

# *What is Socialism?*

**THREE LECTURES  
FOR WORKERS**

**BY  
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**10¢**

# Foreword

THE FOLLOWING LECTURES were delivered before a study group composed exclusively of trade union workers. The character of the group, as well as the necessity to limit the material to three lectures, made it inadvisable and impossible to enter into a thorough discussion of the different aspects of socialist doctrine. Important questions of principle and tactics were not even touched upon and those that were treated were discussed without extensive analysis.

It was the interest shown by the workers who listened to these lectures that led me to the decision to put them into printed form with the hope that they would constitute a simple introduction to revolutionary socialism for many thousands of proletarians.

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# What Is Socialism?

## 1

ANYONE WHO ATTEMPTS at the present time to convince a group of workers that socialism offers the only solution for the problems of the working class labors under a severe handicap. For he is immediately confronted with the task of explaining conditions in the Soviet Union. Most people are under the false impression that socialism exists in the Soviet Union, and knowing what they do of the dreadful oppression which workers suffer in that country, they tend to be prejudiced against any speaker urging socialism as the solution for the ills of society.

The intelligent worker is certainly looking for a way out. He understands that to continue under the present insane system where millions of people are suffering want in the midst of a superabundance of everything, where millions are unemployed while factories are idle, is impossible. A change is absolutely imperative.

If not socialism, then what? Certainly not fascism which would bring to the workers greater oppression and more misery.

Is it possible to modify and reform the present system by eliminating its bad features? That is what many liberals and reformist socialists have been trying to do for many years without the slightest success; that is what Roosevelt wants to do and he has failed; that is what demagogues like Father Coughlin advocate.

In spite of conditions in the Soviet Union we revolutionary socialists are convinced that a real socialist society is practicable and will actually solve the problems of mankind. Later I shall try to show the reasons why the situation in the Soviet Union is so contrary to the theories and ideals of socialism, and that conditions in the Soviet Union, instead of disproving socialist theories, actually confirm them.

You will, of course, understand that in these three lectures it is impossible to give more than a very general and sketchy presentation of the philosophy and program of socialism. I hope that your interest will be sufficiently aroused to make you anxious to read some of the socialist classics and some of the current literature dealing more extensively with the thoughts that I shall present be-

fore you. (A list of the best books and pamphlets on socialism can be obtained from the Labor Bookshop, 28 East 12th Street, New York City.)

### *Unemployment and Insecurity*

Your personal experiences are able to suggest to you the problems in which the workers are, or ought to be, vitally interested. Some of you are unemployed, some are working part time only. And you are worried. It may be that you have succeeded in saving up a few dollars so that you can keep the wolf away for a short while but the chances are that the wages you received when working full time were just about enough to keep you and your family in food and inferior clothing. If this "Roosevelt recession" will continue for a while longer it will be necessary for most of you to apply for relief and suffer all the humiliations connected with being on relief. I do not intimate that you should hesitate for one moment to ask for relief; you are more than entitled to it but you know as well as I do, if not better, how humiliating it is to be subjected to all the questionings and snoopings by social workers who are directed to make it as difficult as possible to obtain relief.

At the present moment unemployment appears to be the most serious problem facing the workers. And it should not require an extended discussion to convince an intelligent worker that the so-called leaders of industry and politics are unable to solve that problem. Once more, as in years past, factories are shutting down and millions of workers, willing and anxious to work, are thrown on the streets. When Roosevelt became president many workers believed that he would solve the problem. For a while unemployment decreased due to a revival of business but now we are back again to the same conditions that prevailed under Hoover. Just as in the case of Hoover, Roosevelt is calling conferences of business men and issuing optimistic but false statements. Meanwhile the workers continue to suffer.

And this problem of unemployment is part of the general problem of insecurity that plagues not only the workers but practically all sections of the population. Only a small percentage of the people can have a feeling of economic security. The average man must worry about his job or his little business or his farm; he must worry about possible illness or accident to himself or members of his family; he must worry about old age. The future is full of risks and uncertainties.

## *Low Standard of Living*

Even assuming that unemployment did not exist and that the worker was provided for in his old age and in periods of illness, there would still be the problem of the low standard under which he is compelled to live. The average worker makes about eleven hundred dollars a year. According to government estimates it requires about twenty-four hundred dollars a year for a family of four to live decently but how many families are there that can boast of such an income? Figures compiled by the Brookings Institute show that in 1929 there were over 16 million families, some 59% of the total, with incomes of less than \$2,000 a year. There were nearly six million families with incomes of less than \$1,000 a year. Very, very few workers earned enough to provide their families with a decent standard of living even in the years of greatest employment. Millions of workers and poor farmers work excessively long hours and earn barely enough to keep body and soul together at the same time that the rich wallow in luxury.

## *War*

Another very dreadful problem confronting all of us is the problem of war. Hardly twenty years after the end of the last war when millions of human beings were wounded and killed, the nations are feverishly preparing for a new world slaughter. In China the Japanese militarists are brutally killing and maiming hundreds of thousands of men, women and children; in Spain tens of thousands of workers are sacrificing their lives in a heroic struggle against the fascists. No one knows how soon it will be before many of you will be drafted to fight Japanese workers and peasants. President Roosevelt who is supposed to be a very peace-loving person has asked for a billion dollars with which to build a larger navy. Why should the President ask for such a huge sum for armament purposes? Is there any reason why American workers should be called upon to fight Japanese or Italian or German workers? The workers of all countries face the same problems. They work for low wages; they are thrown out of work; they lead a miserable existence. What possible benefit can they derive from taking up arms and wounding and slaughtering one another?

Besides war, the low standard of living and insecurity, there are other problems but I haven't the time to discuss any but the three that I have mentioned and they are the most important. If we can solve the three major problems I believe all of the other problems will take care of themselves.

## *Why Problems Exist*

Is there any explanation for the existence of these problems? Why must the workers suffer from unemployment and war? Let us take a glance at our society, how it is constituted and how it functions. Perhaps we can get a clue to the reason for the existence of these problems and to a possible solution.

Let me call your attention to the fact that all of you here are compelled to work for some employer in order to make a living. And this is true of the majority of the population. Why should that be? I am sure that there isn't a single one of you who would not prefer to work for yourself provided, of course, you could make a decent livelihood without working too many hours. Why is it necessary for you and others to go to a factory belonging to some one else and ask to be employed rather than work at home?

It is because you and other workers have no tools and no machinery and no raw materials. The man to whom you apply for a job has all that, and that is why you are compelled to seek employment from him. He, on the other hand, needs you because you have something without which his machinery and raw material would be valueless: you have the mind, the muscle and the energy, in other words, the labor power or the capacity to work which is required to set the machinery into motion and to transform the raw material into finished products ready to be sold.

Many years ago it was possible for a mechanic to work for himself. The tools were simple and could be purchased for little money. But now the factories are huge, the machines are complicated and expensive, making it impossible for workers to own such machinery. In the course of many years of development, it has come to pass that some people own all the means of production and others own nothing but the ability to work. The first group which includes a small minority of the population is called the capitalist group or the bourgeoisie, and the second group which consists of the vast majority of the people we designate by the term proletariat or working class. The existence of these two classes is the most conspicuous and important factor to be taken into consideration in any analysis of modern society.

What impels the employer to hire workers? Is it because he is a religious and charitable gentleman who cannot tolerate the thought that the workers will suffer unless he gives them employment? Or is it because he knows that the people need the products of his factory, whether they be clothing, or furniture, or tooth paste?

You and I know that the employer is interested in only one thing: *profits*. The sole reason why any owner of a factory hires workers and produces goods is because he can make a profit by selling the goods that he produces and as soon as he is unable to make a profit he closes his factory and the workers are discharged.

Since the capitalists are in business because they want to make profit and not because they are charitable people, and since the lower the wages—all things being equal—the higher the profits, it is only natural for the employers to pay as low wages as they can possibly get away with. Should any one capitalist be so different as to pay high wages, he would soon find himself in bankruptcy because his business would be taken away by his competitors. The desire for profits plus the keen competition between the capitalists guarantee the lowest possible wage to the workers. As long as the workers do not starve to death at the same time, and thus leave the capitalists without any one to do the work for them, so long are the bosses perfectly satisfied with the conditions under which the workers live.

Fortunately the workers do not submit passively. If they did, their condition would be a thousand times worse than it is now. They organize themselves into unions so that they can sell the only thing they possess, their labor power, at a higher price and under better conditions than the capitalist is willing to give them of his own will. But only a minority of the workers are organized (approximately eight million out of about thirty million workers that could be organized belong to trade unions), and even that minority is compelled to struggle constantly to get a little more out of the employers. And very frequently, if the workers, through their organizations, succeed in getting higher wages, prices of the goods they have to buy are raised and they remain in the same relative position.

The history of the capitalist system in the last century has shown that, although the standard of living of sections of the working class has tended to rise, it has not risen in comparison with the standard of the capitalists and proportionately to the growth of industry. In spite of the unbelievably enormous increase in production the vast majority of the workers lead an existence that is far from comfortable. On the basis of an analysis of the capitalist system and on the basis of its history we can say definitely that so long as the profit system exists, so long will the few people who own the means of production take the cream for themselves and leave the skimmed milk for the working class.

## *Why Unemployment?*

You can see that even if the workers would be assured of steady employment their lot would not be an enviable one. And when you consider that the average worker, in addition to making a small wage, must suffer from periodic spells of unemployment, you will admit that the system under which we live is no bed of roses for the workers. For over a hundred years the capitalist system has been marked by alternate periods of business boom and depression and the professors of economics have been offering cures that do not cure. As a matter of fact every depression is worse than the previous one and we are now, in what can be called, a permanent depression. When Roosevelt became President there were fifteen million unemployed. His "New Deal" was supposed to solve the problem, and now, after five years of Roosevelt, we are almost back to the same number of unemployed.

