

CLASSIC REPRINT SERIES

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COMMUNISM  
*and*  
SOCIALISM

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by  
Karl Kautsky

Forgotten Books

Karl Kautsky  
**Communism and  
Socialism**  
(1932)

## Content

Introductory

1. The Idea of a Socialist-Communist Coalition
2. The Peculiarity of Marxism
3. Dictatorship in the Party
4. Dictatorship in the State
5. Dictatorship in the International

# Introductory

This pamphlet by Karl Kautsky presents in clear and succinct form the issue between Communism and Socialism, the two forces struggling for supremacy in the international later movement. No man more competent to discuss the question than Kautsky. Universally recognized as the most important living exponent of Socialist thought, Kautsky has also been a keen student of Russia for more than forty years. His book *The Moving Forces of the Russian Revolution*, published in 1906, was translated into Russian with a preface by Lenin, in which the father of Bolshevism hailed him as the only man among Western European Socialists who truly understood Russia and her problems. Since the Revolution of 1917, Kautsky has written prolifically on the subject. His books *Democracy and Dictatorship*, *From Democracy to State Slavery, Terrorism and Communism*, *The Proletarian Revolution* and *Bolshevism at a Deadlock*, as well as innumerable articles, have been translated into many languages. His two recent volumes on *The Materialist Interpretation of History* have been hailed throughout Europe as the most important contribution to socialist thought since the appearance of the classic works of Karl Marx.

This pamphlet presents in popular form the essence of Kautsky's writings on Communism and Socialism. Kautsky approaches the issue from the viewpoint of its historical development, fundamental Socialist principle, and the experience of the Russian Revolution and of the international labor movement.

The American League for Democratic Socialism, composed of members of the Socialist Party banded together for educational publication purposes, believes that the publication of this pamphlet, the first of a series on socialist topics, fills a long felt need for an authoritative exposition of the question, which has been sadly confused in this country by uncritical and ill informed writers of all shades.

*The American League  
for Democratic Socialism*

# 1. The Idea of a Socialist-Communist Coalition

The German proletariat faces a severe struggle against the rising power of Hitlerite fascism. Only as a united mass can it expect to assert itself victoriously. Communists and Socialists are equally threatened by the National Socialists. Nevertheless, the Communists persist in their old policy of considering the Socialists as their worst enemies, to be destroyed first before the attack on the Hitlerites is unleashed.

The senselessness of this policy has been clearly perceived even by the Communist Trotsky, who has called upon the German Communists to unite with the Socialists on a joint program of defense against National Socialism.

But however urgent this may be, it will not materialize. The Communists will continue to support the Fascists in this crisis of the republic by fighting the Socialists, whom they oppose more bitterly than any other party, at times hand in and with the Fascists.

Are we not confronted here by an unfortunate misunderstanding? What is it that divides us from the Communists? Like the Socialists, they are a proletarian party. The emancipation of the proletariat by establishment of a socialist society is our common aim. Nay, more: we have a common theoretical basis for our practical struggles: the teaching of Karl Marx. It appears as if the only thing that divides us is a varying interpretation of some of his utterances. Shall we permit our cooperation to be shattered by any such difference at a moment when the entire

movement for emancipation of the proletariat faces a life and death struggle?

Were this true, we would be justified in condemning our whole movement as no higher than some Christian sect whose members seek to devour each other over the interpretation of some particular words in the Bible.

However, even such sectarians do not appear upon closer study to be as senseless as they seem at first glance. Behind the various interpretations of particular words may be found very real differences. For example: upon superficial examination Luther and Zwingli appear to be fighting each other over different interpretations of the words spoken by Christ at the Last Supper. Yet, the disagreement between them really arose from the fact that Zwingli was a republican while Luther expounded the idea of absolute monarchy.

The same holds true to day with respect to our relation to the Communists. They fight us not only because our interpretation of Marx differs from theirs but because they must perforce interpret him differently in order that they may find arguments against us. There was a time when we both had a common theoretical basis. But later a gulf developed between us which cannot be bridged, however much we may desire and consider this necessary. This gulf arises neither from a misunderstanding nor from any mere difference of opinion.

## 2. The Peculiarity of Marxism

To realize how absolutely irreconcilable are Communism and Socialism we must first look at the history of the origin of Socialism.

It springs from two roots, one ethical and the other economic. The first emanates from the natural instinct of man, the second from the nature of capitalist society and the position of the proletariat as a class.

The demand “liberty, equality, fraternity« put forward by the men of the French Revolution antedates all written history. It represents the desire of all oppressed, exploited and their friends ever since there have been oppression and exploitation. But this demand merely poses a problem. It does not indicate the road to its solution. What via road should be has been variously conceived, depending upon varied social conditions and the classes who have sought to find it. Only under the capitalist mode of production has the solution of this problem, through the establishment of a democratic social economy of the workers, become possible and necessary. Only through economic research, not through ethical indignation, can this solution be achieved. Certainly, it can never be achieved by mere impassioned desire for what, since 1789, has been termed “liberty, equality, fraternity.«

All socialist thinkers were rebels against any end of enslavement and exploitation. But all of them were also research workers in the domain of economics.



The revolt-provoking study of the mass impoverishment generated by capitalist industry gave birth to socialist ideas. It was precisely this impoverishment, however, which by its very frightfulness so held the workers down, that they were frequently rendered incapable of resistance. Whenever some few did revolt, they knew nothing better to do than to destroy machines and burn factories. By such outbursts of indignation they succeeded only in multiplying their own misery.

The early socialists, therefore, believed that the proletariat could not emancipate itself. It was to be emancipated through the efforts of humanitarians, superior to the proletariat. It soon became clear, however, that nothing was to be expected from the statesmen and millionaires of the bourgeois world. Side by side with the utopians who relied upon the well-meaning bourgeoisie were socialists who perceived that the power necessary for the realization of socialism could come only from the proletariat itself. But they, too, despaired of the masses. They addressed themselves to the small group of the elite among the working class, those enjoying more favorable conditions than the average worker. Together with professional revolutionists they were to enter into a conspiracy and seek to capture political power, and bring about socialism by means of armed revolt. Finally, there were socialists who, permitting themselves to be deceived by the prospects aroused by the early labor movement, over-estimated the numbers and intellectual power of the workers of their period and believed that the proletariat needed only to bring about democracy, namely, the universal franchise, in order to win immediately the power of government and transform society in line with the proletariat's desires.

All these schools, however they appeared to vary one from another, had this common characteristic: they looked upon the proletariat as they *found* it, and sought a means for the immediate “solution of the social question,« i.e. for the immediate abolition of the misery and enslavement of the working classes. Every one of these schools criticized severely the other socialists, each perceiving clearly the illusions of the others. Each was right and all succumbed to the criticism of time, which wrecked every one of them.

Then came Marx and Engels with their dialectic materialism and introduced the idea of *development* into socialist thought. They perceived the proletariat not only as it *was* but also as it was *becoming*. In their *Communist Manifesto* they realized that the proletariat had not yet advanced far enough to achieve immediately its own emancipation and, further, that this could not be achieved through the universal franchise, the efforts of the well-meaning portion of the bourgeoisie, or by the armed action of an advanced guard of energetic conspirators. At the same time they also perceived that through the development of industry the proletariat would grow in numbers and organization, while gaining constantly in intellectual and moral power. In this way the proletariat would achieve the power to emancipate itself. To be sure it would have to be educated to this. But this education, so Marx and Engels realized, could not be brought about by men who proclaimed themselves the schoolmasters of the workers, but through the experience of the class struggle, forced upon the wage earners by the conditions under which they lived.

