at least two-thirds, of members who, even prior to the Second Congress had "openly and definitely" declared for joining the Third International.

The final condition stated that: "members of the Party who reject the conditions and theses of the Communist International on principle must be expelled from the Party." This applies also to the delegates of the special Party congress."¹⁷⁰

Following the presentation of the theses, Zinoviev stated that:

"Just as it is not easy for a camel to push through the eye of a needle, so, I hope, it will not be easy for the adherents of the centre to slip through the 21 conditions. They were put forward to make clear to the workers in the USDP and in the Italian and French Socialist Parties, and to all organized workers, what the international

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¹⁶⁹ Ibid., pp. 31-32.

¹⁷⁰ Ibid., p. 32.

general staff of the proletarian revolution demands of them." 171

The most outspoken critics of the 21 points were, predictably, the leaders of the USDP, Crispian and Dittman. In an effort to divert the discussion from consideration of the overhaul of the USDP, they launched into an attack on the Bolshevik use of "terror and dictatorship". The conditions, nevertheless, were carried with only two opposing votes. 172

The E.C.C.I. drew up statutes which were to be ratified by the Second Congress. 173 These statutes were an attempt to concretize the unity of the C.I., as a Leninist World Party. The principles of democratic centralism, of the leading role of the Congress and of E.C.C.I. were formalized in the Statutes, as was the predominance of the Bolshevik Party in the world movement. Two delegates, Wijnkoop from Holland, and Paul Levi from Germany, objected to the systematization of Russian leadership of the Comintern, however, the vote for this particular statute was unanimous. 174

At this congress, also, for the first time an objection was raised which was to be repeated ad nauseum from

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171 J. DeGras, op. cit., p. 167.

172 Ibid.

173 Ibid., pp. 161-166.

174 Ibid., pp. 161-162.

this point onwards, by anyone from blundering leaders of Comintern sections, to the U. S. House UnAmerican Activities committee. Angelica Balabanova argued that the primacy of E.C.C.I. and specifically the primacy of the Bolshevik party within E.C.C.I. was intended to destroy the independence of the national parties and to make them subservient to Moscow.¹⁷⁵ However, it is the spirit, rather than the content of the charge, which made it objectionable - ingrained Social Democratic habits had made the concepts of centralism, discipline, chains of command and suchlike, anathema. In effect, the Bolshevik leadership was under strict compulsion to assume the leadership of the Comintern. After all, they were the most authoritative Party, for the reasons outlined by Lenin in "Left Wing Communism". One can only recoil at the idea of the hapless European communists leading the body.

The Second Congress, therefore, made the first corporate attempts to mine the bridges between Bolshevism and reformism. Despite this determination, the schism was not to be actualized for some years to come. The period between the Second and Third Comintern Congresses was to demonstrate further that the hold of European Menshevism

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E. H. Carr, "The Bolshevik Revolution 3", p. 203. The bogey of "subservience to Moscow" was raised by every renegade from Marxism, from Trotsky to Bertram Wolfe, to Claudin, etc. Somehow, after these people were expelled from the Movement, they discovered the glories of "independence". However, the flock of ex-Communists into "Kremlinology" and bourgeois propaganda activities, shows that their "independence", was independence from the working class and dependence on the bourgeoisie. (See also A. Balabanova "My Life As A Rebel" - New York, Harper Bros., 1938).

was wise-like, and that the lessons of Bolshevism, endlessly repeated at the Second Congress, were making slow headway outside Russia.

THE REVOLUTION CONTINUES...

In Italy, directly after the Congress, on August 27, workers independently seized factories throughout the country.¹⁷⁶ The sequence of events was depressingly reminiscent of those in Germany and Hungary. The Italian Socialist Party (ISP) had not split either before or after the War, precisely because it had not followed the Second International Parties' stampede to prove their loyalties to the bourgeoisie. The ISP had taken a principled pacifist stand against the War, and this had boosted its prestige immensely, doubling its' membership from 24,000 to 48,000 between 1910 and 1914. The Party emerged from the War with a membership of 70,000, and after deciding to affiliate with the Comintern, in March, 1919, during an enormous strike wave, the membership rocketed to a high of 200,000 (in November, 1919).¹⁷⁷

During this period, with the gathering of the revolutionary storm, no coherent Communist organization existed. The ISP can in no way be considered a Bolshevik formation, as it united within itself centrists (Serrati), revolutionaries (Gramsci) and open right wingers (Turati,

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¹⁷⁶ On the Italian revolutionary situation, see: Foster, op. cit., pp. 309-311; R. P. Dutt, Fascism and Social Revolution, pp. 113-127; W. Hilton-Young, "The Italian Left". (New York, Longmans, 1949); A. Gramsci, "Poison Notebooks", pp. xxv-xlvi,

¹⁷⁷ R. P. Dutt, "Fascism...", p. 114.

D'Arragona). The exhortations of E.C.C.I. were to no immediate avail. The ISP, in the midst of the rising tide of revolution, acted under the Menshevist, Luxemburgist slogan, "the Revolution is not made, the Revolution comes". This liquidationism thus abdicated the leadership of the movement.

The wave of revolution crested with a lock out of engineering workers in Milan in August. Workers responded by occupying the factories. By September 3, most of Italy's industry was held by workers who had established their own leading committees and armed groups. All the classic pre-conditions for revolution were present; the Government of Giolitti temporised, the armed forces went over to the side of the workers, the bourgeoisie was in disarray. The key condition was absent - a Leninist vanguard to organize the seizure of state power. By this time E.C.C.I. had literally ordered the ISP to adhere to the 21 conditions and to expel Turati and company without delay.

"In Italy there are at hand all the most important conditions for a genuinely popular, great proletarian revolution.

...the Italian Socialist Party has acted and is acting too irresolutely. ...The basic reason for this is the contamination of the party by reformist and liberal bourgeois elements who at the moment of civil war become outright agents of the counter-revolution, class enemies of the proletariat... Such a state of affairs is absolutely intolerable.

The Executive Committee thinks it necessary to state that it must put the question of cleansing the party and all the other conditions of admission

as an ultimatum, as it cannot otherwise take responsibility before the world proletariat for its Italian section. - We shall not allow reformists into our ranks." 178

Some weeks later, E.C.C.I. was to write:

"The ISP acts with too much hesitation. It is not the Party which leads the masses, but the masses which push the Party... In Italy there exists all the necessary conditions for a victorious revolution except one - a good working class organization." 179

The ISP continued to maintain its "unity" above all else - above the revolution. Thus the rightists and reformists of the ISP could act as the bourgeoisie's 6th. cavalry, and avert revolution in the nick of time. The reformists, aping the Economists, insisted on treating the nationwide upsurge as a purely economic movement, and decided to abdicate leadership to the heads of the avowedly reformist Confederation of Labour.

The Confederation of Labour immediately launched into negotiations with Gioletti for evacuation of the factories in return for the usual facelift for the system. The muscles of the bourgeois face were, however, in spasm, and the facelift was to be totally ineffective. The "concessions", especially the utopian call for "workers' control" of industry (under prior capitalist control,

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178 "E.C.C.I. Letter to the Central Committee and All The Members of the Italian Socialist Party, To the Revolutionary Proletariat of Italy, August, 1920", in J. DeGras, Vol. 1, p. 190.

179 "E.C.C.I. Statement - October, 1920", in R. P. Dutt, "Fascism..." p. 115.

naturally), failed to materialize.

"What neither the employers, nor the Government, nor the Police, nor the armed forces could effect, this was effected by the reformist leadership - to get the workers back to the factories and hand them back to capitalism." 180

Even the bourgeoisie was rather bewildered at their unexpected recapturing of power. Bonomi, the Italian Prime Minister, made this wide-eyed comment:

"Finally, in September, 1920, it seemed that the time had come for the Italian Socialists to be bold (he is speaking of the seizure of the factories). This was the culminating point in the development of revolutionary Socialism, the only great revolutionary experiment tested simultaneously throughout all Italy. But it was defeated owing to causes which will astonish future historians, namely: the movement was victorious and unresisted. It did not meet with any difficulties in its path. This movement had not the boldness to take on itself the initiative of attacking and winning political power, and limited itself merely to occupying the factories, expecting that capitalist economy would capitulate to the Red Flag waving along its front. A few days later the movement exhausted itself in its own impotence." 181

The liberal journal Corriere della Serra echoed Bonomi's sentiments, on September 29, 1920:

"Italy has been in peril of collapse. There has been no revolution, not because there was anyone to bar its way, but because the General

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180 cited in Ibid., p. 118.

181 cited in O. Piatnitsky, "The Twenty One Conditions...", p. 19.

Confederation of Labour has not wished it." 182

The consequences of the abortion of the revolution were to be momentous. The defeat of the proletariat did not mollify the bourgeois canaille which had been waiting hungrily offstage, it had merely been emboldened. The Italian bourgeoisie was about to make an innovation in infamy. In the face of a continuing crisis, a defeated proletariat, an absent revolutionary centre, and a confused petty bourgeoisie, the ruling class produced its naked dictatorship - Fascism. The reformists were quite incredulous about the rank ingratitude of the bourgeoisie after they had so graciously saved it:

"But after we had the honour of preventing a revolutionary catastrophe - Fascism arrived." 183a

It should come as no surprise that D'Arragona and other reformists made the brief trip over to the side of Fascism after the latter's victory. It should also be noted that they were far from the only Social Democrats to become open Fascists. The defeat of the revolution coincided exactly with the time (November, 1920) when the Fascists, with the backing of the Bonomi Government and the Army, unleashed their terror campaign against the workers.

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182 Cited in R. P. Dutt, "Fascism...", p. 119.

183a Ibid. This is a statement from one of the ISP leaders in 1924.

The ever more strident demands of E.C.C.I. caused the ISP to make a final decision about affiliation on the basis of the 21 points. In January, 1921, the Party held its congress, at which Serratti argued for "unity", and against the expulsion of the Turati group. He also stated that the 21 conditions were unsuitable for Italy, given the warmth of feeling between "left" and "right" in the Party. Despite Seratti's fears about a split, the reformists commanded the smallest proportion of votes out of the three groups; 14,000. The Seratti conciliator/liquidationist group received 96,000 and the unreservedly pro-Comintern group received 58,000 votes.^{183b} The latter group split to form the Communist Party of Italy. As the reformists backed further and further down to the Right in the face of the Fascist onslaught, Seratti began to regret his stand. The reformists entered into a "Peace Treaty" with the Fascists, which effectively disarmed workers whilst leaving the Fascist thugs armed; and even entered into a coalition government under Mussolini, as long as he allowed it. In October, 1922, Seratti and his group reapplied to join the Comintern, admitting:

"Our fault is that we never sufficiently prepared ourselves for the events that have overtaken us... Today we believe it essential to abandon the democratic illusion, and to create a combative,

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^{183b} O. Piatnitsky, "The Twenty One Conditions...", p. 18.

active and audacious Party." 184

This was a mere four weeks before Mussolini's assumption of power. The Comintern replied:

"He cannot be called a leader of the proletarian masses who with great effort and after the lapse of several years comes to a correct conclusion, but rather he who can detect a tendency at its birth and can warn the workers in time of the peril 'that menaces them'." 185

The Serrati group returned to the Comintern in August, 1924, after joining the CPI.

One of the other events of import to occur between the Second and Third Congresses was the ill fated March Action in Germany. This defeat in all probability marks the beginning of the end of the post war revolutionary wave.¹⁸⁶ Prior to this action, the ranks of the KPD were enlarged by the entrance of the majority of the U.S.D.P. The minority reformists, Crispian and Dittmann included, went back into the arms of the SPD.

With the influx of new members into the KPD, a section of the Comintern leadership felt that the Party should be propelled into a precipitous adventure. Bela Kun, possibly wishing to exculpate himself for his role in the

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¹⁸⁴ Cited in R. P. Dutt, "Fascism...", p. 116.

¹⁸⁵ Ibid., p. 116, Full text in J. DeGras, Vol. 1, pp. 371-372

¹⁸⁶ On the March Actions, see: R. Fischer, "Stalin...", pp. 174-179; E. H. Carr, "The Bolshevik Revolution 3", pp. 336-338 passim; O. Piatnitsky, "Bolshevism and Insurrection" in A. Neuberg, "Armed Insurrection", pp. 48-50.

Hungarian debacle and Zinoviev, concocted the "theory of the offensive". This "theory" held that if Comintern sections independently started revolutionary offensives against the bourgeoisie, the masses of workers would inevitably follow. This was mere caricature of Lenin's vanguardism, and ignored the crucial questions of concrete ties with the masses through painstaking industrial concentration work; seizing the most propitious moment; and forming the vanguard and the masses into an indissoluble whole.¹⁸⁷

At the urgings of Kun and Zinoviev, the KPD planned to launch a general strike combined with an armed rising in Germany, at an arbitrarily fixed date, giving no account to the relationship of class forces. The KPD called the action for March, but predictably, the expected response did not mechanically materialize. The strike was successful in certain areas, and the workers in Mansfield escalated the action into an armed conflict. Nonetheless, the time was not ripe, and the preparations were sloppy. The KPD never managed to congeal the workers' ranks into an effective striking force, and, despite the much heralded "offensive" nature of the action, it became in practice defensive.

The best organized and armed section of the workers, in Leuna, locked themselves in their factories to await the Reichswehr,

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¹⁸⁷ See O. Piatnitsky, "Bolshevism...", p. 49.

whilst other workers waited for their lead to fuse into a Red Army. In the midst of this, dissident members of the KPD Central Committee, including Levi, took fright and actually began to organize against the action, which, given that workers were already under arms, was treacherous behaviour.

The SPD Government was easily able to rout the scattered workers' forces. The operation thus had two aspects: positive, inasmuch as thousands of workers were moved to armed struggle with the bourgeoisie, especially in view of the crushing defeats recently suffered by the German proletariat, and negative, inasmuch as the action was putschist, and despite its ultra-vanguardist theoretical formulas, the Party could not form a coherent vanguard.

Paul Levi immediately and publicly attacked the Central Committee for putschism, which in itself was correct, but used this as an entree into Social Democratic polemics with Leninism. He argued that the bourgeoisie should not be provoked, that the KPD could peacefully drift into power, and that the formulas of Leninism were "Asiatic" and inapplicable to "civilized Western nations" such as Germany. Levi was expelled from the KPD, from whence he joined the SPD.¹⁸⁸

Intertwined with the series of crippling defeats

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¹⁸⁸ R. Fischer, "Stalin...", pp. 177-179.

in Europe came the successful close of the Civil War in the USSR, and the transition to the New Economic Policy. After the devastation left by seven years of war, revolution and civil war, Lenin called for a temporary and partial retreat in the march towards socialism. Capitalist elements were to be allowed a new, if limited, lease on life in certain areas of the economy, specifically in agriculture, but the "commanding heights" of the economy, i.e. banking, heavy industry, foreign trade, etc., were to remain in State hands.¹⁸⁹

The Third Congress commenced on June 22, 1921, in a somewhat less jubilant atmosphere than that of the previous congresses. The "Theses on the World Situation and the Tasks of the Comintern" opened by stating that:

"1. The revolutionary movement at the end of the imperialist war and after it was marked by an amplitude unprecedented in history....It did not, however, end with the overthrow of world capitalism, or even of European capitalism.