There is a very simple reason for unemployment, but the capitalists and their intellectual defenders will never accept that explanation because it is contrary to their interests. As I have indicated before, the employers produce goods only when they are reasonably certain of making a profit. The competition that exists between the capitalists drives them to produce their products ever more cheaply, and the most effective way to produce things cheaply is to produce them by machinery. Throughout the history of capitalism new machinery has been invented only for the purpose of reducing the cost of production. Machinery necessarily displaces labor, and while it is true that it takes labor to create machinery, the total effect has been to create a condition which is called "technological unemployment." From your own experiences you know that every once in a while the number of workers is reduced in a factory because a certain machine has been invented which can do the work of ten, twenty or even a hundred workers.

Technological unemployment, however, is not the most important reason for the recurrence of periods of unemployment. The capitalist system exists for only one purpose: to make profits. And most of the profit that is made is invested in order to make more profits. Profits are made from the labor of the workers; machinery displaces labor and at the same time makes it necessary to invest a greater amount of capital in proportion to the labor. The rate of profit tends to decrease and on the basis of the invested capital the capitalist class as a whole, at certain periods, finds it impossible to make any profit. And since capitalists will keep their plants open

only when they can make profit, they very naturally shut them down when such periods are reached. When sufficient capital is destroyed, and when wages are reduced to a point at which it once more becomes profitable to hire workers, the plants are opened and we have another period of prosperity for the capitalist class.

The capitalist system is distinguished by the fact that complete anarchy exists in the production of goods for the market. Within a factory everything is planned but the general system works in a planless fashion. Many capitalists compete amongst themselves, and they are all producing for a market, the extent of which they do not know. During a boom the markets are glutted with goods which the workers, because of their low wages, cannot possibly buy. During a period of depression millions of tons of food rot because the workers have no money to buy anything at all. Chaos and anarchy reign supreme at all times. Every attempt to regulate the capitalist system results in failure creating ever greater difficulties, especially for the working class. The fascists claim that they regulate capitalism, but the only result of their regulation is a lower standard of living for the workers.

It is impossible in a series of three lectures covering the important questions of socialism to go into a detailed explanation of the workings of the capitalist system. I have gone into it sufficiently, I hope, to convince you that unemployment is part and parcel of the capitalist system. As long as the capitalist system exists, so long will there be periods of unemployment. To do away with unemployment, it is necessary to do away with the capitalist system.

### *Cause of War*

War is the third important problem with which the workers of all countries are confronted. And war is such a horrible thing that many well-meaning people devote a great deal of energy in an attempt to find a solution which will make it unnecessary. Peace pacts, League of Nations, disarmament—all have been put forth by sincere pacifists and insincere politicians as the only effective solution for the problem. Some of these solutions have been tried but they have solved nothing. We are closer to war now than we have been in the last twenty years. Evidently there is something phoney about these solutions, and there is something about war which the peace-loving people, who offer them, do not understand.

To comprehend the real nature of modern war we must do what

we did in the case of unemployment and the low standard of living, we must analyze how the capitalist system functions.

Once more we must start by emphasizing the fact that the making of profit is the purpose of the capitalist system. What do the capitalists do with their profits? Part of it they, of course, consume but they can consume only a small part. Most of the profits are invested in new enterprises to make more profit. With the development of industry a point is reached where new places for the investment of capital must be found. As large as the United States is, for example, it is not large enough to absorb all the capital at the disposal of the American capitalists. New fields for the investment of the profits of American capital in undeveloped countries is constantly being sought. And in the realm of foreign investments the big bankers or financial capitalists, with huge reserves of capital at their command, play the most important role.

In addition to finding new fields for investment, it is also necessary for the capitalists to find new markets where they can dispose of the products which they are unable to sell to the people of their own country. A substantial part of the goods produced in this country must be sold outside of the country, in spite of the fact that the workers here could very well use those products. But, as I have already indicated, the employers are not concerned with the fact that the workers need things; they are concerned only with profits.

Furthermore, at the present time, the need for raw materials, such as iron, coal, cotton, etc., is so great as to make it obligatory for the capitalists of every nation to assure for themselves easy access to places where necessary raw materials can be obtained. Even such a rich country like the United States is compelled to import rubber and other products. Other capitalist countries, not so wealthy, are under the necessity of importing much more than the United States.

The capitalist nations, therefore, find themselves compelled to look for places where their capitalists can dispose of their surplus goods, where they can invest their capital, and where they can obtain raw materials. This purpose is partially achieved by the subjugation of undeveloped countries, called colonies. The whole continent of Africa, and most of Asia, has been parceled out among different capitalist nations. There are, in addition, certain territories which do not actually belong to any capitalist nation but, since the industries of those territories are controlled by the capitalists of the big

nations, they are independent only in name. Such is the case with many countries in South America and with China (at least that part of it which the Japanese imperialists have not actually conquered).

The present stage of capitalism, when the capitalists of all nations export capital for investment in undeveloped countries, when they are struggling to obtain colonies and spheres of influence, is designated as the imperialist stage of capitalism.

Unfortunately for the capitalist nations there is a limit to the earth's surface and everything that is worth while has already been gobbled up. Some capitalist nations came too late upon the scene and found that their competitors had already taken all the juicy sections of the world. England was early and captured all the choice morsels, leaving very little for Germany and Italy. But the capitalist nations can hardly live, let alone grow and prosper, without fields of investment and raw materials. The capitalist nations that came too late upon the scene are compelled to struggle for a re-division of the colonial world. The rivalries between the capitalist nations inevitably lead to armed conflict. The World War eliminated Germany as a powerful imperialist power but only for a short period. At present England, France and the United States are fairly well satisfied with what they possess, while Germany, Italy and Japan are the hungry wolves in the pack. Italy has conquered Ethiopia; Japan is now grabbing China; Germany is threatening to take what she wants. War for a re-division of the world between the imperialist nations is inevitable.

Upon analysis it can be seen that the hope to do away with war, without doing away with the rivalries of the imperialist powers, is as utopian as the schemes to abolish unemployment under the capitalist system. To do away with war, we must get rid of imperialism, and to get rid of imperialism, we must abolish capitalism. Any other solution is *no* solution.

### *The Solution*

I have analyzed the trinity of evils afflicting the working masses: the low standard of living, insecurity and war. And I have shown that they can all be traced to one fundamental cause, to the fact that the means of production belong to a small group of private owners who are interested in producing things only if they can make a profit out of such production. Knowing the basic cause of society's illnesses, we are in the position of a doctor who knows the cause of the sickness of a human being. We can prescribe the cure. The cure is socialism.

The basic idea of socialism is that all the means of production and distribution be owned in common by all of the people, and that every person, who is not too young, or too old, or too sick, cooperate in producing those things which every member of society needs and uses. Instead of having individuals or corporations own all the factories and hire workers to produce goods only when a profit can be made from their sale, society as a whole will own the factories, and the workers will produce the things required to feed, house and clothe all of the people, and to satisfy all of their cultural needs. Administrators elected by the workers will figure out approximately how much of each article will be necessary to satisfy the needs of society and the factories will be set into motion to produce more than enough of each item. Every country will produce that which it is best fitted to produce and there will be an exchange of products between different countries.

Instead of the anarchy and competition that prevail at the present, production and distribution will be thoroughly planned by capable administrators with the help and participation of the workers. The plans will be constantly subjected to analysis and revision.

It is impossible, of course, to furnish a complete blueprint indicating every detail of the functioning of society under socialism.

Of one thing we can be certain. A change in the system of property from private ownership, producing for profit, to collective ownership, producing for use, will solve the three problems which I mentioned as the major problems facing the workers.

### *Greater Production*

Will the standard of living of the masses under socialism be higher than it is now?

At the outset I must emphasize the proposition that the validity of the whole conception of socialism is based on the idea that industry has developed to such a point that more than enough can be produced to satisfy all the reasonable needs of the population. For it is certain that if, after the industries are taken away from the private owners, not enough will be produced under social ownership to give every one a high standard of living, a struggle is bound to arise between different sections of the population and the stronger elements, and those in more privileged positions will ultimately succeed in gaining economic and political power over the masses and we shall then have the same struggle over again. If there are a thousand apples to be consumed by ten people with the

assurance that more apples will be forthcoming whenever necessary, no one will quarrel about his share of the apples. But if the number of apples in proportion to those ready to eat them is small, we can be certain of a conflict arising between the would-be eaters. In the last analysis socialism will succeed only if it guarantees a high standard of living to all people.

We socialists contend that industry has developed to a point where a sufficient quantity of goods can be produced to assure every one a very high standard of living. Justification for the historic existence of capitalism is found in the fact that under it the forces of production have developed to an extraordinary degree. In the last century more labor-saving machinery has been invented than in all centuries of recorded history preceding it. It takes far less time to produce an infinitely greater number of products than it did prior to the capitalist era. Having completed the historic mission of developing the forces of production, capitalism has prepared the ground for a higher stage of social organization in which the forces of production will develop still further. The forces of production can no longer function under the system of capitalist private property. They are hampered and chained by the struggle between different classes and different nations. They can function effectively only when released from these fetters.

It can be shown that even at the present time, in the period of capitalist decline, enough can be produced in this country to enable every person to live in a decent manner. In the year 1929 the income of all gainfully occupied persons amounted to eighty-one billion dollars. Divide that by the number of families and you have twenty-five hundred dollars for each family. That is a larger income than sixty percent of the families received in that year. If one takes into consideration the tremendous waste that exists under capitalism, it can be readily seen that, even without any further progress in the development of the productive forces, a change from capitalism to socialism, by eliminating the waste inherent in capitalism, would easily raise the standard of living of all people to the standard now enjoyed by those who earn around five thousand dollars a year.

What waste is there under capitalism? There is the waste of advertising and of huge sales organizations, of innumerable different models and styles, of strikes and periods of unemployment. Under socialism the billions of dollars expended on the armament industry would be used for the interests of the masses. Eliminate all the

waste under capitalism and the present standard of living is immediately raised by four to five times, without increasing the forces of production. But everything points to the fact that under socialism the productive forces will take a leap forward, just as they did when capitalism displaced feudalism. And if that is correct, the standard of living will be infinitely higher than at present with the number of hours of work reduced to five and even four per day.