The more the class struggle proceeds in a democratic environment, all other things being equal, i.e. in an

environment of universal school education, freedom of the press and organization, and equal suffrage, the greater its educational influence. Long before the instruments of democracy become the means for acquisition of power by the proletariat, they constitute the means of its education in the task not only of how to attain power but also of how to keep it and apply it successfully in the building of a higher social order.

As Marx and Engels saw it, the task of Socialists was not to bring about the immediate solution of “the social question» and the realization of socialism, but, first, to support the proletariat in the class struggle, to help it understand the nature of capitalist society, its power relationships and processes of production, and promote the organization of the working class.

Proceeding from this point of view, Marx and Engels sought to bring about the union into a strong mass party of all elements participating in the class struggle for the liberation of the proletariat. Before their arrival upon the scene, each of the various socialist leaders and thinkers had put forward their own, distinct method for the solution of the social question and waged a struggle against all other socialists who would follow other methods. So it had come about that socialism had served only to divide the working class. Marx and Engels tried to unite it, not to add a Marxian sect to those already in the field.

We find emphasis of this already in the *Communist Manifesto* (1847). Speaking to their adherents, who called themselves communists, Marx and Engels said:

The communists do not constitute a separate party, distinct from other working class parties.«

They demanded only that their adherents within the working class parties strive to develop “in advance of the rest of the masses of the proletariat an understanding of the conditions, the process and the general consequences of the movement of the proletariat.«

Their actions were in line with this idea, as, for instance, in the First International, which had very few Marxists but plenty of Proudhonists and, later, also Blanquists as well as British trade unionists, who knew little of socialism.

### 3. Dictatorship in the Party

Marx and Engels understood well how to bring about a firm union between the world of socialist ideas and the labor movement. All working class parties of our time, which have arisen since the final quarter of the last century to take the place of preceding sects, rest upon this union. As working class parties they fight for the interests of the working class; as socialist parties they wage the class struggle as a means of emancipation of all the oppressed and exploited, not of the wage earners alone.

The socialist parties fight not only for shorter working hours and higher wages, unemployment insurance and shop councils, but also for the liberty, equality, fraternity of all human beings, regardless of race, religion or origin.

Such socialist parties are bringing about the realization of s Marxist ideas even when they themselves are not conscious of them. Everywhere where the capitalist mode of production exists, with few exceptions, they have been irresistibly on the march since the end of the last century. Russia, too, could not remain closed to the rise of Marxism and of a socialist, working class party founded upon its ideas. These met with even greater obstacles from the czarist regime than did the earlier socialist parties of non-Martian character. Another obstacle to Marxian ideas in Russia was her economic backwardness, which delayed considerably the development of large, capitalist mass industry and with it the growth of an industrial proletariat in the large cities. No less a barrier to the development of a party of proletarian class struggle was the absence of all democracy, which made

impossible the development of any party activity, any legal mass-organization and a free press.

Added to this was the fact that due to her backwardness Russia retained until about the end of the last century more pronounced traces of a primitive village communism than were to be found anywhere else in Europe. Due to these factors, socialist ideas in Russia continued to bear pre-Marxian characteristics for a longer period than in the West. The Russian fighters for liberty and equality inherited socialist tendencies from Western Europe. It was natural for them to see the power for a socialist regeneration of czarist Russia not in the numerically weak city proletariat but in the great masses of the peasantry. Moreover, the city workers themselves came largely from the village, the bulk of them remaining quite peasant in their thinking and feeling. The village, where it was easier to avoid the police, offered also a more advantageous field for propaganda.

The working masses in the cities and the champions of their interests among the intellectuals, namely the students, were influenced much more by the ideas of a peasant socialism than by Marxism. The development of Marxism in Russia came later than in Western Europe, and the growth of its influence upon the Russian city workers was slow and difficult.

Not until 1898 did the groups who embraced Marxian ideas become sufficiently numerous to venture upon the establishment of the Russian Social-Democratic Labor Party.

This was a thoroughly Marxian party and brought forth leaders and thinkers who have enriched mightily Marxian thought not only in Russia but throughout the world.

Nevertheless, the peculiar conditions prevailing in Russia remained unfavorable for the development of consistent Marxism. In Germany, too, it made itself felt effectively only with the rise of her heavy industry and after her political constitution had provided ample opportunity for the creation of free working class organizations, a socialist mass literature, as well as the participation of the masses in strikes and electoral battles. In Russia, even after the establishment of the Social-Democratic Labor Party, the industrial workers remained relatively small in numbers, while retaining their peasant viewpoint, without any proletarian consciousness of their own. Added to this was the fact that only a secret press and secret organizations were possible, which, naturally, could not be developed beyond painfully restricted proportions.: The conditions unfavorable to the development of Marxism remained. Even many of those who considered themselves Marxists fell victim to these conditions. They did not deny Marxism but interpreted it frequently in a rather fanatical sense. And involuntarily they injected into it in increasing measure ideas of a pre-Marxian, Blanquist or Bakuninist colors.

Outstanding among the Marxists of this character was Vladimir Ulianov, better known as Lenin. He joined the Social-Democratic Labor Party at its inception. He accepted its program, having helped formulate it. What first brought him into conflict with the consistent Marxists in the party was the question of party organization. Under the conditions prevailing in czarist Russia this organization was of necessity

a secret one. Nevertheless, the intention was to give it a form conducive to the highest possible development of the intellectual and spiritual powers of its members and the promotion of independent thinking among the greatest possible number of the workers. This could be achieved only through the closest participation of all party comrades in party work, their intimate contact with the labor movement, i.e. only through the widest possible measure of democracy within the party.

This was entirely in accord with the ideas of Marx, who at the beginning of the movement regarded democracy less as a means of gaining political power and more as an instrument of education of the masses.

The Communist League, which Marx and Engels joined in 1847, was obliged to be a secret organization under the political circumstances then prevailing on the continent of Europe. And such, indeed, it was at the beginning. Such an organization presupposes the vesting of its leadership with dictatorial power. Our teachers declined to accept this, however. They joined the league only after it had ceased to be a conspiracy, although it had been obliged to remain a secret organization, due to the absence of all freedom of organization. Engels reports about it as follows:

The organization (of the Communist League) itself was entirely democratic, with elected officials, always subject to removal, thereby putting an end to all urge for conspiracy, which requires dictatorship. (*Introduction to K. Marx. The Cologne Trial, Zurich 1885, p.10*).

The First International of 1864, like its predecessor, the Communist League, was also compelled to maintain secret organizations in some countries. Nevertheless, Marx and



Engels fought repeatedly against transforming the International into a conspiratory organization, as Mazzini would have it. Marx won over Mazzini. The first International was organized not dictatorially but democratically. Marx was also opposed to the manner in which the General Workingmen's Association was organized in Germany in 1863, and in which Lassalle wielded dictatorial power. In contrast to the Lassalleans, the Eisenach group under Bebel and Liebknecht, who had Marx's support, was organized in 1869 democratically. The dictatorial form of organization very soon became obsolete. All proletarian organizations in Germany adopted the democratic form.

Nevertheless, the urge for a conspiratory organization with unlimited dictatorial power for the leader and blind obedience of the members continues to manifest itself wherever the organization must be a secret one, where the masses do not as yet possess their own movement and where the political organization is regarded not as a means of educating the proletariat to independence but as a means of obtaining political power at one stroke. Not the class struggle but the "putch«, the coup d'etat, is thus brought into the foreground of interest, and together with this a form of militarist thinking is carried into the party organization, the kind of thinking which, relies upon victory in civil war rather than upon intellectual and economic elevation of the masses. The latter are regarded as mere cannon fodder, whose utilization can be made all the easier the more obedient they are to any command, without independent thought and will of their own.