2. During the year which has passed between the second and third congresses of the Communist International, a series of working class risings and struggles have ended in partial defeat (the advance of the Red Army on Warsaw in August, 1920, the movement of the Italian proletariat in September, 1920, the rising of the German workers in March, 1921).

The first period of the post-war revolutionary movement, distinguished by the spontaneous character of its assault, by the marked imprecision of its aims and methods, and by the extreme panic which it aroused among the ruling classes, seems in essentials to be over."¹⁹⁰

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¹⁸⁹ "History of the CPSU (b)", pp. 256-262.

¹⁹⁰ Cited in J. DeGras, Vol. 1, p. 230.

Lenin summarized the situation thus:

"The development of the revolution which we predicted makes progress. But the progress is not the straight line we expected... What is essential now is a fundamental preparation of the revolution and a profound study of its concrete development in the principal capitalist countries."¹⁹¹

Thus the task of this Congress was to set the ball rolling, to reorient and reorganize the world's Bolshevik Parties in accordance with their historic role. From this point on, and especially following the 1924 Fifth World Congress, the Comintern devoted all its time to organizational and practical questions of the World Revolution, in numerous E.C.C.I. instructions, newspapers, pamphlets, directives, etc. The Third Congress elaborated on the organizational and political imperatives of Bolshevism, outlined and actuated at the previous Congresses.

In the first section of the "Theses on Tactics", titled "The Definition of the Question", the Comintern openly stated:

"The third congress of the Communist International takes up anew the examination of tactical questions at a time when, in a number of countries, the objective situation has become acutely revolutionary and a number of mass communist parties have been formed, which, however, nowhere yet possess the actual leadership of the majority of the working class in real revolutionary struggle."¹⁹²

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¹⁹¹ cited in E. H. Carr, "The Bolshevik Revolution 3", p. 383.

¹⁹² cited in J. DeGras, Vol. 1, p. 242.

The "question", therefore, was to win the leadership of the masses through Leninist organizations. "From the very first day of its establishment, the Communist International distinctly and clearly devoted itself to the purpose of participating in the struggle of the labouring masses, of conducting this struggle on a Communist basis, and of erecting, during the struggle, great, revolutionary, Communist mass parties."¹⁹³

The Theses went on to urge real Communist, as opposed to reformist, participation and leadership in all the partial struggles of the proletariat. This corresponded with Bolshevik strategy of becoming firmly entrenched as vanguards in the proletariat. "Communist parties can develop only in struggle. Even the smallest communist parties should not restrict themselves to mere propaganda and agitation."¹⁹⁴

On the same day, and as response to the questions of practice raised by the "Theses on Tactics", Koenen presented "Theses on the Structure of Communist Parties and on the Methods and Content of Their Work."¹⁹⁵ These Theses stressed the achievement of organic unity in the Communist Parties,

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¹⁹³ Cited in Ibid., p. 243.

¹⁹⁴ Cited in Ibid., p. 248.

¹⁹⁵ Full text in: Committee on Un-American Activities, "The Communist Conspiracy Part 1 Section C". (Washington, U. S. Government Printing Office, 1956). pp. 108-132.

based on democratic centralism, in contradistinction to the old Social Democratic dualisms, i.e. separation of "active functionaries and passive masses."¹⁹⁶ The tested form of organization for effecting such unity was the system of nuclei and fractions, which both formed a live link with the proletariat in strategic areas, but also vitalized the Party's cadres.

"Communist nuclei must be formed for the daily work in the different branches of the party activities: for home agitation, for Party study, for newspaper work, for the distribution of literary matter, for information service, for constant service, etc.

These Communist units are the nuclei for the daily Communist work in the factories and work-shops, in the trade unions, in the proletarian associations, in military units, etc., wherever there are at least several members or candidates for membership in the Communist Party. If there are a greater number of Party members in the same factory or in the same union, etc., then the nuclei is enlarged into a faction, and its work is directed by the nucleus."¹⁹⁷

The Theses emphasized the crucial nature of the struggle to build Communist Parties on the basis of factory nuclei:

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¹⁹⁶ Cited in Ibid., p. 109. This "dualism" corresponds to Martov's line which was attacked by Lenin in "What Is To Be Done?" Martov's scheme divided the party into "politicians" and "followers", whereas Lenin's plan engaged all party cadres in political activity and decisions making. Lenin's party format is also clearly conditioned by the socialist tasks of the movement: it trains all members as leaders - to prepare for the day when "every cook" governs.

¹⁹⁷ Cited in Ibid., p. 111.

"Until a widespread network of Communist nuclei, factions and groups of workers will be at work at all the central points of the proletarian class struggle, until every member of the party will be doing his share of the daily revolutionary work and this will have become natural and habitual for the members, the Party can allow itself no rest in its strenuous labors for the carrying out of this task." 198

The activity of the fraction was to include constant and merciless exposure of Social Democratic misleaders, careful preparations prior to trade union meetings and elections, etc.

The section headed "The Organization of Political Struggles", closed with these words:

"Without the closest ties between the Party organizations and the proletarian masses employed in the big and middle industries, the Communist Party cannot carry out any big mass-actions and really revolutionary movements. The untimely collapse of the undoubtedly revolutionary upheaval in Italy last year, which found its strongest expression in the seizing of factories, was certainly due to a great extent to the treachery of the trade-unionist bureaucracy and the unreliability of the political party leaders, but partly also to the total lack of intimacies of organization between the Party and the industries through politically informed shop delegates interested in the welfare of the Party." 199

One of the strongest remnants of Social Democratic influence remaining in the new Communist Parties was a

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¹⁹⁸ cited in Ibid., p. 112.

¹⁹⁹ cited in Ibid., p. 123.

territorialist, federalist structure. Needless to say, this structure was based on the structures of all bourgeois political parties, because it was not devised in response to the needs of a revolutionary period. The Party can in no way marshall the forces of the workers for decisive struggles at strategic points, without organizing with this aim in mind. The territorialism of the Second International was thus both a precursor and a result of its refusal to confront revolutionary questions. Reinforcing the commands of the 21 points, Koenen stated:

"43. The party organization spreading out and fortifying itself must not be organized upon a scheme of mere geographical divisions, but in accordance with the real economic, political and transport conditions of the given district. The centre of gravity is to be placed in the main cities, and the centres of large industries." 200

Whereas territorialism is ideal for parliamentary electioneering, organization on the basis of fractions in heavy industry corresponds to the essential Marxist prescription for revolution - organization of the industrial proletariat.

The Third Congress also adopted a resolution on

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²⁰⁰ cited in Ibid., p. 127. As will be shown, virtually every C.I. section either ignored or misunderstood Koenen's point. Every Party was organized on a territorialist basis. The worst muddles were probably in the U. S. and Canada, where not only were the Parties territorialist, they were also loose conglomerations of different Parties based on national differences. (See Chapter 4).

organization, which found it necessary to reemphasize that "The affiliated Parties must learn to regard themselves as sections of one Universal International Party",²⁰¹ and that "The seat of the Executive Committee is Russia, the first proletarian state."^{202a}

The Congress concluded on July 12, and its main conclusions were summarized in a Manifesto drawn up by E.C.C.I. The line of the Third Congress had been that the European ruling classes had to some extent recuperated after their setbacks following the war. This recuperation had been effected by the Social Democrats who "would let the proletariat die of hunger rather than fight."^{202b} This called for tightening the ranks of the vanguard, and for pursuing a Bolshevik policy which would win the working class masses. The slogan issued was "To the masses!"²⁰³

Communists throughout the world, however, were extremely leery of the prospect of reorganization on a Leninist basis. No party ever attempted this during the following three years. Lenin was to ponder whether the theses on the implementation of organization on the basis of factory cells had been couched in phraseology "too

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²⁰¹ Cited in Ibid., p. 133.

^{202a} Cited in Ibid.

^{202b} Cited in J. DeGras, Vol. 1., p. 283.

²⁰³ Cited in Ibid.

Russian" to be readily comprehended by the reluctant Europeans.²⁰⁴

The period between the Third and Fourth C.I. Congresses demonstrated that indeed the defeat of the European proletariat and the emergence of Fascism, had resulted in the ebbing of the revolution. Uncertainty about the future, and pessimism, permeated the Communist Movement. At this point, the Bolsheviks were becoming more and more cognizant of the state of disarray of the World Movement. Most parties were Communist in name and desire only, none were so in practice. Compounding these problems was the fact that the C.I. leadership itself contained wavering elements in important positions; Zinoviev and Radek, to name but two.

In light of the setbacks suffered in Europe, Zinoviev elaborated a new strategy for the Communist Parties; The United Front.²⁰⁵ This formulation was ambiguous, to say the least, and was based on a picture of an exhausted working

²⁰⁴ This is from Lenin's speech to the Fourth C.I. Congress, parts of which are quoted further on in this Chapter. "Five Years of the Russian Revolution and the Prospects of the World Revolution", (November, 1922) in Selected Works 2, pp. 811-821.

²⁰⁵ See "Outline History of the Communist International", pp. 140-159. This work interprets history in Brezhnevist hindsight. Thus the United Front is given the most rightist possible interpretation - i.e., as a transitional form towards socialism; in concert with Social Democracy. In fact, this work is more interesting in itself, for the light it throws on the modern Soviet techniques of rewriting history; than for the history it considers. For example, the policy of building shop nuclei is not even mentioned, and Stalin gets almost no references! (See also Foster, pp. 327-335).

class, unable to make any bids for power in the immediate future. Thus the task of the day was to build united partial actions of workers, together with the Social Democrats. Zinoviev felt that this did not contradict the policy of implacable hostility towards the Social Democrat leadership. However, the phrasing of the united front tactic was such that it bore three possible interpretations. Firstly, that united front proposals were intended to expose the Social Democratic leadership, who in reality would refuse or sabotage them. Secondly, that the united front should go into operation from below, i.e. between Communists and rank and file Social Democrats, thus splitting them from their leaders. Thirdly, that it was tolerable for Leninists and Social Democrats to co-operate, and repeat the old disasters of the past years. Somehow, the lessons were not sinking in far enough.

These theses were proposed on December 18, 1921, and provoked a furor in the movement, with the French, Italian and Spanish Parties rejecting them outright. Lenin remained somewhat circumspect, allowing tactical agreements as long as Communists maintained their absolute independence, and continued criticism of the Social Democrats.

Lenin's actual presence was starting to fade in International affairs, though his ideology loomed large.

Following an attempt on his life by a Socialist-

Revolutionary terrorist, Lenin suffered a severe stroke in May, 1922, and the Fourth World C.I. Congress, November 5 to December 5, 1922 was to be the last he attended.

The Fourth World Congress acknowledged, through the report of Lozofsky, that the capitalists were now on the offensive on all fronts.²⁰⁶ The defeat suffered by the working class, and the capitulation of the Social Democrats, had seriously depleted the ranks of the labour movement, Communist Parties and trade unions.

"Owing to the fact that the Proletariat of all countries, with the exception of Russia, did not take advantage of the weakened state of capitalism to deal it the final crushing blows, the bourgeoisie - thanks to the aid of the social-reformists - managed to suppress the militant revolutionary workers, to reinforce its political and economic power and to start a new offensive against the proletariat."²⁰⁷

The Congress also began to take note of the grave danger of Fascism, reared as a new form of the counter-revolution, responsive to conditions in decaying monopoly capitalist countries.

"The menace of fascism lurks today in many countries; in Czechoslovakia, in Hungary, in nearly all the Balkan countries, in Poland, in Germany (Bavaria), in Austria and America, and even in countries like Norway. Fascism in one form or another is not altogether impossible even in countries like France and England."²⁰⁸

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²⁰⁶In Foster, p. 331.

²⁰⁷cited in Ibid., p. 332.

²⁰⁸cited in J. DeGras, Vol. 1, p. 421.

The debate over united front tactics came into the open at the Congress, with Radek, and the German leadership (Brandler, Thalheimer et. al.) calling for united front action solely "from above" i.e. between Communist and Social Democratic leaderships. Zinoviev managed to jump the whole discussion to the Right, by merging the united front question into the question of the slogan of a "workers' government". According to Zinoviev, Communists could not support Social Democratic or Liberal Governments, but could support Social Democratic Governments in which Communists participate.²⁰⁹ Although this latter form is a "workers' government", Communists should emphasize that a "real workers' government" is only established by Communists after a revolutionary struggle with the bourgeoisie. This entanglement ("When is a workers' government not a workers' government?") was to give impetus to Social Democratism within Communist Parties, which in turn was to cause further setbacks. Obviously the "workers' government" formula was mechanical and schematic - it ignored the teachings of Marxism - Leninism on the class

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²⁰⁹ Text of Zinoviev's speech in Ibid., pp. 425-427. Zinoviev's confused scheme allowed Rightist elements in many sections to steer their Parties on a reformist course. In Canada, for example, the operating slogan at this time was for a "Liberal Farmer-Labour Government" - not really a revolutionary rallying cry. It took Canada until 1931 to call for the dictatorship of the Proletariat!

nature of the state and proposed chimerical transitional forms between bourgeois and proletarian dictatorships.

The rest of the Congress reemphasized the need to build Party cells in industrial concentrations, and exhorted the Communist leaders to study Bolshevik tactics. "No Communist Party can be considered a seriously and solidly organized Communist mass party unless it has strong communist cells in the factories, workshops, mines, railways, etc."²¹⁰

Lenin, in his last speech to a Comintern Congress, on November 13, gave a report titled "Five Years of the Russian Revolution and the Prospects of the World Revolution."²¹¹ In this report he lamented the fact that the Bolsheviks had been unable, thus far, to convince other Communists of the crucial importance of approximating the lessons of Bolshevik history.

"...We have not learnt to present our Russian experience to foreigners. ...I think that after five years of the Russian Revolution the most important thing for all of us, Russian and foreign comrades alike, is to sit down and study. ...The foreign comrades...first of all...must learn what we have written about the organizational structure of the Communist Parties, and which they have signed without reading and understanding. This must be their first task. That resolution must be carried out...and they cannot be content with hanging it in a corner like an icon and praying to it. Nothing will be achieved

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²¹⁰ Cited in Ibid., p. 427.

²¹¹ See Footnote 204.

that way. They must digest a good slice of Russian experience. Perhaps the fascists in Italy, for example, will render us a great service by explaining to the Italians that they are not yet sufficiently enlightened and that their country is not yet ensured against the Black Hundreds. Perhaps this will be very beneficial." 212

Before his sarcasm, Lenin had noted that the Third Congress Organizational Resolution by Koenen, had remained "a dead letter".

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212 V. I. Lenin, Selected Works 2, pp. 820-821.

THE GERMAN "OCTOBER"

The key international event between the Fourth and Fifth C.I. Congress was the German insurrection of 1923.²¹³ This event served to seal the fate of Social Democratic survivals, at least in theory, throughout the International.

In January, 1923, in order to take reparations out of Germany, France sent its troops into the Ruhr and the Rhineland. This deprived Germany of the essential bases of its economy, eighty per cent of its iron and steel production, seventy-one per cent of coal mining.²¹⁴ This served to deepen the already grave crisis of German capitalism. The numbers of unemployed doubled monthly, the Mark was depreciated, and catastrophic inflation set in. By October 18, 1923, the dollar (U. S.) fetched six billion Marks, and five days later it fetched an unbelievable seventy-five billion Marks.²¹⁵

By August, 1923, the position of the nationalist Cuno Government was clearly untenable, and a general strike brought it down. The KPD had played a decisive role

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²¹³ On the German October, see especially: A. Neuberg, "Armed Insurrection", pp. 81-105; A. Lange, "The Art of Uprising"; also R. Fischer, "Stalin...", pp. 291-387; E. H. Carr, "The Interregnum 1923-1924". (Harmondsworth, Pelican Books, 1969). pp. 209-251. In addition see relevant C.I. and E.C.C.I. materials.