With the production of goods in sufficiently large quantities, socialism will solve the problem of the standard of living and at the same time solve the problem of insecurity. Since things will be produced for use and not for profit, planning will be possible and feasible, and unemployment will disappear. If it should happen that because of some mistake too much will be produced, it will merely signify more leisure for the workers. Provision will be made for those who are sick or who have reached a certain age. With profits eliminated and production increased, there will be no difficulty for society to take care of those unable to work.

But how can socialism solve the problem of war? It must be clearly understood that when we speak of socialism we mean a system that will displace capitalism in all of the important countries. With the abolition of capitalism in the most important countries, there will be no capitalists of different nations, competing with one another for markets, raw materials and fields of investment. The rivalries between capitalist nations based on the profit motive will disappear and instead we shall have the cooperation of all nations for the purpose of increasing production and exchanging goods between themselves. Countries most adapted to agriculture will exchange their products with countries where manufacturing has been developed. The industrially backward countries will be aided in their development, not because any one group of capitalists will make huge profits, but because the development of any backward country will be beneficial to all nations. With the destruction of capitalism, wars between nations will disappear, just as the destruction of a germ does away with the disease caused by that germ.

You can readily see that the solution offered by the socialists for the problems of the workers and all of humanity is a very radical solution, one that goes to the root of the whole matter. In our opinion it is the only solution possible.

### *Obstacles in the Path*

It is not sufficient, however, merely to recognize the necessary solution for a problem and rest. It is incumbent upon socialists to

show how that solution can actually be realized. Suppose that you and I, and some thousands of others, agree that socialism is the only solution, what shall we do about it? It is possible that the solution is a correct one only in theory, that there is no way in which we can put it into effect. It is possible that the difficulties in the way are so great that all our attempts to bring socialism into actual existence must inevitably fail. It is certainly necessary to convince many more people, than are at present convinced, of the desirability and necessity for socialism. In short we have to proceed to an enumeration of the difficulties confronting those who would want to see socialism put into effect, and the method to be used to overcome those difficulties.

Before proceeding to a discussion of the actual difficulties I shall spend a minute or so on an objection which many people claim to be a conclusive refutation of the idea of socialism. If you have ever listened to any discussion of socialism you know that the first argument advanced by the opponents of the idea is based on "human nature." Human nature is supposed to be such as to make socialism a mere utopia, a fantastic and unrealizable dream. Let us analyze this argument.

Most thinking people at the present time accept the theory that, in the main, what a man is, how he looks upon life, what his ideas are, are a matter of environment. When a person is born he is neither religious nor irreligious, neither Catholic nor Protestant nor Jew. Most people become religious and accept a definite kind of religion only because they grow up and are educated in that religion. You can take a thousand children born of parents of different nationalities and religions, and if you subject them to the same environment and training, the chances are that the vast majority will be either atheistic or religious, Christian or Mohammedan, depending upon what they have been taught. The same is true not only of religion but of patriotism, that is, people grow up to be patriotic Americans or Italians or Frenchmen, not because they were born such, but because they were trained in their youth to be such. Similarly other social attitudes are determined by the training one receives at an early age. What the attitude of the average person is towards work, what ambitions he has, his attitude to property, are all, by and large, decided by the attitude of society in general on those questions.

It is true that there is a minority of non-conformists, but that is because conditions are insufferable and the most independent minds

are looking for a solution. It is also true that, under certain exceptional circumstances, the majority will throw off its accepted ideas but that also is because life becomes unbearable under prevailing conditions. But these are exceptional cases and tend rather to prove the general rule that so-called human nature is determined by the kind of society we live in.

Under a socialist regime the educational system will have as its basic purpose the training of all persons to act for the benefit of society as a whole. The person brought up under such an educational system will see in society, not a place where he will have to struggle against everybody else for a living, but an institution where he will be prepared to cooperate with every one else for the general welfare. Human nature will reflect the character of the future society just as at present it assumes the competitive, selfish, grasping character of capitalist society. When you take into consideration the greed, the strife, the cheating and the violence that exist under the system of private property, you are amazed, not that the human animal is so bad but that, in spite of everything, man has not completely degenerated into a wild beast. If anything, it can be argued that man is inherently good and not bad.

Let no one imagine that we socialists assert that under socialism all men will be born with equal abilities. Just as at present there will be individuals with greater and lesser abilities, but the superior individual will be educated to use his capacities to serve society and not to exploit others. For the person of greater talents, socialism, by doing away with the struggle for food and clothing, will mean a far greater opportunity for the exercise of those talents.

While the objection to socialism, based on the assertion that it is against human nature, can be dismissed as having no validity, the real difficulties are not of a minor nature and cannot be disregarded. Throughout the ages those who owned the wealth of society surrounded themselves with guards to protect their wealth against the propertyless and exploited masses. The capitalist class is no exception to the rule. It has created many forms of protection for itself, tangible and intangible, and it will not hesitate one moment to use them all whenever necessary.

From your own experience you know that in the police the bosses have a very efficient instrument for the protection of their property rights. Most of you were on strike at one time or another, and you know that the police are ever ready to protect the employers and the scabs. Picketing is limited or prevented altogether; the pickets

are arrested and fined. And you have probably pondered the fact that rarely, if ever, is a boss or strike-breaker arrested. By this time every intelligent worker should know that the duty of the police is to protect the property rights of the owners and not any rights which the workers are supposed to have.

As between the workers and capitalists the police will always protect the rights of the latter, no matter who is in control of the government—conservatives, liberals or even “socialists”—for the simple reason that the function of the police under capitalism is to protect the capitalists and not the workers. Should it occur that, because of the great number of workers on strike and their militancy, the police are unable to “preserve order,” the national guard or even the regular army will be called out to defend the capitalists. In addition the courts are always ready to do their bit to help the bosses. Injunctions are very frequently issued against strikers; many workers are given severe sentences in prison. All for the protection of property.

The sum total of the instruments of force, which have as their purpose the protection of the property of the capitalists, is called the state. The government, by which is meant the legislature that passes laws, the executive that administers the laws, and the judiciary which interprets the laws, is part of the state apparatus and is in reality, as Karl Marx said, the executive committee of the capitalist class. The composition of a government may change. In this country, for instance, the Democratic party is now in control. More conservative or more liberal politicians may displace the Democrats. But capitalism continues under every form of government. No matter what party is in power, as long as capitalism exists, so long will it be the function of the state to protect the property of the owning class.

### *Fascism and Democracy*

Since the advent of fascism a great deal has been written and said about the relative merits of fascism and democracy. Many, especially the communists, and some who call themselves socialists, argue that the workers must fight for democratic governments against fascist governments, and this argument has a certain plausibility. It is necessary, however, to examine this contention very carefully and distinguish between the correct and incorrect elements of the proposition.

When we speak of democracy it must first of all be recognized

that real democracy cannot exist for the workers so long as the basic means of production are owned and controlled by a small minority, the capitalist class. Democracy must of necessity be very limited under conditions where the possession of wealth affords a group all opportunities for the exercise of freedom of the press, while that group, which is composed of poor people, cannot exercise such a right for the simple reason that it has no press. Nor is it possible to have real democracy in a society where one class has all the economic resources at its disposal. In essence democracy under capitalism furnishes the workers no more than the doubtful right to choose between different groups of politicians who, in the end, will guard the property rights of the capitalist class. Using technical language, it can be said that capitalist democracy is nothing else but capitalist dictatorship, because through the ownership of the means of production, the capitalists have the power to dictate to all sections of the population.

In several countries, notably Germany and Italy, capitalist democracy has been displaced by fascism which makes no pretenses at granting democratic rights to the working class but which functions as an open and naked dictatorship of the capitalist class.

It is important to note that fascism developed at a time when capitalism reached a stage of decline, when it can no longer afford the luxury of democratic forms. It first seized hold of those countries where, either because of defeat in war or because of lack of raw materials, industry could not operate at a profit except by the most ruthless exploitation of the working class. In those countries fascism actually saved the capitalist system from complete collapse. The capitalist class was, of course, the chief beneficiary from the fascist victory even though the freedom of the capitalists is limited by fascism to a certain extent. The big capitalists are perfectly willing to pay the price of a limitation of their freedom in order to save the capitalist system. Fascism and capitalist democracy have the identical purpose of guarding capitalist property.

From the false premise that the fundamental conflict of the present period is between fascism and capitalist democracy, the communists and many others have drawn the conclusion that it is necessary to adopt the fatal tactic of the Popular Front. If the essential task is to save capitalist democracy from the onslaughts of fascism, and not to displace it by working-class democracy, then it follows, according to this argument, that the organizations of the working class should unite with the liberal capitalist politicians

who favor the existing capitalist structure and who are bitterly opposed to socialism. And this union constitutes the Popular Front.

Necessarily in any union between working-class organizations and liberal democrats, the program agreed upon cannot possibly contain provisions that are incompatible with the rights of capitalist private property. The inevitable result is that in any Popular Front, that is, in any union between working-class organizations and capitalist democrats, the former surrender their freedom of action and play second fiddle to the latter. And since capitalism, either through fascism or capitalist democracy, is unable, at the present stage of its development, to offer a decent livelihood to the masses of the people, the unavoidable consequences, especially where the Popular Front assumes the reigns of government, is that large sections of the middle class and even of the working class become disheartened and demoralized, thus smoothing the path for a victory of fascism.

This has proved to be the case wherever the idea of the Popular Front was put into practice. When the social democrats of Germany, immediately after the war, made an alliance with the liberals and, together with them assumed responsibility for governing Germany, they followed the tactic of the Popular Front. Unable to offer any improvement in the conditions of the people, sections of the German working class became indifferent, and the middle class turned to Hitler, thus enabling him to take power.

Whereas, prior to Hitler's victory, the communists rejected the idea proposed by revolutionary Marxists of creating a united front of all working-class organizations to fight the fascists, after the Nazis assumed power the communists became the most ardent champions of the idea of uniting with the liberals to save capitalist democracy. Threatened by the victorious fascists, Stalin decided to rely on alliances with France and England and thereupon the communists discovered all the hidden virtues of capitalist democracy. Whatever the motive for the sudden shift of the communists, the results of the Popular Front tactic must be the same: demoralization and defeat for the working class.