The Social-Democracy of Russia was organized democratically, in accordance with Marxian principles. But Lenin soon discovered that this was a mistake. He began to demand ever greater powers for the central organ of the party and increasingly circumscribed powers for the membership.

Axelrod, Vera Sassulitch, Potresov, Martov and, later, Plekhanov opposed him. Even Rosa Luxemburg, who was more inclined to aide with him in other matters, expressed misgivings on the score of dictatorship which Lenin sought to introduce in the party.

In his brochure *One Step Forward, Two Steps Backward* (1904), Lenin went so far as to assert:

Bureaucratism against democracy – that must be the organization principle of the revolutionary Social Democracy against the organization principle of the opportunists. (p.51)

I take the following from a criticism of Lenin by Rosa Luxemburg in *Die Neue Zeit* (XXII. 2). She declared:

The establishment of centralization in the Social-Democracy on the basis of blind obedience, to the very smallest detail, to a central authority, in all matters of party organization and activity; a central authority which does all the thinking, attends to everything and decides everything; a central authority isolating the center of the party from the surrounding revolutionary milieu – as demanded by Lenin – appears to us as an attempt to transfer mechanically the organization principle of Blanquist conspiratory workmen's circles to the Social-Democratic mass movement. (pp.488, 489).

Lenin's ideas are calculated principally to promote control of party activity and not its development, to foster the limitation rather than the growth, the strangulation rather than the solidarity and expansion of the movement. (p.492).

That was how Rosa Luxemburg characterized Leninism from its very beginning. No wonder she is today in Stalin's Index of counter-revolutionists.

The domination over the labor movement of a conspiratory organization of professional revolutionists led by a dictator, as sought by Lenin, may become an excellent instrument for seizing power over the movement. This is possible, however, only under certain conditions, among an extremely backward proletariat devoid of all sense of independence. Proletarians accustomed to think and act for themselves will not permit themselves to be so imposed upon. Among a backward proletariat it is quite possible, however, for the dictatorship of an outstanding personality to assert itself as a means of attaining personal power.

On the other hand, such dictatorship fails completely as a means of developing the power and ability of the workers for self-emancipation and self-government. Already in 1904, Rosa Luxemburg discovered that all that dictatorship in the party could accomplish was to stem and stifle the intellectual development of the workers. Yet, it is precisely in the early stages of the proletarian movement, in which alone a voluntary recognition of the dictatorship of any of its leaders is possible, that the education of the proletariat to independent thinking and action is far more important than the winning of power by the leaders.

For this reason, as early as 30 years ago, Rosa Luxemburg perceived Leninism as an element inimical to the higher development of the proletariat. Naturally, she could not then foresee all the destructive influences it carried within itself.

In the meantime, at the very beginning of Leninism, another extremely injurious element became apparent side by side with its strangulation and stifling of the movement.

Like the God of monotheists, the dictator is a very jealous god. He tolerates no other gods but himself. Those in the party who do not believe in his divine infallibility provoke his fierce hatred. Lenin demanded that the entire proletariat submit meekly to his leadership. Those in the party who were inclined to show more confidence in other leaders or to defend independently opinions of their own were regarded by Lenin as the worst possible enemies, to be fought with any and all means, not excluding the dirtiest, should such means promise even momentary success.

Hence it was impossible for Lenin, as it is impossible for anyone who would be dictator of the party, to work together with comrades who occasionally differed from him. Hence the impossibility of working at all for any length of time on a level of equality with comrades of character and independence of thought.

Whenever dictatorship assumes power in a party organism that organism is bound to deteriorate intellectually, for dictatorship either degrades the best elements, compelling them to surrender their independence, or expels them from the party.

Dictatorship in the party manifests itself in even worst manner by making it impossible for all elements willing to take part in the proletarian class struggle to form a united battle front.

Marx taught, and an abundance of bitter experience has confirmed it, that splits in its organizations constitute the worst possible obstacles of the labor movement. Only by united action and solidarity can the proletariat advance. By its very nature, however, dictatorship means split.

To be sure, this is not the only cause of splits in socialist parties. Occasionally, under special circumstances, there arise in such parties such deep differences of opinion, namely of a tactical or organizational nature, as to make a split unavoidable. This is always regarded as a great misfortune, however, and invariably it is sought to heal the breach as soon as the cause which gives rise to it is eliminated.

Dictatorship in the party, on the other hand, starts out with the idea of bringing about a split in the party. This is in the very nature of dictatorship. The dictator not only declines to combine his organization with other, independent working class organizations into a higher general organism, but he does not even think of cooperating at least occasionally with other socialist parties against the common class enemy.

Leninism had hardly begun to manifest itself in the Russian Social-Democracy when it brought about a split into Mensheviks and Bolsheviks. Because of this, our Russian sister party entered disunited into the first Russian revolution of 1901, which weakened greatly its power in that extremely important period, to the immense injury of the Russian proletariat.

Since then and until this very moment the cleavage between the two currents in Russian Marxism has not been closed, but has on the contrary become deeper and wider.

Intellectual impoverishment of its own party, obstruction of the intellectual development of the workers, their weakening by prolonged internecine conflict – that was the consequence of the Leninist party dictatorship even before the Russian Revolution of 1917.

That revolution brought with it a fundamental change in all social and political relations. How did Leninism manifest itself in the revolution?

## 4. Dictatorship in the State

The Russian Revolution of March 1917 occurred under circumstances which could not possibly have been more favorable for the socialist parties, even though not for the immediate introduction of Socialism. The czarist governmental machinery was in ruins, the obsolete nobility lay helpless while the capitalist class, its capital largely of foreign origin showed itself quite powerless. All-powerful were only the workers and intellectuals in combination with the peasantry. Among these the Socialists were in overwhelming majority – the Socialist-Revolutionists among the peasants; the Social, Democrats, Mensheviks as well as Bolsheviks, among the wage earners and intellectuals.

The Socialists dominated the state. Relatively speaking, i.e. as far as the backwardness of the state and of the working classes permitted it, they could have accomplished then a very great deal for these classes, elevate them to a very high standard and make them fit for domination over the processes of production. But only under two conditions: first, the retention of the democratic liberties won in March, 1917, in order to make possible, unimpeded, the work of enlightenment and organization of the masses and their independent participation in politics and economics: second, a coalition of all socialist parties on the basis of a common program of action and loyal cooperation in its execution.

The Socialist-Revolutionists and Mensheviks acted precisely along this line. But not the Bolsheviks. Lenin arrived in Petrograd on April 16, 1917, from Switzerland with the clearly formulated and openly expressed determination to proclaim war against the other socialist parties and to

destroy them. This determination was not merely a mood but emanated from the very nature of his idea of dictatorship in the party.

More Asiatic than European in concept, and applicable to the needs and instincts of the backward portion of the Russian proletariat, dictatorship in the party proved to be, under the quite exceptional circumstances then existing in Russia, an excellent instrument for the destruction of the democratically organized parties of the peasants and workers and the seizure of power in the state without their approval, nay, against their will – power for the dictator and not for the proletariat, to be sure.

After the complete dissolution of the czarist army and bureaucracy in the World War, the Bolshevik Party, rigidly centralized and dictatorially administered, was the organization which finally asserted its domination amidst the general disorganization of the state. All it succeeded in accomplishing, however, was to create a new army and bureaucracy, a new autocracy, which destroyed all freedom of action and thought in the state and society.