²¹⁴ A. Neuberg, "Armed Insurrection", p. 81.

²¹⁵ Ibid.

in initiating the strike, after E.C.C.I. had pronounced that the situation was revolutionary. Under orders from Ebert, Stresemann and Social Democrats Hilferding, Sollman and Radbuch formed a Government to stitch together the rapidly fraying fabric of bourgeois rule. This Government soon found itself plagued by Nazi provocations and working class unrest. Stresemann soon called in Von Seeckt and the Reichswehr to "restore order".

"The threat to order came as much from the nationalists as from the Left. But, in accordance with precedent, it was against the Left that the main measures of repression were directed." 216

In Saxony, the Social Democratic regime of Zeigner was unable to hold out against a rising tide of demonstrations and street rebellions. The fact that the Social Democrats were in the majority on the police force of the region hastened the radicalization of workers, each time they were assaulted by "socialists" in police uniforms. The Zeigner cabinet resigned and made ready for a replay of events in Hungary; Zeigner offered the KPD the chance to participate in the Government. The reformist Brandler - Thalheimer KPD leadership (tied to Radek in the C.I.) lunged after the opportunity and entered into this Government on October 10.

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²¹⁶E. H. Carr, "The Interregnum", p. 228.

Some days later the scene was repeated in Thuringia, where even some "trenchant Leftists", such as Karl Korsch,²¹⁷ entered the Government. Whilst workers expected radical measures to flow naturally from this "workers government"; such as seizure of large industry, price control, confiscation of large estates, and, most importantly, arming of the masses; none of this was forthcoming. Brandler was more concerned to placate the Social Democrats and prove the bourgeois "respectability" of Communist ministers, than to prepare for the capture of power.²¹⁸

The potentates of the Berlin SPD had no time for such niceties, and on October 14, Ebert assigned General Müller to install a "Reich Executive" in Saxony and Thuringia; i.e. a Reichswehr dictatorship.²¹⁹ In the face of the impending invasion, the KPD set about preparing an armed insurrection. This was to begin with a general strike. On the initiative of the KPD, a congress of factory committees took place in Chemnitz on October 21. By this time there were 250,000 workers under arms in trained Communist detachments, "Proletarian Hundreds". Street fighting had already broken

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²¹⁷ Korsch was one of those who "in principle" opposed working in reformist trade unions.

²¹⁸ See R. Fischer, "Stalin...", pp. 331-334.

²¹⁹ Ibid., p. 334.

out in several centres.²²⁰ The KPD, however, bungled the organization of the Chemnitz conference, and because of the opposition of the (divided) Social Democrats, decided to forget about the general strike and the revolution.

Events had, however, progressed too far. Hamburg, which was to have been the flashpoint for a nationwide insurrection, had already risen. Under the expert leadership of Ernst Thälmann, and with a coherent plan, Hamburg revolutionaries assumed the offensive on October 22. On that night, seventeen police stations were captured and disarmed, a totally successful general strike was started and barricades flew up throughout the city.²²¹ The insurrection was stunningly successful, but this failed to impress the KPD central leadership, who called it off and ordered the disarming of the combatants.

This order arrived in the thick of the fight, at 5-P.M. on October 23, via Hugo Urbahns.²²² The insurgents gradually abandoned their positions, and sections of the military sent in to "mop up" deserted to the revolutionary camp. During the operation the police lost sixty dead, and

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²²⁰ A. Neuberg, "Armed Insurrection", p. 83.

²²¹ Ibid., p. 94.

²²² Later to head the KPD, along with Ruth Fischer, and Arkady Maslow, until all were expelled for Trotskyism. Fischer ended up as an informant for the House UnAmerican Activities Committee, where she informed on her own brother. (See E. Bentley, "Thirty Years of Treason". New York, MacMillan, 1974.).

many wounded. The revolutionaries suffered four to six deaths.²²³ The relatively low number of casualties of the insurgents must be attributed to careful organization of the action. Nonetheless, the action did not end through failure, through the superiority of the bourgeois forces, it ended through a KPD ukase.²²⁴ As this went on, the Governments of Saxony and Thuringia stood idly by, refusing to arm their workers, until they were dismembered by the Reichswehr (who had arms). Military dictatorships were installed, which proceeded to ruthlessly crush the workers organizations.

This disaster, caused by the unpardonable opportunism of the Central Committee, sent shock waves throughout the International. The successful rising in Hamburg could easily have set off a revolutionary explosion - workers across Germany were merely awaiting the word.²²⁵ The action was called off so that Brandler and his cohorts should not offend the Social Democrats! The net result of this self-inflicted defeat was the depletion of the ranks of the Communists, and the strengthening of the fascist organizations who stood as "bulwarks of law, order and national honour"

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²²³A. Neuberg, "Armed Insurrection", p. 101.

²²⁴Russian for "directive" or "command".

²²⁵This was the opinion of E.C.C.I. and is so stated throughout Neuberg's book.

against the "Red Menace".

The failure of the "German October" was the final straw to the C.I. leadership. From now on the order to the worlds' Communists was "shape up...or else"! Energetic measures had to be taken in the struggle with Social Democratism, inside and outside the Comintern.

The bourgeois historian, E. H. Carr, recognized that the Comintern's call for Bolshevization stemmed from a concrete need in the movement. He does not repeat the routine bourgeois line, to the effect that Bolshevization was the result of some Machiavellian plot by Stalin.²²⁶ He correctly, albeit sardonically, states:

"The victory of the Bolsheviks was matched by the stigma of defeat resting since October 1923 on the KPD, the strongest of the foreign parties: no other party had even made the attempt. The Russian party must take the lead in questions of organization, as in all other questions. It must not only occupy the central place in Comintern, but its forms of organization must provide the model for those of other parties.... The emphasis on questions of organization was part of the broader campaign for "the Bolshevization of the sections of the Communist International" proclaimed at the Fifth Congress."²²⁷

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²²⁶The list of authors of this persuasion probably starts with Trotsky ("The Third International After Lenin" - New York, Pathfinder Press, 1974), and includes R. Fischer ("Stalin..."); who feels that the policy of building factory cells is some nefarious scheme of Stalin's to gain control of all non-Russian Parties (she never explains how this connects); F. Claudin ("The Communist Movement" - Harmondsworth, Penguin Books, 1976); et. al. - The list is quite long although the general theme has few variations.

²²⁷E. H. Carr, "Socialism in One Country 3". (London, MacMillan, 1964). p. 897.

The history of events from the 1918-1919 German Revolution on, has demonstrated a number of points which indelibly left their mark on the Comintern leadership, especially the Bolsheviks.

Whereas Bolshevism had grown and become tempered in a struggle with Menshevist opportunism in over fourteen years prior to the Revolution, no other party had had this experience. Every party outside Russia suffered from crucial misconceptions about the nature of Social Democracy, and the Bolsheviks were forced to reenact all of their old struggles with the Mensheviks, for party organization, for a revolutionary line, for party independence, etc., within their own organization, the Comintern. Worldwide Menshevism all but discarded its revolutionary garb, and in the "classic" case of Germany, played host to the counter-revolution so often, that the militarist brigades of fascism were hardly needed²²⁸ (until later - when Social Democracy began to fail as an effective instrument of the counter-revolution).

The Communist Parties' accommodation with Social Democracy expressed itself at a deeper level within the

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²²⁸ Anyway, the Social Democrats always tolerated the fascists far more readily than the Communists. The SPD's slogan in the late 'twenties/early 'thirties was "Better Hitler than Stalin" - see R. P. Dutt, "Fascism...".

Comintern - in the question of organization. Not a single Comintern section outside Russia could grasp the seminal point that for a proletarian revolution, the revolutionary party must base itself in the key centres of proletarian activity: the factories, railroads, etc. Industrial concentration remained a "dead letter" throughout Europe due to "historic reasons" as Lenin said. These included such factors as, the burden of social democratic/bourgeois parliamentary traditions surviving in the Communist movement, as a result of the relatively peaceful development of the European proletariat prior to the war.

The Bolsheviks were not, however, fatalists or determinists, and could not simply wait for the march of history, or the "ripening of productive forces" to take effect. Their role was to facilitate the transition to revolution throughout the world. The waves of defeats made it crystal clear to the Bolsheviks that this was not to be either a quick or an easy task; witness Lenin's Fourth Congress speech. The Bolsheviks had originally decided to found the Comintern on a crest of a revolutionary wave crashing across Europe. Their isolation soon dawned on them; the Bolsheviks formed the sole proletarian organization of its type - the world's only Leninist revolutionary party.

The Bolsheviks set about redressing the situation

by: (1) founding the Comintern and giving it an ideological bedrock, (2) formulating the 21 points as a formal injunction to other parties on the organizational imperatives of Bolshevism, (3) providing practical guidance in revolutions in other lands, (4) summarizing the lessons of these revolutions and incorporating them in the corpus of Marxism-Leninism, (5) deepening the analysis of proletarian revolutions and developing a body of organizational material.

Despite the assiduous work of the E.C.C.I., this seemed to be making irritatingly slow inroads into the Communist Movement, which, meanwhile, was being periodically bathed in blood. The despairing tone is apparent in Lenin's statement that maybe the Italian fascists could teach the "foreign comrades" a lesson. This is not to say that no Menshevik elements existed in the Russian Party itself - these were soon to be dealt with. Having said this, it is difficult to imagine that the "foreign comrades" could rapidly be rid of Menshevist deviations, if even the victorious Bolsheviks were, to some extent, infected with them.

The remainder of the thesis will concern the Comintern's move to the Left in order to isolate and destroy Social Democratic remnants, and build a solid world vanguard proletarian party.

CHAPTER IV

"'TIS THE FINAL CONFLICT"

Before consideration of the Fifth C.I. Congress, and the Bolshevization campaign, the discourse will take a brief diversion to consider the struggle of the Bolsheviks with the Mensheviks in their own ranks. This diversion will therefore complete the background to the Bolshevization programme. The previous chapters have dealt with the Social Democratic distortions in Party work throughout the Comintern, the following section will deal with the vexed question of Trotskyism, the Social Democratic distortion within the Russian Party.²²⁹

Trotsky was a schismatic figure, one who never felt at ease in any movement which was not of his own making. In the years before 1917 he had skipped from faction to faction, dissolving groups almost as he formed them. All of the Trotskyist grouplets had one common element: antagonism towards Lenin and Bolshevism. Lenin considered Trotsky to be more dangerous than the avowed "social patriots", because of his "wavering".²³⁰ After Trotsky

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²²⁹The best works, from a Communist perspective, on Trotsky and Trotskyism are: M. J. Olgin, "Trotskyism, Counter-Revolution In Disguise". (New York, International Publishers, 1935); J. R. Campbell, "Soviet Policy and its Critics". (London, Gollancz, 1939); J. V. Stalin, "On The Opposition". Peking, FLPH, 1974), "Trotsky, Just Another Right-Winger" in Progressive Labor Vol. 9, #4, March-April, 1974, pp. 25-45; "History of the CPSU (b)"; also CPGB, "The Errors of Trotskyism". (London, Modern Books, 1926). The Trotskyist perspective (much more widely disseminated) starts with Trotsky's account of himself in "My Life". (New York, Pathfinder Press, 1975).

stood with the Mensheviks in 1903, he called Lenin "the party disorganizer", "a demagogic liar", "the head of the reactionary wing of our party", "a Caricature Jacobin", "a barracks regime dictator".²³¹ He apparently shelved his differences in 1917, when, seeing that the Bolshevik Party was to be the winner, he declared fidelity to Leninism. However, differences cropped up in the ensuing years, over Brest-Litovsk, and over the trade unions, amongst other things. On the latter question, in the 1921 trade union dispute, Trotsky (who later posed as the very guardian of proletarian democracy) advocated militarization of the trade unions, i.e. military discipline for factory workers, shooting slackers, etc.²³²

While Lenin lay dying, in the closing months of 1923, Trotsky renewed his open opposition to Bolshevism, and started a factional attack on the Party. In October, 1923, Trotsky circulated his faction's platform, the "Platform of the Forty Six."²³³ This sought to instigate feuds between the younger and older Party cadres, to blame the Party for the defeat of the European revolution, to demand

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²³⁰ V. I. Lenin, "Letter to A. M. Kollontai, March 17, 1917", cited in M. J. Olgin, "Trotskyism...". p. 11.

²³¹ L. Trotsky, "Our Political Tasks", cited in Ibid., pp. 68-69.

²³² See "History of the CPSU (b)", pp. 251-254; Lenin, "Once More on the Trade Unions, the Current Situation and Mistakes of Trotsky and Bukharin." in Selected Works 9, pp. 40-62.

²³³ Abridged Text in R. V. Daniels, "A Documentary History of Communism, Vol. 1". (New York, Vintage Books, 1960). pp. 239-242

an end to democratic centralism and freedom for factional groupings.

The Party tackled this, by open discussion and by a report at the Thirteenth Conference of the RCP (b), which condemned Trotskyism as a petty-bourgeois deviation.²³⁴ Trotsky, though present at the conference, raised no objection, but went and wrote a more strident attack on the Party in his books "The Lessons of October"²³⁵ and "The New Course".²³⁶ In response Stalin penned "The Foundations of Leninism" which gave the bases for the form and content of the Leninist Party.

Trotsky had not abided by Party decisions to stop factionalizing - in his "Lessons of October" he derided the alliance between the working class and the peasantry, predicting inevitable "hostile collisions" between the two classes. This was a deterministic and dogmatic reading of Marxism, holding that the peasantry could not be won to socialism. The events of the First Five Year Plan and the Chinese Revolution proved otherwise, in practice. Even more serious, however, was Trotsky's resuscitation of the theory Lenin had

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²³⁴ "History of the CPSU (b)", p. 267.

²³⁵ Full text in CPGB, "The Errors of Trotskyism".

²³⁶ L. D. Trotsky, "The New Course". (New York, New International, 1943).

dubbed "absurdly 'left'",²³⁷ the "Permanent Revolution". According to this mechanistic formula, a bourgeois democratic revolution in Russia would necessarily grow into a proletarian revolution, which, because of the low level of productive forces, could not maintain itself in Russia, but had to branch out to the 'advanced' nations of Europe. This was the quintessence of Menshevist determinism. The old, discredited, Second International theories of the impossibility of socialism in Russia, and the "inevitable fixedness" of the revolutionary timetable, were revived in a new guise.²³⁸

This theory was an attack on the Marxist-Leninist concept of the uneven development of capitalism (outlined in Chapter I). It was first iterated by Trotsky against Lenin in 1906:

"Without direct State support from the European proletariat, the working class of Russia cannot maintain itself in power and transform its temporary rule into a durable Socialist dictatorship. This we cannot doubt for an instant."²³⁹

Trotsky advanced the "United States of Europe" slogan, which Lenin condemned by upholding the possibility of socialism in one country. (Note that Lenin uses the expression

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²³⁷ Cited in M. J. Olgin, "Trotskyism...", p. 12.