In Spain, at the present time, we have an example of the treachery and the tragic impotence of the Popular Front tactic. When the fascist revolt broke out in July, 1936, it was clear to every one that the workers, practically to a man, were willing to clean out all the capitalist elements of the country and establish a Workers' and Peasants' Government. By expropriating all the capitalists, by giv-

ing the land to the peasants, and by granting the right of self-determination to the Morrocans, such a government would have aroused tremendous enthusiasm amongst the whole population and would have completely isolated and defeated the Spanish, Italian and German fascists.

Instead, the Popular Front coalition government, the very government that permitted the fascists to prepare the insurrection, was allowed to continue. The few liberals with no following were given important posts, and in order to obtain the support of the democratic capitalist governments of France and England, the struggle in Spain was officially proclaimed to be one of capitalist democracy against fascism. The most treacherous role was played by Stalin who, after considerable delay, sent military equipment to the Loyalist Government but only on condition that the workers would not establish their own government, and that all revolutionists would be suppressed.

The futile reliance of the Loyalist government on France, England and the United States, and the failure to raise the banner of the social revolution, brought one military defeat after another. Thousands of loyal and devoted revolutionary anti-fascists are in the jails of Barcelona; hundreds have been killed by the communist G.P.U. (secret police) because they would not accept the treachery of the Loyalist government. Should the Loyalists even win the war the workers will be crushed under the heavy boots of a military dictatorship.

The Popular Front has brought devastating results for the workers of Spain; it can bring nothing but defeat for the workers of France and of all other countries. The lesson of Spain is clear and should sink deep into the hearts of the workers. Fascism can be destroyed only through the destruction of capitalism.

### *The United Front*

While revolutionary socialists declare that both fascism and capitalist democracy serve the interests of the capitalist class and that fascism is a product of capitalist democracy, they do not take a neutral attitude in any struggle between the two. The fact is that under capitalist democracy the workers have, to a certain extent, the right to organize, strike, and carry on political agitation, while under fascism they have no rights at all. We revolutionary socialists contend that so long as the workers are not willing to fight for the overthrow of capitalist democracy and establish their own democracy,

we must do all in our power to prevent fascism from gaining control. For what is involved is not only the parliamentary regime but also the organizations of the working class. The revolutionary workers do not struggle for capitalist democracy as a system of government but for the preservation of the democratic rights of the workers in a capitalist society.

To guard these democratic rights and to gain concessions from the capitalist class, revolutionary socialists advocate the tactic of the united front as against the tactic of the Popular Front. We recognize that the workers do not all follow one party or one organization. There are different organizations with different programs, but all working-class organizations and parties have common interests in achieving immediate objectives and accomplishing specific tasks. To prevent the victory of fascism, and to gain better conditions of labor, are tasks which should bring all workers together, regardless of their differences in program. The united front tactic serves the purpose of uniting all working-class organizations for some specific objective without in the least interfering with the right of each organization to propagate its ideas outside of the united front. Revolutionary socialists have no objection to middle class elements joining such a united front, but the leadership and control must remain in the hands of working-class organizations.

The united front of working-class organizations opens the way to victory; the Popular or People's Front leads to inevitable defeat.

## 2

**I**N THE COURSE of the first lecture I attempted to show that a very serious obstacle in the path of the working masses towards emancipation is the capitalist state, whether democratic or fascist. The mailed fist of the state cracks down upon the workers, even when they struggle against the bosses merely for a higher wage or better conditions. The mailed fist of the state says in effect: "I am here to protect the property of my master. I do not care how much misery and suffering the people must undergo; capitalist property must be defended. Dare to touch that property and I will crush you."

### *Deceit*

If the capitalists were to depend upon force alone to guarantee their privileged position, their situation would be precarious indeed.

After all they represent only a small minority of the people. In the United States there are probably no more than two to three million out of the forty-eight million gainfully occupied who could be considered as belonging to the capitalist class. As a matter of fact, the number of capitalist families in control of American industry and finance is a mere handful—sixty, according to a recent book that created so much excitement (Ferdinand Lundberg's *America's 60 Families.*). The overwhelming majority of the population would benefit by a change from the present system to socialism. Against such a decisive majority the instruments of force at the disposal of the capitalist class could not prevail. If the working masses would be aroused and determined to abolish capitalism, the police and the army would be helpless, even if we assume that all of the soldiers would be loyal to the capitalist class.

What the capitalist class must depend upon, more than on force, is deceit. All the force in the world would not avail the capitalists if they could not deceive and confuse the masses. Even their police and their armies would not be reliable because the police and the army are composed of people who come from the working class and who permit themselves to be used against their class brothers simply because they do not know better. The rulers of our present social order see to it that the workers are subjected to a system of training which succeeds in making them believe that the present system is the best possible system, and that if there is anything wrong with it, it is only of a minor character and can be easily cured by changing the people who are in control of things. It is the deception of the masses, more than anything else, that assures the existence of a social order which brings so much misery and suffering to the vast majority of the people.

What institutions exist for the purpose of deceiving the masses? There are quite a few, the most important being the church, the press, the educational system and the radio. From early childhood every person is subjected to the influence of ideas which tend to make him respect authority, and to believe in things as they are. Obedience is the virtue stressed by religious teachers and by school teachers. Here and there, of course, there are teachers of more independent thought, who influence their students to question accepted doctrines and practices, but they are few and far between, and have no influence in the molding of general opinion.

Some of you may be religious and may possibly resent my statement that the church is one of the pillars of the capitalist system

with its exploitation and war. I shall not deny that I am an atheist and that all advocates of revolutionary socialism look upon religion as contrary to science and reason, and as an effective method to make the masses reconciled to their fate on earth by promising them unbounded joys in heaven. I shall also not deny that some or all religious systems contain many noble teachings which are impossible of realization under the present system. One of the ten commandments, for example, imposes the duty not to kill, but look at the millions of men who are butchered in capitalist wars. There are many other precepts of a very idealistic nature which are conveniently forgotten by the churches.

If, because of your early training, you feel that religion is necessary for your peace of mind, well and good. But do not permit that to interfere with your participation in the struggle for the emancipation of the working class. At least distinguish very carefully between your religion which is a source of consolation to you and the church as an institution which functions on behalf of the ruling class. If any one doubts that the church is arrayed on the side of property, let him glance at the composition of the board of trustees of most of the churches. Almost invariably the same type of people are trustees of the churches as are directors of business corporations. Capitalists contribute heavily to the churches and they, who pay the piper, call the tune. There are, of course, exceptions to all general rules and at times one finds a minister of a church coming out in favor of the workers, but as an institution it is undeniable that the church is one of the most powerful guardians of the interests of the capitalist class.

In countries with a free and compulsory school system, the members of the ruling class depend upon the schools, more perhaps than upon the churches, to instill into the minds of the working-class youth a proper respect for all the institutions and ideas which ensure the continuance of the present system. Above all, the educational system attempts to imbue the young people with an intense patriotism. To be ready to fight and die for one's country (which, of course, means the country owned by the capitalists) is pictured as the highest of all virtues. The average boy or girl is graduated from school firmly convinced that the economic, political and social ideas and ideals that they have been taught are correct and necessary. They are prepared to fight, not in the interest of their class, but for things as they are, for the benefit of those who exploit them.

While the educational system, both religious and secular, molds

the minds of the people in their earlier years, the press is the chief instrument in the work of confusing and deceiving them in later life. Day in and day out the capitalist press turns loose a veritable flood of lies and half-truths, the sum and substance of which is that capitalism is the best of all possible systems and that only people with vicious tendencies would want to change that system. And there is very little that those of us, who want to establish a new social order, can do in order to counter-act the propaganda of the capitalist press. To publish a paper or a magazine that can hope to acquire a large circulation requires tremendous capital. The large newspapers and magazines are owned by wealthy capitalists and depend for their advertisements on the big business people. They hire the best writers who are willing to sell their talents to those who can pay the highest price. On the other hand, the revolutionary press must depend upon the pennies of the comparatively few workers who have torn themselves away from the ideas supported by the ruling class. For every worker who has a chance to read a paper advocating the ideas of socialism, there are tens of thousands who read nothing except the capitalist press.

Besides the press there are the radio and the cinema subtly spreading the same poison that benumbs the thinking faculties of the workers. On all sides there stand the sentries of the rulers guarding the interests of the exploiting few. Force and deceit are the two watch dogs keeping the masses in subjection to a system which offers the vast majority of the people nothing but a low standard of living, insecurity and war.

### *Divisions in Ranks of Workers*

Influenced by the false ideas propagated by the capitalist class, the workers not only fail to struggle against their real enemies but actually permit themselves to be arrayed against one another. They allow themselves to be divided on racial, national and religious grounds. Prejudices are fostered amongst the workers and thereby the struggle against the common enemy is weakened. The best example of a prejudice that causes untold harm to the labor movement is the prejudice of the white against the colored worker. Several centuries ago tens of thousands of Negroes were brought into this country (they were kidnapped in their native land) and sold into slavery. Through their toil the southern plantation owners grew wealthy. Because of the struggle between the northern industrialists and the southern plantation barons the Negroes were fi-

nally freed from chattel slavery only to find themselves members of the class of wage slaves. The white workers both of the South and the North were imbued with the prejudices of the ruling strata of society. Until very recently the colored workers were not permitted membership in the trade unions and even now most of the American Federation of Labor unions will not admit Negroes on the same basis as white workers.

It is essential that the white workers realize that this unreasoning prejudice against the colored workers can bring incalculable harm to the working class. There are millions of colored workers in this country, and it is inconceivable that the white workers can solve their problems without the willing and loyal co-operation of the Negro workers. The latter are the most exploited of all workers and they can be easily enlisted in the struggle against the capitalists. But the white worker must first recognize the colored worker as his equal in every respect. The white workers must fight on behalf of the social, political and economic equality of the Negro people and thus gain a mighty ally in the struggle for freedom.