Lenin's dictatorship over the party was now extended to dictatorship over the general population of the state. This inevitably accentuated greatly the conflict between Bolshevism and the other socialist parties.

Until 1917 the Bolshevik Party regarded the dictatorship within its organization as a means of struggle for democracy in the state, and Lenin's fight for democracy in the state proceeded along the line of the other socialist parties. Like the latter, and as late as 1917, he demanded the convocation of a Constituent Assembly on the basis of universal suffrage.



Until 1917 he could fight the other socialist parties only with intellectual weapons, by means of propaganda. In this respect he differed from the other socialist parties in that he never hesitated to resort to the most unscrupulous falsehoods. A Socialist who seeks to lift the proletariat intellectually and spiritually to the high level of ability to emancipate itself must always stick to the truth in his propaganda activity. On the other hand, he who does not consider the proletariat capable of emancipating itself and regards it merely as cannon fodder with no other capacity than that of supplying blindly and obediently the necessary power to the dictator does not recoil from falsehoods if they serve to enhance the prestige of the dictator and to make all Socialists who think independently appear to be miserable scoundrels.

When the elections to the Constituent Assembly revealed that the majority had been won by the Socialists, not the Bolsheviks, Lenin decided without further ado to dissolve the Assembly, the convocation of which he had himself but recently demanded. Upon the ruins of democracy, for which he had fought until 1917, he erected his political power. Upon these ruins he set up a new militarist-bureaucratic, police machinery of state, the new autocracy. This gave him weapons against the other socialists even more potent than shameless lies. He now had in his hands all the instruments of repression which czarism had used, adding to these weapons also those instruments of oppression which the capitalist, as the owner of the means of production, was against wage slaves. Lenin now commanded all the means of production, in utilizing his state power for the erection of his state capitalism, which is best characterized as state slavery.

No form of capitalism makes the workers so absolutely dependent upon it as centralized state capitalism in a state without an effective democracy. And no political police is so powerful and omnipresent as the Tcheka or G.P.U., created by men who had spent many years in fighting the czarist police and, knowing its methods as well as its weaknesses and shortcomings, knew also how to improve upon them.

It would have been absolutely unnecessary to resort to any of these instruments of repression had Lenin agreed to form a coalition with the Mensheviks and Socialist-Revolutionists in 1917. These parties commanded the support of the overwhelming majority of the population, as the elections to the Constituent Assembly had shown. Everything of a truly progressive nature which the Bolsheviks sought to realize was also part of the program of the other socialist parties and would have been carried out by them, for the people had empowered them to do so. The confiscation of the big landed estates had also been planned by the Socialist-Revolutionists and Mensheviks – they actually put it into effect in Georgia. Abolition of illiteracy, marriage law reform, social welfare measures, children's homes, public hospitals, shop councils, unemployment insurance and laws for the protection of labor, about all of which such a big to-do is being made in Soviet Russia, have been attained to a much greater and more perfect degree in capitalist countries where the democracy of labor has won any considerable power. The socialization of heavy industry, insofar as this would have appeared economically advantageous, would likewise have been approved by the majority of the Constituent Assembly.

All the innovations in the domain of social welfare in which the Bolsheviks take so much pride and which so greatly

impress tourists would have been introduced by the majority of the Constituent Assembly, and in much better fashion than the dictatorship has been able to do, because the country's economic condition would have been immeasurably better. All the social welfare measures in force in Russia suffer from lack of resources, the haste and ill-prepared manner in which they have been introduced, as well as from the methods of brutal force used by the dictators even in instances where abstention from force would have been more advantageous. Many workers were thereby embittered against the new regime when their willing cooperation was possible and necessary.

How disgusting and unnecessary, for example, have been the forms of struggle against religion in Soviet Russia. The dictatorship does not seek to find a substitute for religion by promoting independent critical thinking and knowledge – such methods are not in the nature of dictatorship. Religious services and institutions, sacred to the devout, are subjected to the coarsest insults and humiliations. Without the slightest necessity, harmless, devout folk are embittered and made to suffer, while simultaneously the free thinkers themselves are degraded by such low forms of anti-religious propaganda.

All such difficulties of social change as arise from lack of means, undue haste, opposition of the population, would have been largely averted if these changes had been the work of the Constituent Assembly. They were accomplished directly or indirectly through the civil war, which was the inevitable consequence of Lenin's dissolution of the Constituent Assembly by the hands of his sailors in January 1918.

The majority behind the Constituent Assembly was so overwhelming that not a single one of the czarist generals dared move against it. Had any one of them ventured to do so he would have had no following. These generals were emboldened to counter-revolutionary mutiny only after Lenin had dissolved the Constituent Assembly and enabled them to put forward the pretense of seeking to restore the rights of the Constituent Assembly.

Had Lenin not dissolved the Constituent Assembly, Russia would have been spared the civil war with all its horrors, cruelties and destruction. How much richer the country would have been, how much greater the good of the social transformation! All the enormous expense of the military, bureaucratic, police apparatus, insofar as it has been devoted to purposes of repression, could have been spared. These expenditures could have been applied to productive purposes for the promotion of the general welfare.

The population should have been accorded the greatest possible measure of freedom, freedom of the press, of assembly, of organization, of self-government. Under such conditions the masses would have speedily developed economically, physically, intellectually. All this stimulation of independent thinking and mutual confidence among the workers, peasants and intellectuals would have genuinely enhanced the development of socialist production, of a nation of liberty, equality, fraternity.

This noble development was halted on the day when Lenin ordered his military bands to make an end of the Constituent Assembly.

Certainly, the fact that it proved easy to dissolve it indicates the high degree of political immaturity of the elements who dominated Petrograd at that time – quite ignorant soldiery who had but one wish, immediate peace, and who sensed that Lenin's dictatorship was the one infallible instrument to bring it about.

Not the confidence of the majority of the proletariat but the complication of the revolution by the war brought Bolshevism to power. And because it did not possess this confidence it was compelled, once in power, to maintain itself by terrorism, which it is employing to this day without the slightest prospect of its mitigation.

It is often said that terror belongs to the nature of revolution, that revolutions are not made with rose water or silk gloves, and that this has ever been so.

It is, indeed, a peculiar revolutionism which asserts that what has always been must ever be so. Moreover, it is not true that there never were revolutions without terror. The great French Revolution began in 1789, but the terror did not come until September 1792, and only as a consequence of war. Not the revolution but war brought about the terror as well as the dictatorship. Revolutions resort to terror only when they are driven to civil war.

This was absolutely unnecessary in Russia in 1917. Democracy had been achieved. The proletariat and peasantry were in power. The demands of the proletariat could have been satisfied by democratic methods, insofar as these demands were compatible with the interests of the peasantry and with the material resources available.

The rule of the overwhelming majority in the interest of the overwhelming majority does not; require the use of brutal force in a democratic state in order to assert itself.

At the election to the Constituent Assembly 36,000,000 votes were cast, of which only 4,000,000 were polled by the bourgeois parties, and 32,000,000 by the socialist parties. The Assembly was in no way threatened from the right. It was in a position to proceed undisturbed, and with full hope of success, with the task of .the regeneration of Russia and preparation for Socialism.

As the Bolsheviks saw it, it had but one great fault: they had failed to obtain a majority in it. The Bolsheviks received 9,000,000 votes while 23,000,000 were cast for the other socialist parties. This was an intolerable actuation for any brave Bolshevik. The Constituent Assembly would have carried out everything in the interests of the proletariat that was at all realizable, and in more rational, more successful manner than the Bolsheviks acting alone have been able to do. But this would have required the Bolsheviks to act merely as equals and not as a party of dictatorship issuing orders from above.