²³⁸ Gramsci had a rather nice little summation of the errors of the "theory of permanent revolution":

"The theoretical weaknesses of this modern form of the old mechanism are masked by the general theory of permanent revolution which is nothing but a generic formula presented as a dogma, and which demolishes itself by not in fact coming true."

A. Gramsci, "Prison Notebooks", p. 241

"United States of the World" in contradistinction to the above slogan, as this is the concrete expression of world Socialism. The "United States of Europe" is "either impossible or reactionary".)

"As a separate slogan, however, the slogan of a United States of the World would hardly be a correct one, firstly, because it merges with socialism; secondly, because it may give rise to a wrong interpretation in the sense of the impossibility of the victory of socialism in a single country and about the relation of such a country to the rest. Uneven economic and political development is an absolute law of capitalism. Hence, the victory of socialism is possible first in several or even in one capitalist country taken separately." 240

In 1917 Trotsky made this reply to Lenin (which he republished in 1924);

"Without waiting for others, we begin and continue our struggle on our national soil quite sure that our initiative will give an impetus to the struggle in other countries; but if that should not happen, then it would be hopeless, in the light of the experience of history and in the light of theoretical considerations, to think, for example, that a revolutionary Russia could hold its own in the face of conservative Europe." 241

Following the revolution Lenin again stressed the Bolshevik aim; to build socialism in Russia:

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²³⁹ Quoted in M. J. Olgin, "Trotskyism...", p. 30.

²⁴⁰ V. I. Lenin, "Collected Works 18", pp. 232-233.

²⁴¹ Quoted in M. J. Olgin, "Trotskyism...", p. 33.

"If Russia becomes covered with a dense network of elective power stations and powerful technical installations, our communist economic development will become a model for the future socialist Europe and Asia." 242

Trotsky, in 1922, claimed that economic progress in Russia was impossible until revolution conquered Europe. This struggle was intensified after Lenin's death, given the defeats in Europe Stalin became the main proponent of the Leninist theory of socialism in one country. Stalin, in a speech, drew the difference between Leninism and Trotskyism on the question by a simple reductio ad absurdum:

"With Lenin, a proletariat which has taken power represents a most active force displaying the highest initiative, which organizes a socialist economy, and goes further and supports the proletariat of other countries. With Trotsky, on the contrary, a proletariat which has taken power becomes a semi passive force which requires immediate assistance in the shape of an immediate victory of Socialism in other countries and which feels itself, as it were, in a temporary encampment and in peril of immediately losing power. But if the victory of the revolution in other countries should not ensue immediately - what then? Then, chuck the job. (A voice from the audience: "And run to cover.") Yes, and run to cover. That is perfectly correct. (Laughter)" 243

At the Fourteenth Party Conference, in April, 1925, Stalin's line on the ability of Russia to advance to socialism was upheld and Trotsky was once more defeated. Meanwhile,

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²⁴² V. I. Lenin, "Collected Works 31", p. 518.

²⁴³ J. V. Stalin, "The Social-Democratic Deviation in Our Party" in On the Opposition, p. 403.

Zinoviev and Kamenev formed a bloc, and in 1926 joined together with Trotsky in opposition to the Party. Zinoviev now launched into Social Democratic polemics, declaring Leninism to be a Russian phenomenon, characteristic of a country with a preponderant mass of peasantry. He even defined the "fundamental question" of Leninism as being "the role of the peasantry". Stalin countered this by repeating a phrase from "The Foundations of Leninism": "The fundamental thing in Leninism, its point of departure, is not the peasant question, but the question of the dictatorship of the proletariat, of the conditions under which it can be achieved, of the conditions under which it can be consolidated."²⁴⁴

Zinoviev went even further, and declared that the dictatorship of the proletariat in Russia was and should be the dictatorship of the Party. Stalin demonstrated that this despotic scheme negated the role of the Soviets, the trade unions, etc. Zinoviev went on to confusedly "agree" with the concept of socialism in one country. Zinoviev's position was:

"To engage in building socialism without the possibility of completely building it, knowing that it cannot completely be built - such are

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²⁴⁴J. V. Stalin, "Collected Works 6", pp. 126-127. Stalin repeats this statement in "Problems of Leninism", ("Selected Works", pp. 144-145.)

the absurdities in which Zinoviev has involved himself." 245

The Opposition mounted a full attack on the Party and the Soviet Government, demanding an end to the State monopoly of foreign trade, the reorganization of industry ("The gist of this policy was to enforce commercial accounting of the most vulgar bourgeois kind")²⁴⁶ and the start of forced requisitioning of the peasantry. Taken together with the Trotskyite lack of faith in the revolutionary propensities of the Russian proletariat, this programme signified a retreat to capitalism. Trotsky openly disavowed the concept of independence for the socialist economy from the capitalist world, carefully nurtured by the State's rigid control of foreign trade. He declared this to be a "Hitlerite" innovation.²⁴⁷

Stalin unleashed the fight in the international arena, calling on all Parties to help struggle to defeat Trotskyism in their own ranks and in the CPSU. Stalin based this on the crucial contingency of the Russian and World Revolutions:

"The "Russian" question is of decisive importance for the entire revolutionary movement in the West,

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²⁴⁵ J. V. Stalin, "Problems of Leninism" in "Selected Works", p. 176.

²⁴⁶ N. Popov, "Outline History of the Communist Party of The Soviet Union Vol. 2". (Moscow, FLPH, 1935). p. 196.

²⁴⁷ Cited in M. J. Olgin, "Trotskyism...", p. 60.

as well as in the East. Why? Because the Soviet power in Russia is the base, the bulwark, the haven of the revolutionary movement throughout the world. If in this base, i.e., in Russia, the Party and the Government begin to waver, it must cause very grave harm to the entire revolutionary movement throughout the world."²⁴⁸

Despite being faced with nothing but defeats during 1923-1926, the Oppositionists obdurately violated their promises to maintain discipline and continued with their factional activities. The epithets applied to Stalin and the Party by Trotsky began to appear very similar to those Trotsky applied to Leninism over a decade past: "dictatorship", "barracks regime", etc.²⁴⁹

In 1927, after the Party had been extremely lenient in allowing the existence of a Trotskyite pseudo-Party within its ranks for nearly four years, in violation of all Party rules, the Central Committee decided to bring matters to a head. After four years of exhaustive discussion within the Party and throughout the Soviet Union, and following the Opposition's latest foray against the Party in the "Platform of the Eighty Three",²⁵⁰ the Party called a referendum. In the referendum the Trotskyites were resoundingly defeated. The vote for the Trotskyites was 4,000. There were 8,000 abstentions, and 724,000 votes for the Party.²⁵¹ In the

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²⁴⁸J. V. Stalin, Collected Works 6", p. 277.

²⁴⁹in J. R. Campbell, "Soviet Policy...", p. 40.

²⁵⁰see R. P. Dutt, "The Internationale", p. 187.

²⁵¹"History of the CPSU (b)", p. 285.

face of this the Trotskyites attempted to hold a street demonstration on November 7, 1927, which was met by an angry counter demonstration of militant workers. Trotsky was evidently calling for civil war, and was expelled from the Party, later from the Soviet Union.²⁵²

The history of Trotskyism from this point onwards is a pathetic one. Always claiming his historical rectitude as against the Bolsheviks, Trotsky never achieved any successes, much less any following in the workers movement. The story of his attempts to form a "Fourth International" is a story of splits, factionalism and fighting "groupuscules". Although Trotskyism never made any inroads into the working class, it concentrated its fire on the centre of the revolution - the Soviet Union, in both propaganda and activity.

"Unless Trotskyism is defeated, it will be impossible to achieve victory under the conditions of NEP, it will be impossible to convert present day Russia into a Socialist Russia."²⁵³

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²⁵² Ibid., pp. 283-286.

²⁵³ Cited in Ibid., p. 267. (J. V. Stalin).

BOLSHEVIZATION

Lenin's death on January 21, 1924, sent a shock throughout the workers movement. The Fifth Comintern Congress,²⁵⁴ June 17 to July 8, 1924 was the first without Lenin's attendance.

The Fifth Congress noted that the great European revolutionary wave had definitely suffered a reflux, and that the economies of the capitalist nations were undergoing a period of partial and temporary stabilization. Hesitant economic revivals were taking place in Germany and the U. S. However, this did not mean the end of the revolution, or the crisis of capitalism; the capitalist system was merely in a trough between two revolutionary waves. The Congress also noted that the weakened state of world capitalism had compelled the bourgeoisie to adopt new tactics by constantly alternating between the gloved hand and the mailed fist with the workers. Except in Italy and Eastern Europe, where the mailed fist of Fascism reigned, the capitalists usually resorted to the more flexible policy of Social Democracy which was not reticent about using terror tactics, but which tended to be more discreet.

The Congress spent considerable time discussing the disastrous events in Germany. This led to the expulsion of

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²⁵⁴ See J. DeGras, "The Communist International Vol. 2". (London, Cass and Co., 1971). pp. 94-163.

the Brandler-Thalheimer group from the leadership of the KPD (later from the KPD altogether), for their rightist errors.²⁵⁵ They were condemned for having distorted the tactics of the united front. The united front was intended to mobilize workers for revolutionary struggle, not to lower the sights of Communists to the level of Social Democratic opportunism. Zinoviev attempted to wriggle out of his responsibility in the mess by claiming that the "workers' government" slogan was merely a pseudonym for the dictatorship of the proletariat. Bordiga correctly responded that if it was merely pseudonymous, why not use the slogan "dictatorship of the proletariat"?²⁵⁶ It seemed more honest.

The Congress stated that Communist parties in a united front "must strictly retain their independence and Communist identity."²⁵⁷ The Brandler leadership was condemned for allying with "left" Social Democrats instead of arming the workers and developing a revolutionary struggle.

In response to the failures of the past six years, the Congress took a leap forward and sharpened its attempt to build Leninist vanguards worldwide, with the "Bolshevization" slogan.²⁵⁸ The first three congresses had attempted through

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²⁵⁵ See Ibid., pp. 98-107, passim.

²⁵⁶ in Ibid., p. 143.

²⁵⁷ Cited in W. Z. Foster, p. 340.

²⁵⁸ "Theses of the 5th. C.I. Congress on the Propaganda Activities of the C.I. and Its Sections", in J. DeGras, Vol. 2, pp. 122-127.

resolutions, injunctions, directives, theses, etc., to pour the "foreign" Communist Parties into the Bolshevik mold. This, of course, was the intention of the twenty-one points. Enough blood had been shed by now to campaign for the transformation of the world's Communist Parties into true vanguards on a vastly increased scale. Stalin stated in September, 1924:

"The Communist Parties in the West are developing under peculiar conditions. Firstly, their composition is not uniform, for they were formed out of former Social-Democrats of the old school and of young party members who have not yet had sufficient revolutionary steeling. Secondly, their leading cadres are not purely Bolshevik, for responsible posts are occupied by people who have come from other parties and who have not yet completely discarded Social-Democratic survivals. Thirdly, they are confronted by such an experienced opponent as hard-boiled Social-Democracy, which is still an enormous political force in the ranks of the working class. Lastly, they have against them such a powerful enemy as the European bourgeoisie, with its tried and tested state apparatus and all-powerful press. To think that such Communist Parties can overthrow the European bourgeois system "overnight" is a great mistake. Hence, the immediate task is to make the Communist Parties of the West really Bolshevik; they must train genuinely revolutionary cadres who will be capable of reorganising all party activities along the lines of the revolutionary education of the masses, of preparing for revolution."²⁵⁹

Thus, Bolshevization was to involve "the reorganization of the party units upon the basis of the shops, the

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²⁵⁹J. V. Stalin, "Collected Works 6", pp. 304-305.

carrying on of work in all forms in un-democratic countries, the cultivation of a spirit of self-criticism, the firm correction of all errors, right and left, the systematic raising of the ideological level of the party membership, the building of a strong party unity, and the cultivation of a clear-headed, flexible, and realistic Marxist-Leninist leadership."²⁶⁰

"Bolshevizing the Party, means the application to our sections what in Russian Bolshevism was and is international and of general application."²⁶¹

On June 26, 1924, after a motion from the German, French, American and British delegates, the Congress passed a resolution denouncing the Trotskyite opposition as "a petty bourgeois deviation". Trotskyism, the resolution stated, was "a menace to the unity of the Party and consequently to the dictatorship of the proletariat in the U.S.S.R."²⁶²

The next two sections will deal with the two most critical aspects of the Bolshevization programme, the question of the nature of social democracy, and the question of the reorganization of Parties on the basis of factory-cells.

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²⁶⁰W. Z. Foster, pp. 341-342.

²⁶¹International Press Correspondence (Inprecorr), August 29, 1924, p. 653.

²⁶²J. DeGras, "Vol. 2", p. 142.

"SOCIAL"-DEMOCRACY OR - FASCISM?

The question of Social-Democracy is clearly a cardinal one, since virtually every mistake made by the Communists in the years of revolution stemmed from an incorrect estimation of the roles played by Social Democrats. This was expressed on two levels; firstly, seeing Social Democracy as "merely another faction of the workers movement"; and secondly, allowing the existence of Social Democratic forms of organization, and therefore ideology, in the Communist Parties. As has been shown, the resultant practice included forming disastrous coalitions with Social Democrats (even "left" Social Democracy proved to be as poisonous as the "centre" or "right" species), and abandoning industrial concentration work, i.e. reliance on the masses.

The Comintern was forced to meet this problem squarely. Following the example of the Bolsheviki's long contention with the Mensheviki, and Lenin's oft-repeated admonitions on the nature of Social Democracy, still, the Communist Parties refused to listen, and blundered from one debacle to the next, with the Social Democrats. The Comintern had to seriously reevaluate the situation following the years of revolution and Social Democratic back-stabbing, in order to clearly adumbrate the role of Social Democracy, and the necessity for the absolute independence of the only workers parties the Comintern sections.

That Social Democracy was both the saviour and the mainstay of bourgeois rule and reaction following the world war was undeniable. However, following the usage of this former workers' party by the state, the ruling class had elaborated a new form of reaction (albeit one with many similarities), Fascism.

What was the relationship between the two? Both were demagogic, both preached anti-capitalism, the German Fascists even labelled themselves "National Socialists". Both were also Nationalist. The Fascists appeared to move one step further than the Social Democrats by openly terrorizing workers; the Social Democrats had to do this only behind the cloak of the State. Both sowed confusion about the role of the State: for Fascism and Social Democracy, each step towards State capitalism, every non-aggression pact between trades unions and employers was a step towards "Socialism". Somehow the Krupps and the Stinnes' didn't disappear, but this was not mentioned. For both, the main danger was disruption of the activities of the bourgeois state (i.e. the extraction of surplus value) by militant workers and Communists. The "Red Menace" was their joint platform.

After the war, in restructuring the shattered State apparatuses of Europe, Social Democracy had recourse to the only sectors who could help; given the proletariats'

unwillingness; the circles of the extreme reaction. Monarchists and capitalist monopolists were called in to stamp out the revolution and boost the economy. Social Democracy covered this by juggling phrases about the new era of "organized capitalism" which would no longer visit hardships on the workers - who had to sit tight and wait for the gradual, inevitable, maturation of productive forces which would be Socialism. "Socialism without struggle" became a battle cry for bloody struggles against those who would forcibly inaugurate socialism!