In addition to the racial prejudice of the white workers against the Negroes, national prejudices exist amongst the white workers. In this country, because of the immigration of many different nationalities, we have a situation where Hungarians, Germans, Italians and workers of other nationalities toil side by side. The employers constantly try to create divisions and strife amongst the workers. False ideas of superior and inferior nations are cultivated in their minds, all for the purpose of destroying the solidarity of the working class.

Mighty forces stand in the path of the working class. The state consisting of the police, the army, the courts, the jails, the government; the institutions that exist for the purpose of subduing and deceiving the minds of the masses, such as the church, the press, the schools, etc.; the divisions in the ranks of the workers themselves, divisions that are fostered by the ruling class. Can these mighty forces ever be defeated? Will the workers ever unite and join in the struggle for true freedom and true equality? There are many who throw up their hands in despair, proclaiming the hopelessness of the struggle. Let us look into the matter a little further.

### *Difficulties Not Insurmountable*

If we glance for a moment at history, we discover that there have been revolutions in the past and successful revolutions. Consider

first, the French Revolution of 1789. Prior to that revolution France was under the domination of a class of noble landowners. They controlled the state in the same way that the capitalists control the present state; they were in charge of the church and, to a large extent, they moulded the ideas of the masses. At that time the merchants and industrialists, the predecessors of the present ruling class, were oppressed by the landowners. Industry and commerce had grown and developed but only to a limited extent because the feudal order, under which the landowners ruled, prevented their rapid evolution. The masses, consisting of the peasants in the rural areas and the artisans and workers in the cities, suffered want and privation. Revolutionists appeared on the scene demanding liberty and equality for the people, agitating for a change in the social system. Their demands were met by governmental repressions, by clubbings, jailings and shootings. But the feudal state could not solve the problems confronting the people. The productive forces, hemmed in by the feudal order, could not develop and function. The agitation continued, in spite of the repressive measures of the government. The class that took the lead in the struggle against the existing regime was the rising capitalist class; the masses, driven by suffering, followed that class, hoping that their condition would improve. Finally the Parisian workers and artisans revolted and in the course of a few years completely destroyed the feudal social system. Capitalism was victorious. The masses could go no further at that time for the reason that the ground was not yet prepared for socialism.

A social order which had at its command all the forces of the state and of the church was overturned by the masses who were kept in ignorance and subjection.

Another example of a successful revolution occurred in Russia. In 1917 the workers and peasants of that country overthrew the Tsar and eight months later they rid themselves of the capitalists and landlords and established their own government. Before the monarchy was overthrown, it appeared that the Russian people were destined to remain under the yoke of tsarism for ever and ever. The rulers had a tremendous army and a huge police force; the church kept the masses in ignorance. But misery and suffering compelled the masses to look for a way out. Neither the police nor the church nor the army could protect the monarchy. As a matter of fact, the army itself was infected with revolutionary sentiments, and the result was that the monarchy toppled over without offering

any resistance. The same was true of the landlords and capitalists a short while later.

The lesson of these and other revolutions is clear. When the problems confronting a people cannot be solved by the ruling class, when the people are compelled to suffer without getting relief, when they behold an arrogant minority wallowing in luxury, indifferent to the fate of the masses, then they are in a mood to listen to those who propose a radical solution. The ideas which the ruling class pounded into the minds of the masses lose their hold and new ideas are accepted. The cover which blinded the workers is lifted from their eyes and they realize that they must take their fate into their own hands. No force on earth can stop them.

History teaches that when a system of society outlives its usefulness, when in the womb of the old society there has been prepared the possibility of a new social order, when the masses suffer needlessly, and when the ruling class is unable to solve the problems facing society—under such circumstances—the ideas representing the new social order are accepted by the masses, and instruments of force and deceit at the disposal of the ruling class are helpless to preserve the old order. A revolution occurs and a new social system comes into being.

Everything points to the fact that the capitalist system under which we live is subject to the same laws of historical development. It was born and grew to some extent under the system of feudalism. The capitalist class struggled with the feudal nobility for supremacy and, because capitalism was a social system superior to feudalism, the capitalist class was victorious. Capitalism then developed at a tremendous pace until it conquered the whole world. Although the masses did not gain the liberty and equality which they hoped for and which were promised them, the ground was prepared, through the development of the productive forces, for the establishment of socialism and the abolition of all inequalities. And now the capitalist system, after having reached the zenith of its development, is in a state of decline. In spite of the vast productive forces, the people are compelled to suffer for the need of food, clothing and shelter. Factories are idle when workers are looking for work; farmers are worried about selling their products at a time when people go hungry. The capitalist system has outlived its usefulness and must be replaced by a new system.

If it were a question solely of educating the masses through books, pamphlets and lectures, then indeed the difficulties in the

way of changing the present system would be insurmountable. But the most effective teacher is life itself. The hardships which the workers are compelled to endure cause them to think and drive them to attempt some solution. They may be misled at first, by demagogues, or by the bureaucratic leaders of their own organizations, but ultimately they will see that there is no solution other than to take over the industries and operate them for the benefit of the people.

And once the wide masses rally around the ideas of socialism, nothing in the world can stop their progress. Neither the state, nor the church, nor the press, will save the present system.

### *Labor Must Lead in the Struggle for Socialism*

Having considered the difficulties confronting those interested in changing our social order, and having shown that those difficulties are not insurmountable, it is incumbent upon us to proceed to an analysis of the general methods which, in our opinion, will succeed in bringing humanity to its ultimate goal. There are many persons who agree, or who claim to agree, with the socialist ideal but who differ amongst themselves as to the path which should be followed in achieving the goal. Are there many paths all equally good and all ultimately reaching the destination, or is there only one road with all other roads ending in a blind alley?

It is important, in the first instance, to answer the question: which group in society will be the spearhead in the struggle for a new society? From what I have said before, you can surmise that we socialists think in terms of classes. I pointed out that the capitalist class took the lead in destroying the feudal system with the masses of the people simply following the capitalist class. Of great significance is the fact that, not long after the capitalists achieved political power, they were confronted by the necessity of using that power to resist the encroachments of a new class. That new class consisted of the industrial wage workers who, even at that time, were herded together in factories and mines in fairly large numbers. Could there be anything more natural than for a large number of people working in one place to organize for the purpose of improving their conditions of labor? That is exactly what the workers did; they organized trade unions. In those early days the workers attributed their miserable plight to the machine and actually set about destroying machinery. But that period did not last long. Soon the workers realized that it was useless to fight against

the machine which could be used for the benefit of labor as well as to oppress it; they saw that their struggle must be waged against the owners of the machine, the people who were reaping all the rich harvests as a result of the introduction of machinery.

In 1848 Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels published the Communist Manifesto and in that little book they analyzed the actual struggle that was going on in modern society. They pointed out that, just as the capitalist class struggled against the feudal landowners and finally conquered power, so now the industrial proletariat, or the wage-working class, is struggling against the capitalist class, and this struggle will go on until the working class will gain political power and reconstruct society on a socialist basis.

That the capitalist class and the industrial wage-working class are not the only classes in society is readily admitted by every socialist. All other sections of society, such as the farmers, the professionals, etc., may be grouped in the middle class. That class is an exceedingly important class, but in modern society those who control and operate the means of production play the decisive role. The capitalist class controls the means of production at present; the wage-working class is the only other class that can hope to control and operate the industries. Consequently the struggle for power is primarily a struggle between the capitalist class and the working class. The heterogeneous middle class cannot and does not play an independent role—it follows either the working class or the capitalist class.

Modern industry assembles the workers in large masses, making them susceptible to organization. Members of the middle class, especially the farmers, are scattered, and to organize them is far more difficult. Then again, and what is most important, the conditions under which the workers exist tend to make them appreciate the necessity for socialism. Within the factories, where thousands of workers are employed, there is perfect cooperation. Each worker does his own particular job and many of them working cooperatively turn out one product. A person working in a huge factory soon comes to realize that in the sphere of production, within the limits of one factory, there is socialism on a small scale. It is only outside the factory, in the sphere of distribution, that anarchy prevails. The idea of extending the order that exists within the factory to include all of economic activity seems most natural to the thinking worker.

On the other hand, members of the middle class like the farmer

and the store-keeper work mainly as individuals and this tends to create an individualistic psychology in them. To the middle class, as a class, socialism appears contrary to "natural law." Radicalism amongst the farmers or small merchants is generally expressed in opposition to trusts and big business. The class-conscious worker has no reason to oppose big business because it is big; there is nothing to be gained and a lot to be lost by splitting up one big industry into a lot of small businesses. It is far easier to convince workers that what should be done is not to destroy the huge trusts but to take them over and operate them for the welfare of the people.

Modern industry, in addition to making the working class amenable to socialist ideas, has also placed it in a very strategic position. At any time the workers so desire, they can paralyze industry or breathe life into it, and this power enables them to control all of social life. The capitalist class controls industry at the present time because of its ownership, but it could not operate industry without the workers, while the latter have no need of the capitalists to keep the wheels of industry in motion. In an industrially developed country like the United States, the wage workers with their families constitute a majority of the population, but its actual strength is far greater than its numerical proportion. It is the only class that can challenge the right of the capitalist class to rule.

I am not suggesting that the working class should be arrayed against all other classes. While it is true that the middle class cannot see the advisability and necessity for socialism as clearly as the working class, it is also true that the middle class suffers under capitalism just as well as the working class. We revolutionary socialists are in favor of adopting policies which will gain the support of as many people as possible who are not members of the proletariat. Socialism will not only solve the problems of the workers but of all mankind. The working class at all times must attempt to show the farmers and other sections of the middle class that their welfare is bound up with the welfare of the workers. They are grievously mistaken who think that as soon as the workers gain governmental power they will immediately compel all the farmers and all the small business men to give up their farms and businesses to the government. A workers' government will show the farmers by example that they will be far better off by working together, with the latest machinery, on a cooperative farm than by tilling their own soil. Force against the farmers and other middle class elements to make them adopt socialist methods is absolutely excluded.