Against any such democratic procedure the Bolsheviks struggled with all their might, and they utilized a favorable situation to dissolve the Constituent Assembly. This blow they struck not against a czarist, aristocratic, bourgeois or "white guardist« counter-revolution but against the other socialist parties, who had been more successful than the Bolsheviks in the struggle for the soul of the workers and peasants.

Hence the abolition of all democratic rights of the masses, hence the terror. It was the necessary consequence of the rule of a minority over the great majority of the working people. Hence the fact that the terror has been indispensable for the Bolsheviks not only in the civil war but throughout the more than ten years since its conclusion. They resort to terror not only as a means of repelling counter-revolution but as an instrument of holding down and destroying all revolutionists among the workers and peasants who refuse to submit without protest to the whip of the new Red czar and his Communist cossacks.

While the Bolsheviks in Russia were occupied with the struggle against the white czar their leaders confined their dictatorship in their own party. Here it resulted in a split and served to stifle the intellectual development of the membership. Since their seizure of the power of government their dictatorship has become a means not of splitting but of destroying the other socialist parties in their own state. And their stifling of intellectual development is now no longer confined to their own party and the circles close to it, but extends to the entire Russian people.

Added to this, they have also crippled Russia's economic development and destroyed the brilliant opportunities which awaited her after the end of the war with the liberation of the creative powers of the people by the revolution of March 1917. In vain did the Bolsheviks try to stem the destructive process, first through the NEP, which proved to be only a passing palliative, and then through the Five-Year Plan. This, too, must fail, despite certain superficial accomplishments. Those who look beneath the surface, those who consider human beings more important than

buildings must see that the Five-Year Plan represents only a steel-and-stone economy, pursued under complete disregard of all human economy; that it seeks to set up new industrial plants by robbery and exploitation of human labor power, with the human beings sinking deeper and deeper into under-nourishment and filth as the increasing number of new factories rear their chimneys to the sky.

The Five-Year Plan was undertaken as a result of the desperate economic situation of Soviet Russia. War and civil war had undermined all industry. Added to these were the effects of the original nationalization of industrial plants in 1918, under which industry found itself in a state fluctuating between anarchy and militarization. The output of Russian industry was rapidly approaching zero.

This situation, emphasized by the Kronstadt rebellion (1921), led to the NEP (New Economic Policy), which continued until 1929, the year of the introduction of the Five Year Plan. The NEP and return to peace brought a temporary revival of economic life. Nevertheless, the Bolsheviks could not stop at the New Economic Policy.

They did not realize that intellectuals were part of the working class, that the proletariat could not emancipate itself and achieve a higher order of production without the full and willing cooperation of a sufficient number of able and well trained intellectuals. An effective propaganda for Socialism in their ranks is an essential prerequisite to the victory of Socialism.

The socialist conceptions of the Bolsheviks were so primitive and crude that they failed to realize this. They preached the gospel of the mailed fist of labor, branded the intellectuals



(insofar as they were not members of the Communist Party) as on a par with the “bourgeois« and the capitalist, and reduced them to the condition of pariahs without any rights.

But the Communists soon realized that they did not have within their own ranks an adequate supply of talent capable of directing industrial plants. Their operation had to be entrusted to “class enemies«, who from the beginning regarded the new economy as misguided and destructive, and whose opposition was accentuated by the ill treatment accorded them. Looked upon with distrust, they were subjected to constant control by utterly incapable, fanatical Communists, and made the scapegoats for every failure. Under the desperate conditions prevailing, failures continued to multiply while the managers of Soviet industry, living in an atmosphere of increasing terrorism, found themselves helpless in the hands of their Communist masters. Lack of skilled labor constituted an additional difficulty. Shortage of such labor was a feature also of czarist Russia, due to lack of proper educational facilities. The war served to reduce still more the number of skilled workers, while curtailing the training of additional forces. This shortage was further aggravated during the revolution when many skilled workers, provided they were Communists or “non-partisans«, were transferred as a matter of favoritism from the factories to government posts.

All this put industry at a great disadvantage. Worst of all, however, was the effect of the tremendous state apparatus in which the dictatorship had to set up to order to maintain itself. Nationalized industry was subjected to the domination of this machine which, under the circumstances, assumed increasingly larger proportions. The dictatorship inevitably

brought about a condition in which all organizations subordinate to it were deprived of any independence. The absence of any outlet for open criticism made it necessary to extend in ever growing measure the task of keeping watch over the state apparatus, in proportion as it grew in scope and unwieldiness.

This slow, top-heavy, artificial, bureaucratic machine vitiated the joy and efficiency of labor. As an inevitable concomitant of these conditions was the spread of corruption, which certainly did not improve matters.

The leading Bolsheviks themselves looked with dissatisfaction upon the degeneration of economic life arising from the effects of the rampant bureaucracy. Individual departments came under the criticism of the Soviet press. This was the so-called "self-criticism". But all that these outbursts of indignation against the bureaucrats accomplished was punishment of a few scapegoats and individuals guilty of particularly glaring inefficiency.

These were the reasons why Soviet industry was unable to move forward with any degree of success under the Nep although production did increase over that of 1918-21, the period of military communism.

Prices of industrial commodities rose above prewar and world-market levels. The purchasing power of the peasants declined in growing measure as a result of the state's determined efforts to keep down prices of farm products. This gave rise to a dangerous oppositionist tendency on the part of the peasants, who replied by cutting down production in the face of the disquieting growth of the population, which is proceeding at the rate of more than

3,000,000 annually. Worst of all was the fact that despite all increases in prices industry was able to meet only wages and costs of materials, without any margin to cover wear and tear of machinery, to say nothing of creating a surplus for the extension of plants and equipment commensurate with the tremendous growth in population. The production apparatus taken over by the Soviet Government from its capitalist predecessors was rapidly deteriorating. This threatened to bring industry to a complete standstill.

Under Stalin's leadership the Soviet Government thereupon decided to embark upon an attempt as bold as it was colossal of extricating itself from the swamp which threatened to engulf it. All of Russia's resources were to be mobilized and concentrated, to the neglect of all other branches of activity, upon the development of heavy industry, which was to exceed even that of the United States. In the event of success, it was contemplated to develop similarly the lighter industries, agriculture and, finally, the cultural domain. Heavy industry was to be developed as quickly as possible, the fear being that even as powerful a national organism as the Russian people could not very long withstand the enormous strain to which it was being subjected by the task set before it. Heavy industry was to be completely reorganized within five years, the promise being, however, that the beneficent effects of new construction were to manifest themselves in an improvement of living conditions within two to three years.

That was the Five-Year Plan. It cannot be denied that much has been accomplished under the plan. To be sure, not nearly as much as is being claimed so boastfully, and at much greater cost than the original estimates. The

productivity of the new plants also still remains to be demonstrated. Nevertheless, it must be admitted that several hundred new factories and plants have been built and equipped with the most modern machinery. These are the plants exhibited to tourists and which arouse their admiration, as they do that of capitalists invited by the Soviet Government with the idea in mind of convincing them that Russia is a good credit risk. The capitalists are interested only in the material means of production, which they find impressive.

Naturally, we Socialists look at the problem quite differently. We differ from the capitalists not only in that we regard production as intended for man rather than regarding man as intended for production, but also in that we consider man as the most important and decisive factor in production.

An army may be perfectly equipped, but if its troops are undisciplined, discontented, indolent, cowardly and officered by fools it will be defeated by a weaker and poorly equipped army of soldiers who are enthusiastic, brave, permeated by strict but willing discipline, bent on bringing into play all their energies, and led by intelligent officers.