The absurdities in this position were raised to towering new heights by the SPD, who stated:

"One must not lose sight of the fact that the working class is a part of the capitalist system, the downfall of which system is its own downfall; and therefore the great historical duty of the working class is to obtain by means of the regulation of its place in that system the improvement of the whole social structure, which is again equivalent to the betterment of its own social situation." 263

Therefore it was not incongruous with the position of saving capitalism to side with its most aggressive saviours the Fascists, against the revolutionary working class. While the working class was being disarmed and and treated to a dose of Social Democratic "pacifism" at gunpoint in Germany in 1920, the British Ambassador recorded

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²⁶³ Cited in R. P. Dutt, "Fascism...", p. 179.

this conversation with the SPD Government representative,
Dr. Simons:

"Berlin, October 22, 1920. A long conversation with Dr. Simons at the Foreign Office. Regarding Diasarmament, Dr. Simons said that the demands of the Entente for the dismemberment of various Einwohnerweh'r and Orgesch (Fascist) organisations was equivalent to delivering up the orderly section of the population to their greatest foes. Without organisation the bourgeois element cannot resist the Reds, who are a real danger." 264

As the Comintern began its analysis of Fascism in 1923-1924, so it began to reexamine its conception of Social Democracy. The Third Plenum of E.C.C.I., in June, 1923, had, through Klara Zetkin, defined fascism as "the strongest, most concentrated and classical expression of the capitalist offensive of the world bourgeoisie." 265
It was seen as a punishment for the failure of the revolution outside Russia.

"Fascism is a characteristic phenomenon of decay, a reflection of the progressive dissolution of capitalist economy and of the disintegration of the bourgeois State." 266

The resolution drew special attention to Italy, where "the door to fascism was opened by the passivity of the socialist party and the reformist trade union leaders." 267

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264 Cited in Ibid., p. 133.

265 In J. DeGras, "Vol 2", p. 39.

266 In Ibid., p. 41.

267 In Ibid., p. 42.

A clearer crystallization of the Comintern's views on Social Democracy was given in the E.C.C.I. statement, on the defeat of the 1923 "German October", in January, 1924:

"The leading strata of German social-democracy are at the present moment nothing but a fraction of German fascism wearing a socialist mask. They have handed State power over to the representatives of the capitalist dictatorship in order to save capitalism from the proletarian revolution." 268

The Fifth C.I. Congress continued this vein of analysis in a more generalized form:

"As bourgeois society continues to decay, all bourgeois parties, particularly social-democracy, take on a more or less fascist character... Fascism and social-democracy are two sides of the same instrument of capitalist dictatorship. In the fight against fascism, therefore, social-democracy can never be a reliable ally of the fighting proletariat." 269

Stalin sharpened and deepened this analysis in September, 1924:

"Firstly, it is not true that fascism is only the fighting organisation of the bourgeoisie. Fascism is not only a military-technical category. Fascism is the bourgeoisie's fighting organisation that relies on the active support of Social-Democracy. Social-Democracy is objectively the moderate wing of fascism. There is no ground for assuming that the fighting organisation of the bourgeoisie can achieve decisive successes in battles, or in governing the country, without the active support of Social-Democracy. There is

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268 In Ibid., p. 77.

269 In Ibid., p. 139.

just as little ground for thinking that Social-Democracy can achieve decisive successes in battles, or in governing the country, without the active support of the fighting organisation of the bourgeoisie. These organisations do not negate, but supplement each other. They are not antipodes, they are twins. Fascism is an informal political bloc of these two chief organisations; a bloc, which arose in the circumstances of the post-war crisis of imperialism, and which is intended for combating the proletarian revolution. The bourgeoisie cannot retain power without such a bloc. It would therefore be a mistake to think that "pacifism" signifies the liquidation of fascism. In the present situation, "pacifism" is the strengthening of fascism with its moderate, Social-Democratic wing pushed into the forefront."²⁷⁰

An article in "International Press Correspondence" of October, 1924, showed that a member of the KPD had picked up on Stalin's analysis. After the formation of the Reichsbanner, a militarized unit of the SPD, the article labelled the SPD "the classic form of Social-Fascism, the new fighting method of the bourgeoisie in the era of 'pacifism'."²⁷¹ The "Social-Fascism" label was to stick, but not until five years had passed. The Comintern generally did not accept this analysis, and some sections continued to consider the Social-Democracy as a "workers party". For example, despite the "united front only from below" line flowing from the German defeats and the line

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²⁷⁰ J. V. Stalin, "Collected Works 6", pp. 294-295.

²⁷¹ Inprecorr, October 23, 1924, p. 839.

of the Fifth Congress, Zinoviev and "leftists" Ruth Fischer, and Arkady Maslow proposed to withdraw the candidacy of the Communist Thälmann on behalf of the Social Democrats in the March, 1925 elections. This manoeuvre did not pay off at all - the Social Democrats merely ignored the KPD's unwarranted generosity, and formed a coalition with the open Rightist parties.²⁷²

Between the Fifth and Sixth Congresses, however, the lessons of 1918-1923 began to seriously hit home in the C.I. leadership, especially given the unrelenting surge of Social Democracy to the Right. This enlightenment was promoted by more Social Democratic treachery, in 1926. In this year the General Strike in Britain followed the usual route of betrayal by Social Democratic leaders, and vacillation by the Communists. The Social Democrats, in fact, only called the Strike to keep their hold over the workers, who would have wildecatted en masse anyway.²⁷³

Some of the signal 'Social-Fascist' acts of Social Democracy were as follows. The Hungarian Social Democrats, after selling out the 1919 revolution and heading a neo-fascist regime, concluded an Alliance with the military dictatorship in Hungary which was to last through World War 2.

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²⁷² E. H. Carr, "Socialism in One Country 3", p. 329; see also "Fascism and the United Front: The Communist Party of Germany 1922-29", in Proletariat Vol. 1, #2. Fall, 1975, pp. 19-33.

²⁷³ See W. Z. Foster, pp. 345-347.

Their rationalization? "The Social Democratic Party will consider the general interests of the nation as of equal importance to the interests of the working class."²⁷⁴ A 1925 Second International Committee under Kautsky studying the situation, recognized the "good faith" of the Hungarian party and completely exonerated it.²⁷⁵ The terrorist Stambulisky regime in Bulgaria was supported by Social Democrats, the Pilsudsky coup d'etat in Poland was supported by the Polish Socialist Party, and the collaboration of the Italian Socialist Party with Mussolini has already been mentioned.²⁷⁶ In the years to come, many Social Democrats openly went over to fascism: Frossard and Faure in France, Mosley in the U. K., Leipart in Germany, etc.²⁷⁷

In 1929, the Social Democratic German government prohibited May Day demonstrations. In spite of this the KPD brought 250,000 workers out into the streets. Severing, the SPD Minister of the Interior, ordered the shooting of the May Day demonstrators, and Zorgiebel, the SPD Berlin chief of police carried out the order.²⁷⁸ This action was

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²⁷⁴ Cited in R. P. Dutt, "Fascism...", p. 192.

²⁷⁵ in Ibid., pp. 192-193.

²⁷⁶ see Ibid.

²⁷⁷ One could also mention: Dorriot in France, who was a long time advocate of "unity" with the Social Democrats in the CPF; Burnham (the Managerial Revolutionist and National Review editor) and Schachtman, Trotskyites who openly espoused the cause of U. S. Imperialism; DeMan, in Belgium, who became a Nazi puppet ruler; Ruth Fischer (see above); etc.

upheld by the SPD in July, 1932, as it was being ignominiously ousted from the Government by Hindenburg, as follows:

"The Prussian Government is in a position with police-statistics to prove that police interference has caused more deaths on the Left than on the Right, and that police measures have caused more wounds on the Left than on the Right." 279

This was the SPD's defence against charges of "leftism"! Two months before this, the SPD had declared that "the Social Democratic Party, no less than the Catholic Party, is strongly inclined to see Herr Hitler's Nazis share the Governmental responsibility." 280

Following the cold blooded murder of unarmed demonstrators in 1929, and the SPD's subsequent disarming of the Communist Red Front, without touching Hitler's S. A., the Tenth Plenum of E.C.C.I., in July, 1929, endorsed Stalin's line"

"In this situation of growing imperialist contradictions and sharpening of the class struggle, fascism becomes more and more the dominant method of bourgeois class rule. In countries where there are strong social-democratic parties, fascism assumes the particular form of social-fascism; which to an ever-increasing extent serves the bourgeoisie as an instrument for paralyzing the activity of the masses in the struggle against the regime of fascist dictatorship." 281

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278 See "The Tenth Plenary Session of E.C.C.I." in J. DeGras, "The Communist International Vol. 3". (London, Cass and Co., 1971). pp. 36-52.

279 In R. P. Dutt, "Fascism...", p. 186.

280 Ibid., p. 147.

Social Democracy from at least 1914 onward, based itself wholly on the concept of co-operation with capitalism, so as to proceed "peacefully and harmoniously" towards "socialism". The Chairman of the Second International, Vandervelde, gave the watchword: "we are the physicians of an ailing capitalism".²⁸²

"The whole experience of 1914-1933 has demonstrated with inescapable clearness that this line leads, not to socialism, nor to peaceful progress, nor even to the maintenance of democratic forms in the most limited sense, but to unexampled violence against the working class, and the strengthening of the capitalist dictatorship, and, in the final analysis to the victory of Fascism, of imperialist war and all the forces of destruction, against which only the proletarian revolution can avail to save the world."²⁸³

Even the bourgeoisie was compelled to acknowledge its gratitude for the behaviour of Social Democracy.

"The parallelism is indeed really striking. The then Social Democracy (from 1918 to 1930) and present-day National Socialism both perform similar functions in that they both were the gravediggers of the preceding system, and then, instead of leading the masses to the revolution proclaimed by them, led them to the new formation of bourgeois rule. The comparison which has often been drawn between Ebert and Hitler is also valid in this respect...

The parallelism itself shows that National Socialism has taken over from Social Democracy the task of providing the mass support for the rule of the bourgeoisie in Germany."²⁸⁴

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²⁸¹In J. DeGras, "Vol. 3", p. 44

²⁸²In R. P. Dutt, "Fascism...", pp. 181-182.

²⁸³Ibid., p. 196.

²⁸⁴Ibid., pp. 173-174. (From "Führerbriefe" - a bankers' newsletter)

On Hitler's accession to power, the U. S. journalist Mowrer wrote the following epitaph for the Weimar Republic, the SPD regime:

"A virgin Republic that appeals to old-time monarchists and generals to defend it against Communists!" Inevitably it falls into the enemy's hands. ...

What can be said for a republic that allows its laws to be interpreted by monarchist judges, its government to be administered by old-time functionaries brought up in fidelity to the old regime; that watches passively while reactionary school teachers and professors teach its children to despise the present freedom in favour of a glorified feudal past, that permits and encourages the revival of the militarism which was chiefly responsible for the country's previous humiliation?

What can be said for democrats who subsidise ex-princes who attack the regime; who make the ex-Emperor the richest man in deference to supposed property rights. ... This remarkable Republic paid generous pensions to thousands of ex-officers and civil servants who made no bones of their desire to overthrow it." 285

After Hitler came into power the Social Democrats refused to try to oust him, on the grounds that he was "legally" in power and should not be opposed. Despite this, the bourgeoisie had decided that the SPD had outworn its usefulness - the working class was no longer tied to its demagogy, and open terror now had to suffice to subdue the masses. The SPD found itself in the same concentration camps as the KPD, in spite of its grovelling subservience to Fascism.

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285 Quoted in Ibid., pp. 134-135.

Social Democracy was thus analysed by the C.I., and categorized as a wing of the bourgeois, not the workers' movement. The reverse of the coin on making this appraisal was, of necessity, the liquidation of Social Democratism inside the Communist Movement, primarily the reorganization of the Parties as proletarian fighting units, on the basis of factory cells.

REORGANIZATION

The Fourth C.I. Congress, in 1922, had set up a department to deal solely with organizational problems, the Orgburo. The resolution of the Congress had called for the establishment of

"An organization department (Orgburo), to which at least two members of the presidium must belong. The Orgburo is subordinate to the presidium."²⁸⁶

This department went to work on the reorganization of the Communist Parties on a Bolshevik basis. Pyatnitsky, an old Bolshevik, was in charge. The Orgburo did not, however, go into full swing until 1924 and the call for "Bolshevization". Under the auspices of this department, in January, 1925, E.C.C.I. promulgated a "draft statute" for a model party organization (see Appendix). This followed a years' work by the Orgburo, with E.C.C.I. resolutions on factory nuclei in January, 1924,²⁸⁷ and on fractions in February.²⁸⁸

The decision to push ahead with the reorganization on the basis of factory nuclei met stubborn resistance in every Party. This resistance was first expressed openly, and then, after the directives of E.C.C.I. and the Orgburo,

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²⁸⁶In J. DeGras, "Vol. 1", p. 439.

²⁸⁷In J. DeGras, "Vol. 2", pp. 79-85.

²⁸⁸In Ibid., pp. 66-68.

it was expressed by either ignoring the orders, or sabotaging the work of building nuclei and fractions.

E. H. Carr clearly recognized the revolutionary implications of the demand for reorganization:

" - the proposal that all party membership should be organized on the basis of factory cells - met with stubborn and vocal opposition, since it involved the abandonment of a traditional "democratic" form of organization by districts and regions. It corresponded to the Bolshevik conception of the party as an entity composed of workers in factories or other units of production and organized on the basis of such units, but not to the normal western conception of a party based on local organizations. Territorial organization treated the workers as citizens, and suited the requirements of an electoral machine based on universal suffrage. Organization by factory cells treated the workers as members of the proletariat, and facilitated enrolment and training for revolutionary action: the Red Guard of 1917 in Petrograd could not have been mustered on any other basis than that of factories. This was a difference of principle comparable to the difference between Bolsheviks and Mensheviks in the original Russian party." 289

Interestingly enough, the Communist Youth International (KIM), had taken the injunction to form cells, in the 21 points, seriously. In the face of concerted opposition from the German delegation, in 1921, KIM passed a resolution to make "a transition from the current exclusively territorial organization of Communist Youth to the formation of communist league cells."²⁹⁰ The Third KIM Congress in

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²⁸⁹ E. H. Carr, "Socialism in One Country 3", p. 916. (Emphasis added).

²⁹⁰ in Ibid., p. 917.

Moscow in December, 1922, reiterated the proposition more decisively: "the fundamental unit of organization of the youth league is the factory cell."²⁹¹

After the "German October" affair, in January, 1924, E.C.C.I. ordered the KPD to reorganize on the cell basis within two months. E.C.C.I. felt that because the KPD had clung to the territorial principle of organization, it had proved to be a parliamentary, not a revolutionary, organization.²⁹² In the absence of factory cells it had been impossible to take advantage of the propitious moment for the overthrow of the bourgeoisie, by organizing the workers. The transition from legal to underground work, as the Party was under prohibition, was also hindered by the absence of factory nuclei.

Prior to the Fifth C.I. Congress, every Party temporized on the question, some saying it was too difficult; the Canadians, under MacDonald, stating that it did not suit conditions in Canada.²⁹³ The Fifth Congress put the question unequivocally:

"The basic organization of the Communist Party is the cell in the enterprise (in the workshop, factory, pit, office, shop, estate, etc.) which unites all members of the Party working in the enterprise in question."²⁹⁴

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²⁹¹ in Ibid., p. 918.