To gain the confidence and support of the middle class it is essential that labor should know what it wants and act decisively to get it. If it hesitates and flounders about, if it shows no ability to solve the problems that confront the middle class, then the middle class will turn to others for leadership. Fundamentally, the reason for the birth and growth of fascism is because of the failure of the working class to take over power and reconstruct society on a socialist basis. The World War of 1914-1918 conclusively proved that capitalism had outlived its usefulness and had nothing more to offer mankind than self-destruction. It was the duty of the proletariat to take over social leadership and reorganize society. Its failure to do so (for reasons I shall mention later) enabled the fascists of Italy, Germany, and of other countries, to mobilize the middle class for the purposes of reaction.

History has placed upon the shoulders of the working class the task of solving humanity's problems. Failure to do so means to assure the victory of fascism the world over with the complete suppression of the workers' organizations, terrible imperialist wars, and the destruction of all civilization.

### *Workers Need Political Power*

To achieve socialism labor must first gain political power. The capitalist class under feudalism had economic power; it required political power to consolidate and guarantee its economic power; it obtained political supremacy by a revolutionary overthrow of the feudal nobility. The workers under capitalism have no economic power (except in the sense that they can bring industry to a halt by withdrawing their labor power) and neither have they political power. Before they can take over the industries and proceed to construct a socialist society, they will have to take over the power of government.

What that means is that the workers must create their own state. Just as the feudal landowners had their state to protect their rule, and just as the capitalist class has its state to protect its dominant position, so must the workers organize their own state power for the purpose of establishing socialism. Whereas all previous forms of state served the purpose of guarding the property interests of a minority of the people against the majority, the workers' state will be the instrument of the vast majority of the population for the purpose of abolishing all forms of exploitation.

The workers' state will, in the first place, nationalize all the

means of production now owned by the capitalists, and will operate them for the benefit of all the people. It will, in the second instance, guard its rule against any counter-revolutionary attempts by native or foreign capitalists. And, finally, it will proceed to organize production and to educate the people, so that socialism can actually function.

This is what is meant by the statement that the struggle of the working class is political in character. It is a struggle to wrest the political power away from the capitalists, and to establish the political power of the workers, a power which will build socialism.

What will be the form of the workers' state? At present there is the capitalist state with its police force and army completely separated from the people, with a bureaucracy, the top layer of which, is intimately connected with the big capitalists. The people are not permitted to bear arms except when they are drafted for war purposes. In democratic capitalist countries like ours the workers are allowed to vote for representatives in Congress and the voting takes place by geographical districts. The representatives are elected for a definite term and before there is another election that term must expire. In a workers' state the government will consist of a council or house of delegates composed of representatives elected by the workers at the place of their labor. These representatives will always be subject to recall and will receive no more than the average wage of any worker. With the exception of enemies of the working class, the whole population will be armed.

At present, in the countries where capitalist democracy prevails, there are provisions in the constitutions, or on the statute books, granting everyone the right of free press, free speech and free assembly. Leaving out of consideration the fact that the ruling class in actual practice limits those rights, and in critical moments abolishes them altogether, it is essential to understand that the poverty of the workers makes it exceedingly difficult for them to exercise those rights. Without the money to purchase printing presses, or rent assembly halls, the rights of free speech and free press are nothing but rights on paper. With the abolition of capitalism, the right of individual capitalists to own huge printing plants will be abolished, and the workers will then be in a position to take advantage of their privileges.

There will naturally be differences of opinion amongst the people as to policies to be pursued after the workers take over political power. Those differences will have to be decided in a democratic

manner, just as at present in a democratic labor union differences of views exist and the majority prevails after discussion and voting. Any minority group will be furnished with the means, proportionate to its number, to enable it to present its viewpoint before the people.

Because there will be no small minority of capitalists monopolizing all the wealth, democracy in a workers' state will have real meaning. It will be limited only in the sense that no one person will be permitted to exploit any other person. I know that some of you are mentally comparing the picture I have painted of democracy in a workers' state with the terrible reality that exists now in the Soviet Union. I shall discuss the question of the Soviet Union before I am through. Here I want to point out that our program calls for just what I have indicated, and with the active participation of the workers that program can be realized.

Socialists, however, contend that the workers' state will not last for many generations. The necessity for any state exists only because there are classes in society, and one class requires the instrument of the state to rule over the other classes. Do away with classes and you do away with the necessity of any state. As soon as the workers in the most important capitalist countries take over political power and nationalize all of the industries; as soon as the industries are developed to a point where all the needs of the people will be satisfied; as soon as classes will disappear, and all of the people will be educated in the ideas of a new social order, then the state will lose its function and the various instruments of force will gradually disappear.

### 3

**WHAT METHODS** will the workers be compelled to use in order to destroy the political power of the capitalists and to establish their own power?

In countries, such as Germany and Italy, where the fascists have destroyed every right that the workers ever had, it is perfectly clear that the workers will be compelled to use violence in order to get rid of their fascist oppressors. But how about the United States, England or France? In these countries the workers have the right to vote. Why is it not possible for them to elect a

majority of socialists in Congress or in Parliament and establish socialism by law?

A peaceful change is an ideal most desirable. Everyone, especially the revolutionary socialists, will subscribe to that idea. The question, however, is not whether it is desirable but whether it is possible. On the statute books of most of the States there are "criminal syndicalism" laws providing long prison sentences for anyone who advocates the overthrow of the government by violence. Such laws will be as effective as laws against the occurrence of earthquakes. For revolutions cannot be prevented by any law. Like convulsions in nature, they are the result of the evolution of forces beyond the power of man to stop.

On the basis of history and of theory, we are justified in predicting that the capitalist class will not surrender power to the working class without a violent struggle. History knows no example of the peaceful surrender of an exploiting minority to an oppressed majority. The actual conduct of the capitalist class at the present time, the violence which it uses against the workers when they strike for an improvement in their conditions, confirm the historical lesson, and justify the prediction that they, who will lose their wealth and power, will utilize all forms of violence against the overwhelming majority.

The form of government in the United States practically guarantees the ruling class its domination against the will of the majority of the people. To introduce socialism by law would require an amendment to the constitution and for that a two-thirds majority of both houses of Congress and a majority in three-fourths of the state legislatures is required. Thirteen small and backward states could prevent any amendment to the constitution. Revolutionary socialists all favor a peaceful transformation of the present order to the socialist order, but he is insane who thinks that millions of workers will consent to starve because a minority of exploiters will threaten to, and will actually use violence against them.

If there is any one thing that will prevent the capitalists from using violence, it will be the strong organizations of the working class. The greater the strength of the working-class organizations, the less violence will there be.

### *Workers Need a Political Party*

We need not look very closely at the working class to see that

it has very serious divisions. There are divisions between skilled, semi-skilled and unskilled workers; there are differences in political development; there are divisions based upon race, creed and nationality. The workers, furthermore, are not born socialists. The conditions under which they labor make them amenable to socialist ideas but there must be some organization that assumes the responsibility of teaching the workers those ideas, of convincing them of the necessity to struggle for socialism, of representing their historic interests. What is absolutely necessary is an organization of workers who, regardless of their skill or lack of skill, regardless of any secondary differences, agree upon the necessity of solving the problems of the working class through the overthrow of the capitalist system and the establishment of socialism.

As I have indicated before, the struggle between the capitalist class and the working class is a political struggle, and a political party is necessary to guide the workers in that struggle. Without a party the working class would be like a body without a head. Every class acts through a party; at certain times through one party; and at other times through another party. The capitalists rule but they rule either through the Republican or through the Democratic party, and sometimes they rule through parties falsely claiming to represent the interests of the working class.

Only one type of working-class political party has shown itself able to lead the workers in a successful revolution, and that is a party of the type of the Bolshevik party under Lenin. It is highly significant that since 1917, in many countries, the workers have been grievously defeated, and in those countries there was no political party similar to the Bolshevik party. The fact that in Russia in 1917 there was a revolutionary Marxist party, and that the proletarian revolution was successful, and that in Italy, Germany, Austria, and Spain there was no revolutionary socialist party, and the workers were defeated, is evidence proving the contention that without a revolutionary party the workers cannot achieve a successful revolution. It is because we believe in that theory that we of the Socialist Workers' party are determined to build a revolutionary party of the same type as the Bolshevik party that led the successful revolution in Russia.

On the American scene there are three parties of some significance, claiming to represent the interests of the American workers—the Communist party, the Socialist party and the Socialist Workers' party. All ask for the support of the American masses on the

ground that they point out the correct road leading the working class to freedom. The intelligent worker cannot evade the duty of studying the programs and activities of these parties in order to determine his attitude towards them.

Quite naturally I am of the opinion that the party to which I belong has the only correct program based upon the teachings of revolutionary Marxism. Our party is prepared to participate with the workers in their daily struggles, to learn from them and with them. As a party we must be ready to tell the workers what in our opinion is the best course to follow, but that does not mean that, if the workers do not take our advice, we shall stand aloof from the workers' struggles. Our party, in other words, is a group of workers and even individuals who have broken away from other classes, who are sincerely devoted to the interests of the working class, and who believe that their program is the only correct program for the workers to follow. All workers anxious to fight for the liberation of the working class are welcome into its ranks.

More misapprehension and confusion exists with reference to the Communist party than with any other party. Because the name "Communist" suggests a connection with the party created by Lenin which led the successful Russian Revolution; because the communists actually claim that they follow the principles of Marx and Lenin, and because that party has the enormous prestige of being identified with the achievements of the Soviet Union, many workers are under the impression that it is the most revolutionary of all parties. What a party claims to be, however, and what it actually *is* are very frequently two different things.

On all the important immediate questions confronting the working class, the Communist party has taken an anti-revolutionary position. It has, for instance, come out in favor of what is called "collective security," which is nothing but a union of the so-called democratic imperialist powers together with the Soviet Union against the fascist imperialist powers. By that it has completely forsaken the correct revolutionary position of Lenin who fought bitterly against the "socialists" of his day who made a distinction between "good" and "bad" imperialist governments. The communists have given up the idea proclaimed by Marx that the workers have no fatherland under capitalism and the idea of Lenin that in every imperialist war the workers should strive to overthrow their own capitalist class.