The same holds true in production. A working class living under conditions tending to promote intelligence and the joy of labor, a working class well nourished and rested, educated and inspired by initiative, can produce double and triple the quantity with the same equipment that ignorant, discontented, overworked, half-hungry, uneducated workers, deprived of all opportunity for freedom of thought, can turn out. The difference will be even more accentuated if on one side we have a determined, capable, free leadership,

and on the other a harassed, ignorant leadership, encumbered at every step

Capitalists know this as well as Socialists, and in their practice they keep this in mind at least as regards the managers of industry, even though they may neglect the great mass of workers. In practice, they continue to be governed by the age-long principle that industry fares best the more the workers are exploited. And if despite this attitude capitalist industry has achieved great progress, it has been due primarily to the fact that the industrial proletariat of capitalist countries has managed to improve greatly its working and living conditions by means of stubborn resistance.

In Russia, too, our main interest is not in new plants and machinery but in the human beings involved. On this point, however, we maintain that there has not been the slightest improvement. All the causes which had contributed to the failure of industry under the NEP despite the temporary improvement, remain unaltered: lack of skilled labor, the outlawry of plant managers, and particularly the crippling of production by the monstrous, bureaucratic machine, which is simultaneously the instrument of the governing apparatus of the dictatorship and the administrative apparatus of production.

To the old misery which the Five-Year Plan inherited and perpetuated has been added a great deal of new. This was inevitable. The execution of the plan required immense capital. Where was this to be obtained? Capitalist industry creates tremendous surplus values which permit the capitalists not only to live and to maintain expensive armies

and navies, but to accumulate also immense capital reserves. Soviet industry has barely managed to pay wages and costs of materials. The costs of the army, the police, the bureaucracy, the state press, the Communist Party must be met for the most part by exploitation of the peasantry. Under these circumstances, how were the enormous resources necessary for the realization of the Five-Year Plan to be obtained? Through loans from capitalist countries of the “decayed West«? These, to be sure, the Bolsheviki tried hard to obtain, but the credits received, through maneuvers of doubtful moral character, were very far from sufficient. Only from Russia herself could the great bulk of the capital necessary for the Five-Year Plan be sought, for the machinery required and supplied by foreign capitalists had to be paid for.

The problem, could, therefore, be solved only by depriving the Russian population, which contains virtually no capitalists but only wage earners, peasants and intellectuals, of the product of its labor to the extent which would barely keep it from revolting or dying of hunger in the streets. Everything that can possibly be squeezed out of the people is sold in the world market, at any price. The proceeds are devoted to purchasing machinery and equipment from capitalists abroad.

Remarkable, indeed, are the patience and endurance of the Russian people in the face of this situation. In this respect, the Five-Year Plan has been successful beyond all expectations. If Upton Sinclair and others are inclined to find satisfaction in this they are welcome to do so. The Russian people, however, are being profoundly injured by such policies, both morally and economically. Now that the

first Five-Year Plan is drawing to a close, Bolsheviks and their apologists calmly inform us that it will require decades of the greatest sacrifices and privations to achieve the aim which the Stalin regime has set for itself; decades of overwork and undernourishment, ugly living conditions, and renunciation of all genuine cultural development, of every vestige of free and truly creative activity. Already the effects of these degrading conditions are manifesting themselves in increasing alcoholism, brutality, indifference to human suffering and despair. And yet, in the face of all this, we are told that the Russian people are being lifted to higher forms of life, to loftier moral and intellectual levels. There are persons so naive as to believe that the rising generation of the Russian people is being permeated with enthusiastic faith in the ideal of socialist freedom and equality. It is quite true that the tyrannical Communist regime is assiduously cultivating talk of this kind in the schools and encouraging its parrot-like repetition. In the press and at public meetings Communists continue to prattle in similar vein. They ridicule democracy, freedom and equality. They demand freedom only for themselves, as well as special political privileges. In practice the dictatorship is the most bitter caricature of freedom and equality. How can any situation of this sort possibly inspire the new generation, living under the conditions created by the dictatorship, with faith in these ideals?

There are some who admitting the economic weaknesses of the Soviet regime continue to have faith in its aims and possibilities. But are not these economic weaknesses of the Soviet regime themselves due to the fact that the social transformation possible under the historical and structural conditions prevailing in the Soviet Union cannot by the very

nature of things be a socialist one? By its very nature, the Soviet regime cannot create anything beyond a purely governmental economy with an enormously unproductive bureaucracy. Is this not the kind of economy the socialist character of which has always been denied by Socialists?

The highly rationalized technology of some Soviet industrial plants which, like the rest of Soviet economy, are woefully unproductive when looked upon from any true economic point of view, is but a drop in the bucket as viewed from the standpoint of the interests of the national welfare. Still, the Bolsheviks continue to speak glibly of the necessity of “greatest sacrifices« in the present as the price of “future welfare«.

Great sacrifices cannot be waived aside quite so easily. Who will guarantee that “the future welfare« under the dictatorship will be anything more than a Fata Morgana?

This dictatorship is pictured by some as the dictatorship of a minority animated by faith, enthusiasm and readiness for the highest self sacrifice in behalf of a great human ideal, and seeking to impose that ideal upon the great majority of 150,000,000 people.

I see the present generation of Communists, i.e. not those in the opposition but those in power, in quite different light. A few among them may still be regarded as idealists, but many of them have succumbed to the inevitable consequences nurtured by the dictatorship. These are the consequences of every despotism, which inevitably cultivates and encourages a conscienceless element eager to adapt itself to the needs of the powers that be, spies, stool pigeons, informers, careerists.



How can a ruling caste among whom such elements dominate in increasing measure the despotism from which they sprang, while ejecting progressively the influence of decent comrades, be animated by any readiness for high self-sacrifice in the name of a great human ideal? No doubt, they speak much of sacrifice, as do many German Nationalists: they demand immeasurable sacrifices – by others, but never by themselves. They themselves are quite comfortable as long as the Communist Party remains in power.

The Russian Communist Party which is seeking to impose this road to “future welfare« upon 150,000,000 human beings embraces some 2,000,000 members. How many among them are spies, informers, careerists?

Marxism has always rejected the idea that a minority can ever impose a genuine socialist order upon the masses. The *Communist Manifesto* clearly stated:

All previous (liberation) movements were movements of minorities in the interest of minorities. The proletarian movement is the independent movement of the overwhelming majority in the interest of the overwhelming majority.

Marx and Engels erred insofar as they assumed that the proletariat of their time had already constituted a majority. But they clung to the belief that Socialism could be brought about only by an independent movement of the overwhelming majority. It is the task of the Socialists to lead in this movement. And when they are confronted with the apathy of the majority they must seek to enlighten it and to win it. Under no circumstances must they seek to dominate it by violence and compulsion. Only when minorities of exploiters try to hold down by force majorities of exploited

do we consider the use of force against such minorities justified. But never against the majority of the population, however reactionary it may be.

Under czarism the proletariat of Russia had to contend against very limited opportunities for political and social development. Nevertheless, a large portion of the working class managed to utilize whatever opportunities were available to the best possible advantage and to enlarge these opportunities in constant, stubborn struggle against the oppressors. With the breakdown of absolutism in 1917, the expectation was justified that under the new democratic conditions the elite of the Russian workers would continue to make rapid progress and carry the masses with them.