²⁹² in J. DeGras, "Vol. 2", p. 88.

²⁹³ See Tim Buck, "Thirty Years". (Toronto, Progress Books, 1952). pp. 58-68. and T. Buck, "Lenin and Canada". (Toronto, Progress Books, 1970). p. 69.

The KIM representative at the Congress, pointing out that KIM had pioneered in the work of promoting cell building, stated that the Comintern had:

"to begin the Bolshevization of the party in the field of organization in real earnest, to rid ourselves of the social-democratic heritage, and to develop a real communist party."²⁹⁵

The general resolution of the Fifth Congress had noted disparagingly that "the vast majority of European communist parties retain to this day the old principles of organizational structure of the party borrowed from the social-democrats. That is a survival from the times when the party was still regarded as an electoral machine. There can be no talk of building a serious internally-solid mass communist party so long as it is not based on party cells in the factories themselves. ..This is not merely an organizational, but a serious political question."²⁹⁶

Nonetheless, Pyatnitsky made a fatal concession to the territorial principle by allowing the parties to utilize the system of "Street cells" alongside of factory cells.²⁹⁷ Evidently Pyatnitsky was attempting to be flexible, but the

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²⁹⁴ Quoted in E. H. Carr, "Socialism in One Country 3", p. 921.

²⁹⁵ Quoted in Ibid., p. 922.

²⁹⁶ in J. DeGras, "Vol. 2", p. 148.

²⁹⁷ E. H. Carr, "Socialism in One Country 3", p. 922.

street cell system could only operate in contradiction to the factory cell system. The practical outcomes of territorialism and industrial concentration were diametrically opposed. As was to happen, street cells were to take priority, in practice, over industrial concentrations, i.e. territorialism was to win out. This system was maintained through to the victory of the Nazis, who had no trouble in smashing up the KPD, which was not, even then, rooted in the main factories.

Pyatnitsky indicated that this concession to territorialism had been an unwanted compromise with the social democratism of the Europeans: "Street groups never played any role in the organizational structure of the Soviet Union."²⁹⁸

At the end of 1924, Pyatnitsky was seeing that the "two months" ultimatum presented to the KPD had been wide of the mark. His report to E.C.C.I. in January, 1925 stated that "a majority of communist parties are only now beginning their reorganization on the basis of factory cells."²⁹⁹ Zinoviev was reacting against this drive and in March, 1925 complained about the reorganization programme - in his view too much emphasis was being given to it.³⁰⁰

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²⁹⁸ O. Pyatnitsky, "The Organisation of a World Party". (London, Dorrit Press, 1928). p. 46.

²⁹⁹ in E. H. Carr, "Socialism in One Country 3", p. 925.

³⁰⁰ Ibid.

Trotsky, in line with his pre-revolution open anti-Leninism, was totally opposed to Bolshevization.³⁰¹

The reorganization drive sputtered and hesitated everywhere, but it made slow, though real progress in France and Italy. In Italy, the reorganization was said to have been undertaken in two years, from 1924-1926. The fact that these parties achieved a degree of Bolshevization is not insignificant. Whereas the KPD all but disappeared under Fascism, the CPI and CPF were to lead large anti-fascist partisan movements, which proved decisive in the war against fascism.³⁰²

An organizational conference held in February, 1926, painted another gloomy picture. Under the Ruth Fischer - Arkady Maslow leadership, the KPD was refusing to enter the unions, and so had a minimal number of members in cell work. In the U. K. out of 6,000 members, the C.P. had 1,000 organized in 183 factory cells, but this was merely symptomatic.³⁰³ In countries with street cells it was found that factory workers tended to be organized in street cells as opposed to factory cells, which reinforced the territorialist form of organization.³⁰⁴

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³⁰¹ See H. J. Olgin, "Trotskyism...", pp. 74-75.

³⁰² E. H. Carr, "Socialism in One Country 3", pp. 928-929.

³⁰³ Cited in Ibid., p. 933.

³⁰⁴ Ibid., p. 934.

The Sixth Plenum of E.C.C.I. in March, 1926 followed up the sad picture painted by the previous month's Orghuro Conference:

"The present status of cell work and of reorganization must be described as critical. The reorganization which was begun in almost all countries after the fourth congress, and which more or less reached its climax at the time of the last session of the enlarged IKKIM, has come to a halt everywhere and to a large extent regressed. At present individual leagues have only isolated cells which lead a weak existence side by side with the old territorial organizations." 305

The Plenum named France, Italy, China and Bulgaria as countries "in which partial reorganization has been achieved." 306

The case of the U. S. Communist Party is an interesting case in point. The CPUSA was not an unimportant Party in the Comintern, In fact, in the period between the Fourth and Fifth C.I. Congresses, it ranked fourth in the number of times the C.I. discussed its affairs, being surpassed by the German, Italian and French Parties. 307

The CPUSA, and the Canadian Communist Party were both based on a peculiar federalist structure. They were, in fact, loose conglomerations of different language based federations.

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305. in Ibid., p. 935.

306. in Ibid.

307. "From the Fourth to the Fifth World Congress". (London, CPGB, 1924). pp. 117-118.

Each language federation had its own executive and political line. Needless to say, this operation in no sense corresponded to the necessary structure for a revolutionary proletarian party. The Canadian Party, for example, contained Finnish, Ukrainian, Jewish and English language-nationality federations.³⁰⁸

The CPUSA did not touch the factory nuclei issue until January, 1924, when it stated:

"the Party organization must be gradually and systematically transformed from its present territorial basis to that of shop and factory units."³⁰⁹

This was no more than a paper declaration, and at the Fifth World Congress, U. S. and Canadian delegates were vying with each other in tales of woe about how reorganization was "impossible". In both Parties, workers of different nationalities in the same enterprises belonged to different federations in the Party. Obviously co-ordination of Communist activity was impossible. Rather than attempt to dissolve the language federations (with the possible loss of the leaders of these groups), the Americans and Canadians chose to use them as a scapegoat for their inability to reorganize. Pyatnitsky could not, and did not, relent-

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³⁰⁸ See T. Buck, "Lenin and Canada", pp. 65-70.

³⁰⁹ in T. Draper, "American Communism and Soviet Russia". (New York, The Viking Press, 1960). p. 158.

"in America nor in Canada can we renounce the creation of factory nuclei."³¹⁰ He told them to commence industrial concentration work.

Apparently convinced, the CPUSA and the Canadian CP produced "programmes of action" for the formation of shop nuclei. The Fifth E.C.C.I. Plenum, in 1925, reevaluated the American question (the U. S. and Canada were placed under an American Secretariat of E.C.C.I.). Pyatnitsky singled out the U. S. Party as an example of "organizational chaos."³¹¹ By this time the Party had only come up with seven nuclei, all in Chicago. W. Z. Foster, the U. S. delegate, complained that, "There is great resistance within the Party against reorganization."³¹²

Pyatnitsky noted that as long as the language federations existed, the CPUSA was not "ripe for reorganization". He told the Party that the Orgburo would devote "very serious attention" to its reorganization.³¹³ In September, 1925, the Party adopted a new constitution, changing its name from "Workers Party of America" to the "Workers (Communist) Party of America", and making structural changes.³¹⁴ (The name

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³¹⁰ in Ibid..

³¹¹ in Ibid., p. 159.

³¹² in Ibid.

³¹³ in Ibid.

³¹⁴ Ibid., p. 160.

"CPUSA" did not come in until 1929). This defined the shop nuclei as the basis of the Party organization, but still refused to liquidate the language sections, and even provided for "language fractions".³¹⁵ The Orgburo took drastic measures, and assigned an "Org instructor" who was sent from Moscow to show the U. S. Party the way. This procedure went ahead throughout the majority of the C.I. sections. The CPUSA's 19 language sections were eventually eliminated.³¹⁶ Despite this, the Bolshevization was never really completed (and was tacitly dropped, anyway, throughout the C.I., after 1935). Even in June, 1933, almost nine years after the 5th. Congress, one still finds exhortations in the CPUSA's organization journal "The Party Organizer" to involve "40%" of the Party membership in shop cells, as an ultimate goal!³¹⁷ The June 1933 Organization Letter of E.C.C.I. to the CPUSA notes "the unsatisfactory work on the reconstruction of the Party on the basis of factory nuclei at the present moment..."³¹⁸

In 1928, Pyatnitsky was constrained to explain to the sections in some detail what was going on - why Bolshevization was not a startling success. Firstly,

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³¹⁵ Ibid., p. 161.

³¹⁶ Ibid., pp. 166-168.

³¹⁷ "Problems of Shop Nuclei" in The Party Organizer, June-July, 1933, p. 6.

³¹⁸ "To the Central Committee CPUSA" in Ibid., p. 3.

Pyatnitsky notes that the relationship of most of the sections with the masses of the industrial proletariat was tenuous at best prior to reorganization. In reviewing the situation of factory papers, the essential organs of factory party groups, he states:

"Prior to the reorganization there were no factory newspapers anywhere. I have not heard of any cases in which the Party organizations issued circulars to the workers in individual factories, even on important events, prior to the reorganization." 319

Almost above all else, this demonstrates the paucity of industrial concentration work before Bolshevization. This led to problems in winning the sections to an individual concentration policy, and then to the establishment of nuclei in the most important areas: the large industries. By 1927, most factory groups outside the USSR were such only nominally, and were concentrated in small workshops, as opposed to massive enterprises. In the U. S. it was found that in Chicago, with 24 nuclei, half were in large factories, the other half in small enterprises. In New York, out of 300 nuclei, 159 were in the tailoring industry, only 12 were in large enterprises in metallurgy or woodworking, and the rest were in small shops. 320

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319 O. Pyatnitsky, "The Organization...", pp. 37-38.

320 Ibid., p. 39.

Pyatnitsky produced the following figures for the factory groups in Germany, demonstrating that the KPD had not penetrated heavy industry. There were 1,426 groups in toto in 1927:

<u>Number of Factory Nuclei</u>		<u>Size of Enterprises</u> (No. of Workers Employed)
260	nuclei in enterprises employing	3 - 50
329	" " "	50 - 100
540	" " "	100 - 500
175	" " "	500 - 1,000
71	" " "	1,000 - 3,000
28	" " "	3,000 - 5,000
20	" " "	5,000 - and over ³²¹

Thus 21% of the groups were in large enterprises, 39% in medium, and 40% in small enterprises. The figures, however, deal with "groups" which can mean anything from one to ten or more Communists. Pyatnitsky deduces from the figures that:

"We may take it as a general phenomenon in all countries that the greatest numbers of groups consist of one or two Communists working in a factory. They cannot, of course, carry on normal Party work in the factories."³²²

The statistics were drearily similar down the list in England, Czechoslovakia, Canada, etc. In terms of the activity of the nuclei; whether they really served their

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³²¹in Ibid.

³²²Ibid., p. 40.

purpose as centres of political activity, as points around which to rally the factory workers, as bearers of the party line into the everyday life of the factory; the situation was literally abysmal.

"The situation is still worse in connection with the activity of most of the existing factory groups. Many of them, although they are in factories, shops and other enterprises, can be only formally considered as "factory" groups. Their activities are not carried on in their own factories, and they do not deal with the problems confronting their own enterprises. The only actual difference between the former territorial organisations and the above-mentioned groups consists in the fact that now workers of one factory or enterprise meet together whereas formerly Party members living in one neighbourhood met together." 323

This problem was the direct result of the mistaken policy of the Central Committees, who still centred all of the Party mass campaigns outside of the factory groups. Therefore the factory groups were only peripherally drawn into the campaigns, which occurred outside the factories, and were not in any position to carry on effective agitation and propaganda work. The Central organs of the Parties left the factory groups to their own devices. In most countries the street organs were the most highly mobilized, with the factory groups acting as mere adjuncts. This occurred despite the fact that the Orgburo's and E.C.C.I.'s

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323 Ibid., p. 42.

toleration of the existence of street groups was merely intended as a concession to the Europeans.

"In reality, however, the street groups have become transformed into full-fledged Party organizations, while the factory groups eke out a miserable existence." ³²⁴

This is obviously a far cry from the Bolshevik method of concentration on the industrial proletariat in the key areas of their existence. In the U. S. in 1927, there were 440 street and 400 factory groups, with street groups accounting for 60.2% of the membership, and factory groups 26.5%. ³²⁵ In Germany, as of July, 1926, there were 1,525 factory and 1,609 street groups. The membership distribution, however, was much the same as in the U. S.

<u>Area</u>	<u>Factory Groups</u> (% of total membership)	<u>Street Groups</u>
Chemnitz	30	70
Cologne	30	70
Ludwigshaven	70	30
Nuremburg	40	60
Halle	28	72
Leipzig	35	65
Düsseldorf	27	73
Mannheim	28	72
Hamburg	30 - 40	60 - 70
Berlin	60	40 ³²⁶

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³²⁴ Ibid., p. 46.

³²⁵ Ibid., p. 47.

³²⁶ Ibid.

In Czechoslovakia there were 1,049 factory and 3,485 street groups. The figures reflect the same situation throughout the C.I. (outside the USSR).³²⁷

Pyatnitsky's summation includes the following directive:

"The large factories in the most important industries must become the strongholds of the Communist Party."³²⁸

He goes on to state that if the Communist Party has a firm foothold in the key industries, it cannot be dislodged by terror, and can co-ordinate and lead all phases of the proletarian struggle from strikes to general strikes to insurrections to revolution.

However, none of this hit home, and still, in 1931, the Eleventh E.C.C.I. Plenum was complaining that only 25% to 30% of the members of Comintern sections were in the factories. It had to repeat, for the nth time:

"The best and most flexible form for the reorganization of the C.P.'s is on the basis of the factories...this Plenum must declare war on organizational opportunism just as mercilessly as the C.P.'s have frequently carried on war against political opportunism."³²⁹

By the end of December, 1931, the disparity between territorialist and proletarian forms of organization had

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³²⁷ Ibid., p. 48.

³²⁸ Ibid., p. 54.

³²⁹ "The Eleventh Plenum of E.C.C.I.", in The Party Organizer, July, 1931, p. 10.

been accentuated, if anything. In the KPD at this time there were 1,983 factory cells and 6,196 street cells. Throughout the C.I., street cells embraced a colossal 80% of the membership.³³⁰ Pyatnitsky, in 1932, was forced to note that:

"Now many of the Communist Parties have factory cells, but in most cases, they hardly do any work. The Social-Democratic traditions of Party structure have been so strongly rooted in some of the Communist Parties that they press upon the Party members even when Bolshevik forms of organization are already applied."³³¹

In 1933, after the KPD had proven incapable of winning the masses of workers away from the SPD, (because of the KPD's organizational maladies) Hitler came to power. For years past, the Comintern had been warning that the Social Fascists were just that; they were paving the way for Fascism. The task of the Communist Parties was to win the majority of the working class and smash Fascism and capitalism through aggressive vanguard tactics.

Immediately before Hitler's accession to power, Pyatnitsky wrote:

"the mills and factories do not as yet constitute the basis of the work of the Communist Parties...in any of the Capitalist countries."³³²

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³³⁰ O. Pyatnitsky, "The Bolshevization....", p. 2.

³³¹ Ibid.