The Communist party has advanced the idea that the workers

should struggle for capitalist democracy as a system, regardless of their ability to overthrow that system and establish a workers' democracy. It disregards the fundamental proposition that fascism is a product of capitalist democracy, and that to destroy fascism it is necessary to destroy capitalism and capitalist democracy. It has therefore advocated the tactic of the People's Front which is nothing but a union of the working-class organizations with capitalist parties for the purpose of saving capitalist democracy. In this country the communists support Roosevelt who is a staunch defender of capitalism against the "economic royalists"; they support LaGuardia as against some Tammany politicians. They have become the most furious advocates of war against Japan, supporting Roosevelt whole-heartedly in his imperialist war policies. In the trade union movement the extent of their revolutionary tactics consists in blindly and uncritically supporting the trade union bureaucracy in everything that it says or does.

One of the most important differences between our party and the Communist party is in the conception of how a party should function. A member of our party is not obligated to accept everything that the leadership of the party says or does as one hundred percent correct. We recognize that the best of us can and do make mistakes, and in order to avoid mistakes it is essential to have intelligent and free discussion. As a matter of fact, before any new policy is adopted by our party, a wide discussion is arranged so that every member can listen to all sides of the question and participate in the discussion and formulation of policy. Once a policy has been adopted, the minority is obligated to carry it out in practice until that policy is changed. In that way every member participates in the intellectual life of the party, at the same time that the necessary discipline in action is maintained.

Not so in the case of the Communist party. No discussion on the formulation of any important policy is permitted to the membership. Within the last ten years there has, in practice, not been a single instance where the rank and file could listen to different opinions on a vital question and decide on the basis of an honest presentation of different points of view. Policies on all important questions are formulated by the top leadership subject to the control of the Moscow bureaucrats. On the most important questions decisions are made in Moscow and the American "Charlie McCarthys" accept them without question. For the rank and file there is left only the duty to carry out the policies. Discussion is permitted

solely as to the method of executing policies already adopted. As a consequence there has been created a bureaucratic top layer, accustomed to command, and a very submissive membership without a breath of intellectual life. In the Soviet Union, where the communist bureaucrats have state power, opposition to their policies means imprisonment, exile or death; in countries where communists do not have possession of the instruments of force, opposition means expulsion from the party and being subjected to the vilest slanders. In Spain the communists have gone to the extent of having their private prisons and execution squads. A party which acts in the way the communist parties do can never be a revolutionary party, for the essence of a revolutionary Marxist party is its critical attitude to all things and events, and its fostering of intelligent discussion amongst its membership. Only an orthodox religious church can have believers, not a revolutionary party.

The Socialist party is not a very important factor upon the American scene. In 1919 the revolutionary elements were expelled and these elements organized the Communist party, which was then a revolutionary party. For more than a decade the Socialist party vegetated. Due to the insane policies of the Communist party between the years 1930 and 1933, new elements came into the Socialist party, and these new elements gave the party a leftward turn and put some life into it. Events in Europe, especially the victory of Hitler, pushed the younger elements still further to the left, and with the entrance of the so-called Trotskyists into the party, the left wing was consolidated and became very active. The right wing officials of the party, fearful lest the revolutionary wing gain control, expelled all the revolutionists and the latter proceeded to organize the Socialist Workers' party.

What is left of the Socialist party is a conglomeration of pacifists, preachers, social workers and the Wisconsin type of "socialists," that is, people who are merely interested in getting into some government or trade union office. The few militant workers still left in the party will undoubtedly soon leave it. It can be truthfully said that the Socialist party has no function to perform.

### *Internationalism*

If there is any one thing which more than all else distinguishes our party from all other parties, it is its stress on revolutionary internationalism. From the very beginning of the socialist movement, the leaders of that movement emphasized the fact that social-

ism is nothing unless it is international. And this internationalism is not simply a product coming out of the minds of socialist thinkers; it is a necessity born out of the economic interdependence of the capitalist world. The principle of division of labor prevailing in industry exists also on a world scale between the nations. Although the fascist countries have proclaimed their determination to achieve self-sufficiency, their efforts to become self-sufficient have thus far failed and are bound to be fruitless. The only noticeable result of those efforts has been a decided reduction in the standard of living of the masses.

Because of the economic interdependence of nations, revolutionary socialists have always assumed that socialism must exist on an international scale. It has been an axiom with all socialist thinkers that the working class of one country should cooperate with the workers of all other countries. A class-conscious worker does not consider himself an American or German or Russian first, and a member of the working class second, but considers himself, first and always, a member of the working class interested in the struggles of the workers the world over.

After the death of Lenin in 1924, Stalin gained control of the Soviet Union and of the Communist International. The fundamental concept of revolutionary internationalism was violated when Stalin and his supporters accepted the idea that a complete socialist society could be built in the Soviet Union without a proletarian revolution in the important capitalist countries of Western Europe. From that time to the present a bitter and irreconcilable conflict has been raging between the Stalinists and those who have remained loyal to the banner of the world proletarian revolution. Under the Stalinist leadership the Communist International has abandoned all the fundamental revolutionary principles and tactics and as a result the proletarian revolution has suffered disastrous defeats in various countries. To protect themselves against criticism, the Stalinists have expelled every critical and revolutionary Marxist from the Communist parties all over the world. Today the Communist International is nothing but an instrument in the hands of the Soviet bureaucratic clique, functioning to further the interests of that clique outside of the Soviet Union. In its attitude towards imperialist war and capitalist democracy, the Communist International does not differ in the least from the social democrats of the Second International, and is openly prepared to do what the "so-

cialist" leaders did in 1914, i.e., lead the workers to support their own capitalists in an imperialist war.

Just as Lenin fought savagely against the betrayal of revolutionary socialism by the leaders of the Second International, so Leon Trotsky has been fighting against Stalin and his chief followers who led the Communist International off the road of revolutionary internationalism. Because of his consistent struggle, Trotsky was expelled from the Communist party of the Soviet Union in 1927 and was subsequently exiled. He, and those who agreed with him, even though they were expelled from the International, continued the effort to have the Communist International revert back to correct revolutionary principles but without success. Stalin's policies, especially his refusal to enter into a united front with the social democratic organizations, which he designated as "social fascists," for the purpose of fighting the fascists, was the principal factor in smoothing the road for Hitler's seizure of power, and after that event the revolutionary Marxists agreed that it was necessary to found a new International. There is now a bureau for the organization of a Fourth International to which the Socialist Workers' Party is affiliated.

Our aim is to create a revolutionary international socialist party with sections in every country, for the purpose of guiding the struggles of the working class on an international scale. This does not mean that the working class of one country should refrain from attempting to establish its power until the workers of the whole world are ready to accomplish the revolution simultaneously. It means that the workers of every country must fight to gain power and to extend the revolution to the rest of the world. For that it is necessary to have an international revolutionary party.

Our goal is to achieve a world where nations will live in harmony and peace, devoting all their energies to the cooperative production of goods useful to the workers of the world. Only international socialism can achieve that consummation.

### *The Soviet Union*

In any attempt to convince a worker of intelligence that the solution to the problems of the working class can be found only in socialism, there is a hurdle of considerable dimensions which must be cleared. It is impossible and useless to discuss the question of socialism without providing an answer to all the doubts that arise by virtue of the fact that conditions in the Soviet Union seem-

ingly belie every allegation made about the character of socialism. The Soviet Union came into existence as a result of a victorious proletarian revolution, and socialists should be in a position to point to conditions there as proof of their contentions and as justifying their claims that the overthrow of capitalism will benefit the working class. Instead—and it would be useless to deny it—we socialists have been placed on the defensive because every opponent of socialism triumphantly indicates conditions in the Soviet Union as conclusive evidence that socialism brings less freedom and more misery for the workers than they have in democratic capitalist countries.

In one respect at least our predictions of what will happen after the working class takes power have certainly been verified. The phenomenal growth in the industrial development of the Soviet Union confirms our general proposition that capitalism is no longer able to develop the forces of production, and only the establishment of a workers' government will make possible a further development of industry. Under centralized control and with planned economy the Soviet Union has made tremendous strides forward in the building of industry at the same time that the capitalist world has retrogressed. It is true that due to the criminally false leadership of the Stalin clique, the gains are not half so great as they could be, but the fact remains that in spite of the handicap of Stalinist misleadership, great progress has been made in the industrialization of the Soviet Union.

Nevertheless, the development of industry has been overshadowed by the dreadful oppression that prevails in the Soviet Union. Several times have I stated that democracy under capitalism is at best very limited, that the ownership of the means of production by the capitalists prevents the workers, even in democratic capitalist countries, from exercising the privileges of real democracy. I asserted that only when the workers take over political power and expropriate the capitalists, that is, take away the means of production from them, will they achieve real democracy. And that kind of democracy would certainly include the right to think freely and critically, to express thoughts without any fear of punishment, to criticize everyone in the position of leadership in government or industry. It would include the right to organize groups and parties with a program opposed to the ruling party and which the members of the group believe to be in the interest of the working class.

That such democracy does not exist in the Soviet Union goes without saying. Only those who have been completely duped by the leaders of the Communist party believe that there is any kind of freedom in the Soviet Union. The tragic truth is that every worker who dares indicate his opposition to the Stalinist bureaucrats is immediately arrested, and if he is not murdered, he is exiled or imprisoned as a "Trotskyist-fascist." Nowhere is there such revolting exhibitions as the infamous Moscow trials where former revolutionists are compelled to humiliate themselves by "confessing" to the most unbelievable crimes. It is painful to say so, but it is the absolute truth, that an independent revolutionary worker faces, in the Soviet Union, dangers that are just as great, if not greater, than in Fascist Germany or Italy.

Not only has the worker no freedom in the Soviet Union, except the freedom to praise Stalin and his henchmen, but his standard of living is abominably low, and the social distinctions between different categories of workers and between workers and officials are tremendous. Everything that I have stated about freedom and democracy under socialism is directly contradicted by actual conditions in the only country where a socialist revolution took place. Is there any explanation for that glaring contradiction? Are the workers destined to be oppressed by new masters after they throw the capitalists off their backs? Is real socialism a vain dream?