Then came the Bolsheviks and destroyed all the seeds that had sprouted so hopefully by imposing upon the people a regime that is much more oppressive. The old revolutionary idealists, insofar as they failed to become Communists, were killed, driven into exile or silenced in prison cells. Of former Bolsheviks themselves many have disappeared and died; many have submitted in hopeless resignation or have been corrupted by posts of power. Of the new generation now rising an ever decreasing minority belongs to the Communist Party. The greater portion of this minority has fallen victim to those perversions of character which the possession of limitless power inevitably cultivates – among Communists as well as among princes. The overwhelming majority of the people, however, has been shorn of all human dignity, all capacity for action, and reduced to the level of starved and beaten beasts of burden. The fact that they appear to submit and to bear silently, without protest, but with aching heart, all the heavy sacrifices and privations

heaped upon them by their new masters is not to be regarded as in the nature of the heroic but as extremely depressing.

The Russian proletariat has declined progressively with every year from the height to which it had attained in 1918. It is not approaching closer to Socialism but is moving constantly away from it, and is losing in ever increasing measure the capacity for self-determination in the labor process. State slavery does not become Socialism merely because the slave drivers call themselves Communists.

We hope we have demonstrated that the methods of dictatorship in general and of the Five-Year Plan in particular do not constitute the road to Socialism, but rather the road away from it.

Certainly, it is our aim to deprive the capitalists of the means of production. But that in itself is not enough. We must also determine who is to control these means of production. When another minority takes the place of the capitalists and controls the means of production, independently of the people and frequently against their will, the change of property rights thus accomplished signifies least of all Socialism. There are forms of Oriental despotism in which the master of the state wields also mastery over the country's instruments of production. [1]

In comparison with this form of state economy, the capitalist system of production is much less oppressive, and resistance to it much more promising of results. In Russia it is the government, not the people, who controls the means of production. The government is thus the master of the people.

What we see in Russia is, therefore, not Socialism but its antithesis. It can become Socialism only when the people expropriate the expropriators now in power, to use a Marxian expression. Thus, the socialist masses of Russia find themselves with respect to the problem of control of the means of production in the same situation which confronts the workers in capitalist countries. The fact that in Russia the expropriating expropriators call themselves Communists makes not the slightest difference. The difference between Soviet Russia and Western Europe is that the workers in the developed capitalist countries are already strong enough to have limited to some extent the dictatorship of capital and to have altered the power relationships to a point which makes the socialization of important economic monopolies a matter of the political victory of the workers in the near future, whereas in Russia the means of production are highly concentrated in one hand and their ownership protected by an absolutist state machine, while the workers, being divided, without organization of their own, without a free press or free elections, are completely shorn of any means of resistance.

Similar to the monopoly of property ownership in Russia is the monopoly of education. It is true that we Socialists seek to deprive the possessing classes of their monopoly of education. But only by making available to all the treasures of modern science and culture. This is not, however, the object of the Communists. In Russia they have established a new monopoly of education. This is one the instruments whereby the dictatorship seeks to buttress its power.

Although the work of the school teacher is difficult enough and the schools do not belong to the domain of industry,

they are nevertheless, like everything under the Five-Year Plan, sinking ever deeper into filth, due to their miserable construction, lack of educational facilities, their hungry pupils and teachers.

The higher schools remain likewise inadequate. Admittance to these schools is becoming ever more the privilege of Communists and their favorites. The children of the erstwhile bourgeoisie – there are no capitalists in Russia, only intellectuals – are directly excluded from the higher schools. The number of applicants to these schools is usually five or six, times greater than the available facilities.

Still worse is the complete destruction of intellectual freedom, which strikes even the mass of Communists. True education, genuine participation in the knowledge of our time, is impossible without intellectual liberty.

The situation has been characterized by Otto Bauer as follows:

Russia is a state of unlimited absolutism, much more so than it was under the czar. The government is all-powerful. No meetings are permitted except those agreeable to the government, no newspapers except those of the government party. Members of all other organizations are at best jailed, at worst shot. The control of the police over the population has attained a measure which can hardly be imagined in free countries. It is a regime of absolutist dictatorship, of a power quite without any limitation, which holds every human being completely in its hand but is itself subject to no control.

Such a system of dictatorship destroys all intellectual liberty. In Russia there is only one form of science – that officially authorized by the government. He who entertains scientific views other than those prescribed officially is thrown out to starve and must, indeed, consider himself fortunate if he is not exiled or shot.

Nowhere are the mass of the people and the mass of Communists themselves deprived of opportunity to learn what is taking place in the world of science, to explore the truth and to know it, as in Soviet Russia. In capitalist countries the masses of the people have a hundred times more opportunity for real knowledge, not mere drilled and regimented Communist talk; a hundred times more opportunity to break the educational monopoly of the ruling class than in the land of so-called "proletarian« dictatorship. Only Fascist Italy may be compared with Russia in this respect. It is precisely in respect to education that the Russian people have yet to win what the people of the West have long been enjoying. This cannot be attained as long as the dictatorship continues to rule. On this point, too, the road of Bolshevism leads not to Socialism but away from it.

But are not the Russians superior to us at least in the domain of planned economy? Are we not at the present moment experiencing in capitalist countries the calamitous consequences of capitalist anarchy? Is not the planned economy of the Soviet Union to be hailed in favorable contrast to this situation?

One might be inclined to think so. A planned economy should certainly be possible where the general apparatus of production is concentrated in one hand. Nor does such an economy require the socialist self-determination of the people in the labor process. Even the state economy of a despot may be planfully regulated. All human social life which does not spring from mere natural causes requires planned regulation if it is to proceed to some purpose. Any industrial plant is evidence of that.

The Bolsheviks too, tried to introduce such regulation from the beginning of their rule. But they met with no success, and could not have been successful because of the peculiar conditions under which they came into power.

When the Socialists come into power in the democratic countries they will have already secured the support of the majority of the population for their program. We will be able to support ourselves upon great mass organizations of trained comrades, political, trade union, cooperative and educational. Our leaders will have already gained wide experience in the organization and administration of developed social enterprises, as well as much practical and not merely theoretical knowledge in economic affairs as representatives in communal legislatures and administrative organs, as state officials and ministers and, on the other hand, as leaders of workers' cooperatives and labor banks, as managers of great newspapers, etc. We are acquiring also the ever increasing support of intellectuals now engaged in managing private enterprises.

All this will make it possible for our party to introduce planning and system in production when we acquire power and will enable us to master the production process. Its economic knowledge and sense of responsibility with regard to the masses will keep our party from striking out upon adventurist policies and will guard it at every step against ill conceived actions.

The conditions pre-requisite for any such development were non-existent in Russia when the Bolsheviks seized power. Czarism had suppressed every opportunity for the participation of all classes in government, and subjected the

regulation of all social life to rigidly centralized, bureaucratic, police and military institutions.

When these institutions collapsed in 1917, in the midst of military defeat, all classes of the population found themselves free but without any experience and knowledge in self-government. Under a democratic regime they undoubtedly would have acquired quickly the necessary experience and ability. At first the democracy showed itself quite helpless, however. The Bolsheviks utilized this period to destroy democracy and to erect a new despotism by means of a rigidly centralized conspiratory organization, with the support of a group of workers, soldiers and sailors in Petrograd. Bolshevism obtained the support of these elements by making unmeasured promises, prompted to a large extent by demagoguery but certainly also by underestimation of the difficulties of the task.

No less than the masses were the leaders unable to develop under czarist conditions the necessary ability without which victory over capitalism is impossible. The Bolsheviks were well schooled in fighting the police and in winning the plaudits of poor, ignorant devils. But they lacked any knowledge and experience in the administration of governmental and economic institutions. They had studied Marx theoretically, but in a talmudistic sense, for they lacked any opportunity to study more intimately the economic phenomena with which Marx dealt.