³³² O. Pyatnitsky, "The World Economic Crisis". (London, Modern Books, n.d.-1933?). p. 85.

And, immediately after the Fascists' ascendancy

Pyatnitsky outlined the KPD's foremost task:

"The KPD must, not in word but in actual fact, transfer the centre of its work to the factories."³³³

Despite the fact that in 1933, the KPD had a membership of 300,000, the Nazis were easily able to destroy the Party, mostly physically. The KPD had no "firm foothold" from which to counter attack.

The lessons of the Bolshevization period prove that it was far easier to get the C.I. sections to verbally excoriate Social Democracy, than for them to completely shed their Social Democratic baggage. Just as the Social Democrats led the working class into massive disasters, so the Social Democratic traditions led to disastrous consequences in the Comintern - from losing the KPD, to missing many opportunities for proletarian revolution. This is all in spite of the painstaking efforts of the Comintern, and E.C.C.F., to redress the situation.

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³³³ ibid., p. 118.

THE PROGRAMME OF THE COMMUNIST INTERNATIONAL

A brief consideration of the Comintern's penultimate, Sixth Congress, will bring this thesis to a close. The period dealt with has started with the first Communist Manifesto, by Marx and Engels, in 1848, and will finish with the Programme of the Communist International, eighty years later, in 1928. The problem under consideration has been the problem of translating proletarian theory into practice: changing the world rather than merely understanding it. The weapons in the struggle were forged by Marx, Engels, Lenin and Stalin, who elaborated the theory in response to the concrete conditions of proletarian history and who built the instruments: the Communist League, the First International, the Social Democratic Parties, the Second International, the Bolshevik Party, and the Third International.

The period 1924-1928 saw the accentuation of struggles throughout the Comintern, and the working class. The struggle for Bolshevization and against Trotskyism resulted in the expulsion of many recalcitrant elements in the leadership of virtually every C.I. Section: Trotsky, and Zinoviev in the USSR, Brandler, Thalheimer, Urbahns, Fischer and Maslow in Germany, Souvarine and Treint in France, etc.

The East had started to occupy a prominent position on the international stage and the Chinese Communist Party

(CCP) had started to grow. Even in the East, the infection with Social Democratism had taken root and, in order to pursue the "bourgeois democratic Revolution" as a preparatory stage for the Socialist Revolution, the CCP had entered into a coalition with the party of the liberal bourgeoisie, the Kuomintang (KMT). This coalition had been so tight, that the CCP was completely subsumed under the KMT organization. The results of this policy came to fruition in 1927. After Communist workers held a general strike in liberated Shanghai to welcome the KMT "comrades", the KMT arrived and massacred the workers with unexampled ferocity. The only faithful elements in the coalition were the Communists, who were taken by surprise by this treachery from their bourgeois "friends". The Trotskyite leader of the CCP was subsequently removed and the Party, on the turn to the left at the Sixth Congress, inaugurated a policy of establishing Soviet areas under Communist control. It was this policy in 1928-1935, which ensured the eventual victory of the Chinese Revolution.³³⁴

In Vienna, in July, 1927, workers called a general strike to protest the acquittal of two Nazis on charges of murdering a worker. This led to violent confrontations with the police on July 15, and an attack on the Palace of Justice,

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³³⁴ Hu Chiao-Mu, "Thirty Years of the Communist Party of China". (Peking, FLPH, 1952). pp. 10-40. There are numerous accounts of the 1927 disaster.

which was razed to the ground by fire. There were about 100 deaths in the conflict. The Austrian C.P., which was not Bolshevized, proved organizationally unprepared for the event. In a situation with revolutionary potentialities, the C.P. did no more than stand and watch.³³⁵

By far the most electrifying event in the Revolutionary Movement was the turn to the Left in the Soviet Union itself, with the preparation for the First Five Year Plan and the introduction of a planned, socialist society.³³⁶

By 1927, the Socialist sector of the economy, especially industry, had made notable gains and had surpassed the pre-1914 levels considerably. One grave problem resulting from NEP, which still remained, was the growth of a rural bourgeoisie, the Kulaks, and the subsequent imbalance between capitalist and socialist elements in the country. This obviously hindered the growth of industry and the establishment of socialism; one side had to lose and the Central Committee asked the questions "Who will win? What is the way out?"

Making a courageous leap forward, in December, 1927, Stalin stated that:

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³³⁵ See the "Ninth Plenum of E.C.C.I." in J. DeGras, "Vol. 2", especially pp. 423-424.

³³⁶ See, inter alia, "History of the CPSU (b)", pp. 287-324.

"The way out, is to turn the small and scattered peasant farms into large united farms based on the common cultivation of the soil, to introduce collective cultivation of the soil on the basis of a new and higher technique. The way out is to unite the small and dwarf peasant farms gradually but surely, not by pressure, but by example and persuasion, into large farms based on common, co-operative, collective cultivation of the soil with the use of agricultural machines and tractors and scientific methods of intensive agriculture. There is no other way out." 337

The stage was set for the rapid collectivization of agriculture and growth of industry that was to be embodied in the Five Year Plan of 1929-33. The tempo had to be rapid, because what was intended was nothing short of a Second Revolution, a proletarian offensive against the last, and strongest fortresses of capitalism in Russia. This was all-out class struggle, and in order to win, the proletariat had to gain the offensive.

Of course, the Kulaks had their spokesmen within the Party, the most prominent among whom being Bukharin. Bukharin represented a wing of Trotskyism (Bukharin and Trotsky in fact concluded various alliances). Whereas Trotsky's "productive forces" revisionism held that Russia could not industrialize and socialize, Bukharin felt that if the "productive forces" were left alone and allowed to develop at their own rates, Socialism would naturally ensue. 338

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337 J. V. Stalin, in Ibid., p. 288.

338 See Ibid., p. 293.

This was analagous to the Second International's holy writ, the "peaceful transition to socialism". All the forms of Social Democratism, from the Second International to Trotsky and Bukharin ignored the very ABC of dialectical materialism: the class struggle: the maturation of society without this element was the common point of origin of all these revisionists.

Bukharin's fatalist dogma led him, as it had led Trotsky, into declaring for the restoration of capitalism via his main slogan: "Kulak enrich thyself".³³⁹ He even counted on the rural bourgeoisie making the gloried "peaceful transition" to socialism.

The antipathetic orientations of Stalin and Bukharin, were also to lead them to antipodal conclusions on the situation on the international plane. As always, the struggles in the CPSU (b) were to be reflected throughout the Comintern, and also, as always, the national and international outlooks of the CPSU (b) leadership intertwined.

Stalin analysed the situation of the partial stabilization of capitalism which had been under way since the end of 1923, and found all the indications that a new, and overarching crisis of capitalism was approaching with utmost celerity. On December 3, 1927, Stalin presented a

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³³⁹ See J. R. Campbell, "Soviet Policy...", pp. 34, 63, 78-82.

report to the CPSU (b) Fifteenth Congress titled "The Growing Crisis of World Capitalism and the External Situation of the U.S.S.R."³⁴⁰ Basing himself on the elementary propositions of Marxism outlined in the Communist Manifesto, and Capital, to the effect that capitalism engenders inevitable crises due to its internal and external contradictions, Stalin stated:

"...this stabilization...is giving rise to a most profound and acute crisis of world capitalism, a crisis which is fraught with new wars."³⁴¹

Stalin noted such "irreconcilable contradictions" in: the restructuring of the world market in favour of the U. S. and at the expense of Europe; the growth of production and supply, without a corresponding growth in the market; and the accentuation of uneven development. These were the classic conditions for a cyclical crisis of over-production, deepened, by the conditions of imperialism and the existence of a world market, into a world crisis. The upshot would inevitably be a new Imperialist World War to redivide the market; a worldwide crisis; and a renewed revolutionary upsurge.

The Bukharin group did not agree with this estimation,

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³⁴⁰ J. V. Stalin, "Selected Works", pp. 304-315.

³⁴¹ Ibid., p. 305.

and, while admitting the potential for a crisis, disagreed with the possibility of its being worldwide.³⁴² The Lovestone group in the U. S., one of the most hardened factions of Bukharinites, gave birth to a scheme of "national exceptionalism", i.e. saying that U. S. capitalism was "too strong" to be affected by the crisis. Again, theory and practice merged, and this theoretical exceptionalism developed a certain organizational continuity with the CPUSA's tardiness in abandoning territorialism and national sectionalism.³⁴³ Similarly Canada's Spector and MacDonald groups proclaimed that Canada would miss the crisis, and ignored E.C.C.I.'s organizational strictures.³⁴⁴

Alongside Bukharin, capital's open "hired prize fighters" saw Stalin's analysis as hopelessly wrong. The economists and politicians trumpeted the glories of "crisis-free organized capitalism" from Washington to Berlin.

Six months after Stalin's speech, U. S. President Hoover stated that "the outlook for the world today is for the greatest era of expansion in history". Similarly, a special editorial in the 14th. Edition of the Encyclopedia Britannica, penned in the summer of 1928 claimed:

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³⁴² See "Resolution of the Tenth E.C.C.I. Plenum on Bukharin" in J. DeGras, "Vol. 3", pp. 68-69.

³⁴³ T. Draper, "American Communism...", pp. 268-281, also W. Z. Foster, "History of the CPUSA". (New York, International Publishers, 1952). pp. 270-274.

³⁴⁴ See T. Buck, "Lenin and Canada", p. 68.

"Capitalism is still accused of responsibility for avoidable unemployment, arising from periodic alternations of climaxes and depressions in trade activity, of 'booms' and 'slumps'. It is certain, however, that though there must always be some tidal movement of rise and fall, the former violence of these rhythms is now much abated in times of peace, owing to longer experience and fuller knowledge; to swifter information in every part of the globe of what is happening in every other; to quicker transport, to better calculated control exercised by the great trusts and syndicates as indirectly by the great banking combinations and to the better adjustment altogether of supply and demand." 345

J. M. Keynes, the British economist, signalled an era of eternal stabilization, now opening:

"But we are now entering on a third era, which Professor Commons calls the period of stabilization, and truly characterizes as "the actual alternative to Marx's Communism"." 346

Social Democracy, which always dived head first into the pools of capitalism's mirages, was no less ecstatic about the future of capitalism. Hilferding of the SPD, stated, in 1927, that:

"We are in the period of capitalism which in the main has overcome the era of free competition and the sway of the blind laws of the market, and we are coming to a capitalist organization of economy...to organized economy...organized capitalism in reality means the supercession of the capitalist principle of free competition by the socialist principle of planned production." 347

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345 in R. P. Dutt, "The Internationale", pp. 189-190.

346 in R. P. Dutt, "Fascism...", p. 54.

347 in R. P. Dutt, "The Internationale", p. 190.

Vandervelde, the Chairman of the Second International, approvingly stated, (after reading a "Bankers' Manifesto" heralding the transition to "organized capitalism"):

"The language of the International of the Financiers is not very different from that of the Socialist International." 348

Rowse, a British Labour Party theorist, made the following "analysis":

"There are grounds for thinking that the situation is changing for the good. The wave of world revolution, on which the advance of communism is depending, has subsided. Capitalism has been successful up to a point in stabilising itself - though at the price of admitting into its structure socialist elements which will ultimately supercede it.... There is a good deal in the communist picture of a world in the grip of ineluctable conflict that is out of date." 349

Unfortunately, Rowse, in league with all other Social Democrats, had problems in identifying allies. His main example for this progressive tendency of modern capitalism was - Kreuger:

"It is noteworthy that one of the greatest and most progressive of modern finance corporations, the Swedish Kr euger and Toll Co., in a brilliant review of world conditions comes to conclusions not dissimilar.... When a great capitalist concern speaks in these terms, one seems to see a glimpse of the future in which the existing conflict between socialism and it is resolved in a synthesis of common aims." 350

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348 in Ibid., p. 191.

349 in Ibid.

350 in Ibid., p. 192.

It is not without touches of dramatic irony that one notes that within a couple of months of the publishing of Rowse's ruminations, Kreuger's company collapsed and Kreuger himself was exposed as a fraud and committed suicide.³⁵¹

History had the last word. Stalin's analysis was confirmed in 1929, and further in 1933, with a shattering world crisis of capitalism.³⁵²

The capitalists were so stunned by Stalin's accuracy and their ineptitude, that the U. S. Senate commissioned a study into whether the crisis was the result of a Communist conspiracy!³⁵³ This crisis indeed led to a new world war, which broke out in 1939. This proved to be the most devastating capitalist crisis on record, with fifty million unemployed and continuous military adventures (until the outbreak of the World War) by Japan, Germany, etc.³⁵⁴

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³⁵¹ in Ibid.

³⁵² See O. Pyatnitsky, "The World Economic Crisis"; and E. Varga, "The Great Crisis and its Political Consequences". (London, Modern Books, 1934). It is intriguing to note that many of the authors who desperately attempt to discredit Stalin's economic analysis (by calling it a nefarious plot to force conformity in the C.I.), hardly mention the Great Depression. Helmut Gruber implies that Stalin's analysis was a lucky guess, prompted by his struggle with Trotsky and Bukharin. ("Soviet Russia Masters the Comintern". (Garden City, Anchor Books, 1974). pp. 175-234.)

³⁵³ see R. P. Dutt, "The Internationale", p. 193.

³⁵⁴ see Ibid.

In the face of this, the Comintern strode determinedly on towards World Revolution. On July 15, 1928, the Sixth Congress of the Communist International began.³⁵⁵ This Congress was to consolidate the efforts of the previous nine years by making a determined push to the Left. This push involved: promoting the slogan "class against class" as the operative slogan for the C.I. sections; allowing united fronts solely "from below", redoubling efforts to Bolshevize the sections; and ensuring that the sections in the capitalist world which did not advocate revolution for the dictatorship of the proletariat (including Canada, which agitated for a liberal "Farmer-Labour Government") did so.

The seminal document of the Congress was the Programme of the Communist International.³⁵⁶ This Programme was testimony to the untiring work of the Comintern: in all its years of existence, the Second International had never been able to get together to agree on a Programme. The Comintern Programme was a vanguard document, a summation and evaluation of almost a century of proletarian experience in the march towards Communism analysed from the standpoint of Marxism-Leninism.

Formally, the Programme resembled the earlier

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³⁵⁵ See J. DeGras, "Vol. 2", pp. 446-550, also Inprecorr throughout August, September and October, 1928.

³⁵⁶ Full text in "Inprecorr, Special Edition", 31 December, 1928, pp. 1750-1768.

Communist "Programme", the 1848 Manifesto. It is divided into six sections, and concerns the past, present and future of the Movement.

The Introduction begins with the present, the epoch of imperialism. This epoch has subjected the world to the rule of capital, which "inexorably leads to the World Proletarian Revolution".³⁵⁷ Thus, while imperialism spreads capitalism across the globe, it also "musters the army of its own grave-diggers and compels the proletariat to organize in a militant international workers association".³⁵⁸

However, imperialism plants obstacles in the way of this organization by "bribing" a section of the working class to create a labour aristocracy, whose political expression is Social Democracy. Therefore, the fight for Socialism is also a "ruthless struggle against Social Democracy".