First and foremost it must be clearly understood and repeated over and over again that *socialism does not exist in the Soviet Union*. To the founders of socialism, to all those who fought and died for the ideal of a socialist society, to every intelligent human being who has studied the concepts of socialism, and who is not blinded by his zeal for the defense of the Stalinist bureaucracy, socialism meant and means now a social order where there exists a very high standard of living for everyone, where there is freedom for all human beings to think and speak, and where there is no force necessary to keep sections of the population under control. If we accept those conditions as being absolutely essential to the existence of socialism (and we must accept them since otherwise it would not be worth struggling for), then to claim that socialism exists in the Soviet Union is a travesty on the idea of socialism.

But was there not a revolution in 1917, and did not the Russian workers take over political power and deprive the capitalists of their wealth? Yes, there was such a revolution which was a social-

ist revolution, not because it could bring socialism into existence immediately but because, by taking over the means of production, the workers were in a position to proceed with the building of socialism. To complete the socialist structure, however, there was required more than the seizure of political power and the expropriation of the capitalists.

If you remember, I stated that the fundamental basis of socialism is a development of the forces of production to a point where enough can be produced to satisfy the needs of all members of society. A transitional period between the overthrow of capitalism and the establishment of socialism is necessary in order to permit the working class to develop the forces of production and to educate the people in socialist ideas.

At the time of the proletarian revolution, Russia was an industrially backward country. From the point of view of its own industrial development, Russia was far from ready for a socialist revolution. It is only from the point of view of the development of capitalism on a world scale that the Russian workers were justified in taking over political power. The leaders of the Bolshevik party knew this very well, and they openly stated that the proletarian revolution in Russia must be considered as a prelude to the World Revolution. As a matter of fact many of them, including Lenin, were of the opinion that the Russian Revolution could not last for more than a short period unless the working classes of the more advanced capitalist countries would come to the aid of the Russian workers by overthrowing the capitalists in their own countries.

But, unfortunately, the German workers, the Italian workers, and the workers of other countries did not follow in the footsteps of the Russian workers. They lacked the one thing that the Russian workers were so fortunate in having, a Bolshevik party led by a revolutionary genius like Lenin. Because of the failure of the workers of the more advanced capitalist countries to achieve a revolution, the Russian workers were placed in a most difficult position. They had to hold the fort in a backward country until relieved by revolutions in Western Europe.

Three and a half years of a devastating civil war were followed by a period of famine. The suffering of the people knew no bounds. The Bolshevik party had to retreat; it introduced what was called the New Economic Policy, allowing small traders and capitalists to function and inviting foreign capitalists to obtain concessions

from the proletarian state. The Russian workers dug in, waiting and hoping for the proletarian revolution in the west to materialize.

Meanwhile serious changes were taking place in Russia. The most devoted and self-sacrificing militants of the working class were mostly killed off in the civil war. The people were tired after such a gigantic struggle. A bureaucracy came into existence and its members naturally took more than their share of the limited quantity of goods at the disposal of the Russian masses. Lenin saw the danger and fought strenuously against the growth of bureaucratic tendencies. Just before he died he wrote a letter recommending the removal of Stalin from his post as Secretary of the party because Stalin represented those tendencies. This letter was suppressed by the majority of the political committee after Lenin's death.

Attempts at proletarian revolutions in Germany and Bulgaria in 1923 failed; the Chinese proletariat was decimated in 1927. While the Stalinist leadership of the Soviet Union was mainly responsible for these defeats, the bureaucracy was enabled, because of the defeats, to consolidate its position as a ruling clique. For the Russian workers became pessimistic and were willing to listen to the pleasant but false and dangerous doctrine advanced by Stalin that socialism could be built in Russia alone, regardless of the failure of the revolution in the rest of the world. Conditions favored the victory of Stalin who represented the interests of the bureaucratic caste. The representatives of revolutionary internationalism were expelled from the party, arrested, exiled and hounded to death. Reaction, led by Stalin, triumphed.

There are those who ignorantly or maliciously represent the difference between Stalin and Trotsky to be the desire of the former to build up the Soviet Union industrially and the intention of the latter to concentrate upon the world revolution, entirely disregarding the industrial development of the Soviet Union. There is not an iota of truth in that formulation. Long before Stalin launched the first Five Year Plan, Trotsky was insisting against the opposition of Stalin, upon a more rapid industrialization of the country. At the same time, however, Trotsky contended that the difficulties and contradictions confronting the Russian workers could not be solved except through working-class revolutions in the advanced industrial countries of Europe.

The Russian workers were led to believe by Stalin that all their troubles would be over after the first Five Year Plan would be completed, but in 1933, at the end of the Plan, conditions were

worse than at the beginning. They were told that the second Five Year Plan was to complete the industrialization of the Soviet Union and usher in the period of socialism. Conditions did improve somewhat for the masses but that was nothing in comparison with the improvement in the standard of living enjoyed by the bureaucrats. It seemed that the great efforts put forth by the workers during the two Five Year Plans were for the benefit of the bureaucracy.

Meanwhile fascism gained one victory after another, with the result that the Soviet Union is in greater danger now than it has ever been since the successful liquidation of the civil war. The theory of the possibility of building an isolated, complete socialist society in one country was refuted not so much by arguments as by life itself. If fascism is victorious in the rest of the world, how can socialism be safe in one country? The alternative becomes ever clearer: either the proletarian revolution in the capitalist countries or fascism and the destruction of the Soviet Union.

As long as the Soviet workers had hopes for an improvement in their conditions upon the completion of the Five Years Plans, so long were they willing to tolerate the oppressive bureaucracy without any open struggle against it. But when conditions did not improve greatly in spite of the industrialization of the country, when the workers saw the bureaucrats getting the cream of everything and living like lords, at the same time that they were compelled to endure semi-starvation, they became restless and resentful, and the Stalinist bureaucracy saw the danger that confronted it. Stalin decided on a policy of blood and iron. Taking advantage of the assassination of Kirov, one of the leading bureaucrats, Stalin launched the bloodiest purge in all history. Practically everyone who had played an important role in the revolution, and whose obedience to the bureaucratic regime was not one hundred percent certain, has been executed or is now in a concentration camp. A series of "trials" were held which every intelligent person, whose mind has not been paralyzed by the poison of Stalinism, recognizes as frame-ups. Their purpose was to wipe out all possible leaders of any opposition that might arise, and to convince the Russian workers, as well as the revolutionary workers of other countries, that the difficulties in the Soviet Union were the result of the work of "Trotskyist-fascist saboteurs and wreckers" and not of the bureaucratic oppression of the Stalinist apparatus.

It can be seen that what led to the triumph of the reaction in the Soviet Union was the failure of the international revolution to

develop, plus the backwardness of Russian economy. Even if a socialist revolution were to occur in an advanced country like the United States, a workers' government could not hold out if, for a long period of time, capitalism continued to exist in the rest of the world. The world is not large enough to have both capitalist rule and socialist rule at the same time for a long period. It is true that a socialist revolution in the United States could hold out much longer against a hostile capitalist world, and the standard of living would be much higher than in the Soviet Union, but essentially the same general rule would prevail. Either the revolution is extended to other countries or reaction and defeat. Of course, a socialist revolution in the United States would have a far greater effect than the revolution in Russia. It would practically guarantee successful revolutions in all other countries.

Correctly understood, conditions in the Soviet Union do not in the least disprove the theories of socialism; on the contrary they confirm everything that has been taught about the nature of the socialist revolution.

What attitude should we take towards the Soviet Union? There are those who contend that the Soviet Union should be placed in the same category as the fascist states, so that in case of an attack by the fascist countries against the Soviet Union, it would be immaterial to the working class whether the Soviet Union is defeated or not. We of the Socialist Workers' party consider such an attitude absolutely incorrect. The Russian proletarian revolution of 1917 placed political power in the hands of the workers who then proceeded to nationalize the industries. Thus far the means of production have not been returned to private ownership. It is true that the Russian workers have no economic or political democracy, but the fact remains that private ownership in the means of production has not been restored as yet, and to that extent the Soviet Union still remains a workers' state.

As against any attack by the fascists the workers of the world should rise to defend the Soviet Union, that is, to defend the basic conquest of the proletarian revolution and not the despotic rule of Stalinism. Both the Russian workers and the workers of the rest of the world have the same tasks as far as the Soviet Union is concerned: to defend it against any attack by the capitalist states and to purge it of the Stalinist bureaucracy. In the Soviet Union, however, the workers are no longer compelled to wage a war against capitalists for the purpose of expropriating them, that is,

they do not have to accomplish a social revolution. All that they have to do is to organize a political revolution, to throw the Stalinist bureaucracy out and establish democracy in the government and in the factory.

What will help the Russian workers get rid of Stalinism is a proletarian revolution in any of the chief capitalist countries. Encouraged by the possibility of the workers coming to their support, the Russian workers will lift up their heads and begin a real struggle against the Stalinist clique. Just as the defeat of the working class in Europe was primarily responsible for the victory of the bureaucracy, so will the victory of the international revolution cause the defeat of Stalinism.

The development of the Russian Revolution certainly indicates that the path of the working class towards socialism and freedom is beset by many and great difficulties. But in spite of the difficulties, the working class must ultimately conquer. For there is no solution for the ills of society other than socialism. By their suffering under the present system, be it fascism or democratic capitalism, the workers are impelled to accept that solution. In spite of all the forces working feverishly against the proletarian revolution, in spite of the fascists, the communists, the social democrats, or the trade union bureaucrats, the proletarian revolution must succeed if humanity is to be saved from a relapse to barbarism.

For the intelligent worker who is willing to struggle for himself and for his class, the Socialist Workers' party offers a revolutionary program and a revolutionary organization. The ideals that animated the great fighters for human progress throughout the ages, that led men gladly to offer their lives to beat down oppression, are the ideals that motivate the members of our party. In the struggle against the slave owners of ancient Rome; in the struggle against the feudal barons of England and France, men of ideals took the lead, and supported by the masses, they finally conquered. We are now engaged in a struggle for the final abolition of all forms of human slavery, economic and spiritual.

We invite all intelligent and courageous workers to participate in that struggle.

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