"Hence, the organization of the forces of the international revolution becomes possible only on the platform of Communism. In opposition to the opportunist Second International of Social Democracy -- which has become the agency of imperialism in the ranks of the working class -- inevitably arises the Third, Communist International, the international organization of the working class, the embodiment of the real unity of the revolutionary workers of the whole world."³⁵⁹

The C.I. is the "united and centralized international

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³⁵⁷ Ibid., p. 1750.

³⁵⁸ Ibid.

³⁵⁹ Ibid.

Party of the proletariat."³⁶⁰ The Programme of the C.I. is therefore "the programme of struggle for World Communism".³⁶¹ The Comintern is "the only international force that openly comes out as the organizer of the International Proletarian Revolution."³⁶²

The first section of the Programme is titled "The World System of Capitalism, its Development and Inevitable Downfall;" This section outlines the dynamic laws of capitalism which lead to overproduction crises, intensified exploitation of labour, under-consumption, etc. Next it turns to a consideration of "the Era of Finance Capital (Imperialism)" which creates monopolies, restricts "free competition: and divides the world into spheres of influence leading ineluctably to world wars. The forces of Imperialism create and organize the world's proletariat in factories, forming the necessary preconditions for World Revolution. The grave crises of imperialism serve to undermine the social bases of Social Democracy, and revolutionize workers. The Programme takes up Lenin's and Stalin's argument that, as the highest and last phase of capitalism, imperialism heightens the contradictions of capitalism to their limits.

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³⁶⁰ Ibid.

³⁶¹ Ibid.

³⁶² Ibid.

The Second Section is titled "The General Crisis of Capitalism and the First Phase of World Revolution". This gives a historic account of- the World Revolution consequent to the First World War; the counter revolutionary machinations of Social Democracy; the growth of Fascism and the inevitability of new revolutionary crises. The list, provided, of the monstrosities committed by Social Democracy from 1914 to 1928 is almost endless. After voting for war credits in 1914, it:

"supported the predatory treaties (Brest Litovsk, Versailles); it actively aligned itself with the militarists in the bloody suppression of proletarian uprisings (Noske); it conducted armed warfare against the first proletarian Republic (Soviet Russia); it despicably betrayed the victorious proletariat (Hungary); it joined the imperialist League of Nations (Albert Thomas, Paul Boncour, Vandervelde); it openly supported the imperialist Slave-owners against the Colonial slaves (the British Labour Party); it actively supported the most reactionary executioners of the working class (Bulgaria, Poland); it took upon itself the initiative in securing the passage of imperialist "military laws" (France); it betrayed the general strike of the British proletariat; it helped and is still helping to strangle China and India (the MacDonald Government); it acts as the propagandist for the imperialist League of Nations; it is capital's herald and organizer of the Struggle against the dictatorship of the proletariat in the U.S.S.R. (Kautsky, Hilferding)." 363

As for Fascism:

"Side by side with Social Democracy, with whose aid the bourgeoisie suppresses the workers or lulls

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363 Ibid., p. 1753.

their class vigilance, stands Fascism... The principal aim of Fascism is to destroy the revolutionary labour vanguard i.e. the Communist Sections...

The Bourgeoisie resorts either to the method of Fascism, or to the method of coalition with social Democracy according to the changes in the political situation; while Social Democracy itself often plays a Fascist role, in periods when the situation is critical for capitalism." 364

The situation of stabilization is seen as tottering, leading to a new crisis, and new world wars, in line with Stalin's analysis.

The Third Section concerns "The Ultimate Aim of the Communist International - World Communism". This describes the general outline of Communist society: the absence of classes, the transformation of work and leisure, the growth of productive forces, the cessation of wars, etc.

The Fourth Section is headed "The Period of Transition from Capitalism to Socialism and the Dictatorship of the Proletariat". This section deals with the proletarian conquest of power, which "is a necessary condition precedent to the growth of Socialist forms of economy". The Soviet form of the dictatorship of the proletariat is described based on the concrete experiences of the Paris Commune, the 1917 October Revolution and the 1919 Hungarian revolution. This entails the suppression of the bourgeoisie, the rule of the Soviets, the right to recall delegates, the abolition

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 364 Ibid., p. 1754.

of sex, race and nationality inequalities, the State as both executive and legislative, and the arming of the proletariat. The section goes on to deal with the concrete steps which must be taken by a proletarian state in the fields of industry, transport and communications; agriculture; trade and credit; housing; nationalities and colonies; and the means of ideological influence. The Programme recommends ruthless suppression of the urban and rural bourgeoisie, neutralization of the petty urban bourgeoisie, and attempts to influence the progressive sectors of the technical intelligentsia. The mass organizations which help to realize workers' power are the Soviets, trade unions and co-operative societies, which are levers or "transmission belts" whereby the Communist Party guides the whole system. The Fourth Section also notes that proletarian dictatorship implies cultural revolution; it "calls for a mass change of human nature".³⁶⁵

The section closes by outlining types of revolution towards socialism in distinct types of economic systems.

The Fifth Section is headed "The Dictatorship of the Proletariat in the International Social Revolution". This deals with the concrete position of the proletarian revolution, the U.S.S.R. specifically, relative to the rest

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³⁶⁵ Ibid., p. 1760.

of the world. It notes that the U.S.S.R. is the base of the world revolution: "she plays an exceptionally great revolutionary role generally; she is the driving force of proletarian revolution that impels the working class of all countries to seize power".³⁶⁶ The U.S.S.R. demonstrates to the world that the working class is not only able to seize power; it can use that power to successfully build socialism - even in one country. Consequently the duty of the international proletariat is to protect and defend the U.S.S.R.³⁶⁷

The Sixth Section is titled "The Strategy and Tactics of the Communist International in the Struggle for the Dictatorship of the Proletariat". In the manner of the 1848 Manifesto, this starts by outlining counter revolutionary ideologies in the working class.- Religious "Socialism", Social Democracy, Co-operative "Socialism", Guild "Socialism", Austro-"Marxism", Anarchism, "Revolutionary" Syndicalism, Sun Yat-Senism, Gandhi-ism, and Garveyism. "Standing out against all these tendencies is Proletarian Communism."³⁶⁸

The section outlines the fundamental tasks of Communist Strategy and Tactics.

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³⁶⁶ Ibid., p. 1763.

³⁶⁷ Not surprisingly, Trotsky found fault with this section. (See "The Third International After Lenin").

³⁶⁸ "Inprecorr, Special Edition", p. 1766.

"The successful struggle of the Communist International for the dictatorship of the proletariat presupposes the existence in every country of a compact Communist Party, hardened in struggle, disciplined, centralized, and closely linked up with the masses." 369

The Programme goes on to elaborate the essential features of the Communist Party organism.

First on the list of strategic aims is that the Communist Parties "must secure predominant influence in the broad mass proletarian organizations".³⁷⁰ Thus the Communists must capture the working class by concentrating their activity in the factories and trade unions. When this is achieved, and the revolutionary tide is rising, Communists can proceed to issue increasingly radical transitional slogans: for a general strike, for arming of the workers, for disarming the bourgeoisie, for armed insurrection.

The Programme finds it necessary to repeat that:

"Only by constant and persistent work in the factories and in the trade unions for the steadfast and energetic defense of the interests of the workers, together with ruthless struggle against the reformist bureaucracy, will it be possible to win the leadership in the workers struggle and to win the industrially organized workers over to the side of the Party." 371

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369 Ibid.

370 Ibid.

371 Ibid., p. 1767.

The Programme iterates the necessity for international Communist discipline in the C.I., to be achieved by subordinating partial and local interests to the general and lasting, interests of the movement. This corresponds with fulfillment of the decisions of the Comintern's leading bodies.

Thus the Sixth Congress of the Communist International strove to give voice to Communist theory and historical practice. The struggle for Bolshevism had produced a vanguard Programme. The closing note of the Programme is a familiar one, a timely echo to 1848:

"The Communists disdain to conceal their views and aims. They openly declare that their aims can be attained only by the forcible overthrow of all the existing social conditions. Let the ruling class tremble at a Communist revolution. The proletarians have nothing to lose but their chains. They have a world to win.

Workers of all countries, unite!"³⁷²

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³⁷²Ibid., p. 1768.

CONCLUSION

This thesis has treated the question of organization in the proletarian movement as a political one; inseparable from the history and ideology of the proletariat. The struggle for organization, the struggle for Marxism-Leninism and the struggle for Revolution are synonymous. This fight has gravitated around several nodal points: 1848 represented the first clear elaboration of dialectical materialism with the "Manifesto"; 1867, the application of the theory to economic problems - the first volume of "Capital"; 1871, the first demonstration of its practicability; 1902, the first, theoretical crystallization of Marxism's organizational vehicle in "What Is To Be Done"; 1905, the organizational rupture with revisionism; 1912, the formalization of this rupture; April, 1917, the decisive turn towards use of this machinery for proletarian revolution; October, 1917, the practical proof of Leninist theory; 1919, the attempt to promulgate worldwide Leninism with the C.I.; 1924, the decisive attempt to build Leninist organizations in every country; and 1928, the Comintern's systematization of the rupture with Social Democracy internally and externally, in theory and in practice.

One thing is readily apparent from this history, and that is that each step forward, small or large, made by the movement, is taken in a ruthless struggle on two

levels. Firstly, against the bourgeoisie, and secondly, against its agents in the workers' movement - revisionism, Menshevism, Social Democratism, Trotskyism, Bukharinism, etc. Every turn to the Left on the road to Revolution has left a number of travellers by the wayside, from the earliest revisionists, through Social Democracy, to the Comintern's Social Democrats.

Bourgeois authors, in an attempt to discredit Marxism, have long dwelt on the non-appearance of the revolution in Europe.³⁷³ This, they say, proves Marxism incorrect, and demonstrates that the proletariat does not really wish for change. I have attempted to show that in actuality there were numerous revolutionary moments in the Europe of the 'twenties, the Europe of the World Revolution. These moments were strangled at birth by the three pronged offensive of the bourgeoisie; and its confreres in two locations; the Social Democratic Parties, and the Social Democratic deviations in the Communist Parties.

Interestingly enough, many of these authors refer to the "idyllic, heroic" days of the revolution; the "heroic period of the Comintern, 1919-1923".³⁷⁴ As must

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³⁷³The list here is almost endless. It includes S. Hook, "Marx and the Marxists". (New York, VonNostrand, 1955); F. Borkenau, "The Communist International", etc.

³⁷⁴See, for example, H. Gruber, "Soviet Russia Masters the Comintern", pp. xi-xii.

be clear, if disasters and needless bloodshed are heroic, these were indeed times of unparalleled bravery. However, the years 1919-1923 can be characterized as the years of revolutionary ferment among the masses, and sheer incompetence at best, or base treachery at worst, amongst their "leaders". The Comintern, in this period, functioned, through no fault of the (Soviet) leadership, almost as an ad hoc body, which, however came to realize the gravity of the situation eventually, and the need for tight, disciplined organization.

Of course, this laudation of the First Period of Comintern existence has a more subtle purpose: to vilify the Stalin leadership of the Comintern in the ensuing years. Whilst the 1919-1923 muddle was "heroic", the Bolshevization plan was nothing more than an "Asiatic" plot by the "devious dictator" Stalin to Russify the whole set up, in order to wrest power from Trotsky, Bukharin and Zinoviev. How the drive to build factory nuclei in all countries squares with this theory is never explained. The extreme lunatic fringe of this persuasion must be the Trotskyite Souvarine, who stated, (licking his wounds after his expulsion): "Stalin... began to turn the International into a mere instrument of his design, an instrument of his foreign policy aimed at seeking an agreement with Hitler."³⁷⁵ In 1924?

This thesis, I hope, has demonstrated the falsehood

of the above assertion. As every step forward of the workers movement was taken in response to concrete questions, concrete difficulties faced by the movement, so too, the 1924 programme of the C.I. was a response to setbacks, which deepened and clarified Leninism's analysis of the Second International, and the tasks of revolutionaries, made during World War One. Bolshevization can be understood as nothing other than an unequivocal response to the withering failures of the Comintern sections during the revolutionary period and the overarching successes of the Bolsheviks. Not one of these Parties, outside Russia, had any idea about how to organize for the "final struggle". All were infected to some extent or another with the bacillus of Social Democratism, both organizationally and, of necessity, ideologically.

Lenin and Stalin understood this: the historic conditions in the majority of countries did not completely resemble the remarkable configuration in Russia, which had propelled it into the van of the world revolution. "Habit is an iron shirt", and the Social Democratic organizations

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375 B. Souvarine, "Comments on the Massacre" in M. M. Drachkovitch and B. Lazitch (eds.), "The Comintern: Historical Highlights". (New York, Praeger, 1966). pp. 175-176. An interesting aspect of this interperate book, is that most of the (wildly anti-Communist) articles in it are written by "purged" ex-Communists. They were also, purged with reason, i.e. for being Trotskyites, etc. The venom with which they attack the Comintern is better understood in this light.

of the west had grown into institutionalized, complacent, mass parties, in the period of the peaceful growth and consolidation of imperialism, the close of the nineteenth century. This made them adapt to the situation by becoming reformists, bourgeois parliamentary bodies, with the trade unions as purely economic adjuncts. Their non-revolutionary organizational "habits" were difficult to break. The situation in Russia was radically different; Bolshevism had to organize in the face of a unique historical condensation: feudal autocracy, emergent bourgeoisie, and growing proletariat coexisted in antagonistic entanglement. Bolshevism was forced to rigorously examine all phases of the revolution, and consequently organically root itself in factories - (this was the main way to reach the proletariat).

Thus the Parties outside Russia were burdened with the stultifying weight of decades of Social Democratic bureaucratic reformism. The sparks flying from the conflagration in Russia in 1917 were not sufficient to fire these dampened Socialists.

The call for Bolshevization responded to this dilemma by carefully, and repeatedly, explaining the need for reconsideration of the role of Social Democracy, and the subsequent need for reorganization of the sections. The fact that this was never properly effected accounts

for the failure of the revolution to consummate itself outside Russia. Those countries which did make the transition to socialism, did so either with the direct help of Russia (Eastern Europe) or by clearly studying and learning from Bolshevik experience (Albania and China). It must not be forgotten that the Chinese Revolution really began in the period following the Sixth Congress.

Thus, the unique constellation of events, "moments", in Russia had cohered in such a way as to make it obligatory for the Soviet proletariat to come to the aid of its brothers and sisters throughout the world. This was nothing less than an elementary internationalist duty.

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This thesis has considered a struggle on two fronts but in the same direction: against revisionism, for the Party, and for the revolution. The high point of the struggle is 1924-28 and the Fifth and Sixth Congresses. This is the most dense, most intense moment in the contention. Unfortunately, after this (after 1935), the Comintern and the CPSU (b) slowly began to give up the fight; by dropping Bolshevization and reintroducing alliances with Liberal forces "from above" in 1935; through to the restoration of Capitalism in the Soviet Union, twenty-one years later. That, however, is the topic for another thesis.

From 1902 onwards, throughout the period in question,

the most revolutionary force in the world was the Bolshevik Party. Its leadership, through example and action, gave inestimable help to the World Revolution, and the contributions of Lenin and Stalin, as well as Marx and Engels, made possible any stride forward of the proletariat in the last seventy years, and make possible future strides. For those wishing to seriously reopen the struggle with revisionism, they must begin with the history of the Communist Movement, and give cardinal attention to the summit of the anti-revisionist struggle,- the creation of the Communist International and the fight for Bolshevization.

"The Internationale shall be the human race."

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