With quite inadequate human material, themselves entirely unprepared, the Bolsheviks ventured to turn topsy-turvy a country of 150,000,000 inhabitants and to establish in Russia an order of production the pre-requisites for which



were absent, nay, for which there were no models even in the much higher developed West.

Even the greatest of geniuses would have found this too large a task. Marx and Engels themselves would have failed in any such undertaking. But they would have most certainly realized the difficulties beforehand and would have refrained altogether from venturing upon any such undertaking under the given conditions. Visionaries like Upton Sinclair, Shaw, Barbusse and others may be impressed by the daring of the Bolsheviks, but this daring emanates from complete ignorance.

The Bolsheviks were forced to the attempt to create something resembling a planned economy. Planned economy presupposes, however, something more than the drawing up of a plan – nothing is easier. It presupposes also its systematic and consistent execution. Only when this is attained can we speak of planned economy. This has never been achieved in Soviet Russia, however, and could not have been achieved, for the conditions pre-requisite to the success of any plan were non-existent. Failure was all the more certain because each succeeding plan was embarked upon in haste and without preparation. As soon as one plan would be put into operation its shortcomings would become apparent and it was found necessary to change it and, finally, to abandon it. Naturally, the decision to cast it overboard would be delayed as long as possible, as long as there appeared to be any prospect of making any progress along the particular road in question. It would be abandoned only when it was no longer possible to cling to it. Thereupon, the Bolsheviks would rush into another plan

This constant change of plane in Soviet Russia is, therefore, no mere accident. It is the inevitable consequence of the original sin of Bolshevism, which imagined that it could regenerate the world by means of a coup d'état carried out with the assistance of a few thousand soldiers and sailors.

What we see in Russia is not planned economy but an economy of plans, an unbroken succession of plans, which characterizes Bolshevism from its very beginning. These projects are frequently colossal, but each is only begun, none is carried calmly to a conclusion, being constantly modified, abridged, altered, until it is found inadequate and "improved" by a new one, or abandoned. What we find in Soviet Russia is *ordre, contre-ordre, désordre*, or arrangement, rearrangement, disarrangement.

Some speak of the heroic, colossal experiment in Soviet Russia. We have already touched upon its so-called heroic aspect. Anything affecting the lives of 150,000,000 people, be it a social experiment or a world war, may be characterized as colossal. The stupidity and crimes of the leaders of the state likewise assume colossal proportions under such circumstances. It is quite proper to characterize Soviet economy as an experiment, but it is the opposite of planned economy. Due to the lack of proper pre-requisites and preparation the Bolsheviks are unable to emerge from the stage of experimentation.

Above all, does their neglect of the human element, which is inextricably bound with the dictatorship, command the uncompromising hostility of all democratic Socialists against any dictatorial regime, even though it may have originated with a proletarian party.

Socialist reason is turned to nonsense, socialist welfare becomes torture when there is no free, well-trained proletariat to promote the work of social reconstruction in a democratic environment, and when, instead, it is attempted to perform the task by dictatorial methods through the instrumentality of a small clique of dictators operating among a mass of ignorant workers deprived of all rights and opportunities for self-government.

## Note

1. Of Mehemet Ali, Viceroy of Egypt (1797-1819), it is reported: "Mehemet Ali made himself the sole land owner and agriculturist as well as the sole industrialist of his realm. The cotton and silk produced in the land were turned into manufactures by the fellah slaves in the factories of the viceroy. Only from these factories were the inhabitants permitted to draw their necessities«. (Flathe: **The Period of Revolution and Restoration**, p.376).

## 5. Dictatorship in the International

We have seen how the idea of dictatorship affects the inner life of a socialist party and the influences wrought when the dictatorial party seizes power in the state. There remains now the question of how dictatorship affects the class struggle through its efforts to dominate the International.

Before the war Lenin did not find in the International the favorable conditions for the promotion of his party dictatorship which he found in Russia. To avoid being isolated he was compelled to accept democracy in the International, not only platonically but in fact. However distasteful he found some decisions of the congresses of the International, he confined himself to criticism, which was his right, but did not venture to defy them.

This situation changed after the World War had temporarily halted the functioning of the International. In 1915 a group representing some elements of the International met in Zimmerwald, Switzerland. These were not entirely agreed in their opinions, however. Some wanted to revive the old International, while others proposed the creation of a new, third International, from which all socialist parties which did not accept the demands of the founders of the new International were to be excluded. The Bolsheviks, commanded by Lenin, were to form the nucleus of the new International. From the outset, therefore, their object was not to rebuild but to split the International.

The war had hardly come to an end when they undertook to form the new, third International, in opposition to the old

one, which in the meanwhile (1919) had again begun to function. Contrary to the democratic structure of the First and Second Internationals, the third International was rigidly dictatorial. It established its permanent seat in Moscow and became merely the tool of the Russian government, which thus obtained a large number of agents abroad, some of them sincere and enthusiastic supporters and others well paid agents, but all of them blind instruments of the Moscow centre, without any will of their own.

The times seemed to favor the Soviet rulers. They expected a world revolution which they, the world's most successful revolutionists, would lead. The dictatorship over Russia was to be extended to a world dictatorship.

To emphasize the fact that they were no longer with the Socialists, as they had been for twenty years, they called themselves Communists after the coup d'état of 1917. But the calculations upon which they based their plans for world domination proved erroneous. Their dictatorship fitted the peculiar conditions then prevailing in Russia but was abhorrent to the peoples of Western civilization. Moreover, even in Russia the Communist dictatorship could assert itself only because of the abnormal conditions which ensued upon the military collapse of 1917.

Only those who never understood the nature of the modern state could have expected a revolution in every belligerent country at the end of the war. Revolutions occurred only in the defeated military monarchies. But in these, too, the Communists failed to win. No highly developed proletariat

will accept dictatorship, however proletarian its colors, as an instrument of emancipation.

The idea of a Communist world revolution met with a quite different fate than the Communist dictatorship in Russia. The latter was victorious and has been able to maintain itself unbroken to this date. The former suffered complete failure. But the efforts to put the idea of a Communist world revolution into effect did not pass without trace.

The socialist observer outside who failed to look beneath the surface was impressed by the spectacle of the Soviet republic. Such an observer did not understand that everything that was truly progressive in the new state was merely the execution of that which the other socialist parties of Russia had already pioneered and prepared. All this they would have carried out through the Constituent Assembly with its overwhelming socialist majority, under much more favorable conditions, with the enthusiastic participation of the population, and in a manner much more rational than the Bolsheviki have been able to do in the midst of civil war, which they themselves provoked, with its consequent enormous destruction of productive forces and extensive paralysis of the activity of the people.

The superficial socialist observer, his wish being father to his thought, failed likewise to understand that under democratic forms the revolution would have led to a speedy rise of the intellectual and economic powers of the people, whereas under the dictatorship even the hopeful beginnings for the development of the masses laid down in decades of struggle under czarism were shattered.

What impressed the superficial observer was the fact that for the first time in history a socialist party had come into power in a state, the largest in Europe.

For this reason there was at first wide sympathy for Communist Russia in the circles of Western European Socialism. Bolshevism had become strong through dictatorship in the party. It had succeeded in achieving dictatorship in the state. Now it would be satisfied with nothing less than dictatorship over the world proletariat. All those outside of Russia who would not bow to such dictatorship were denounced as enemies, even enough they may have looked upon the Communist police dictatorship as quite all right for the Russian proletariat. This failed to satisfy the Moscow dictators. They called upon all Socialists to recognize the wisdom and desirability of this dictatorship for the entire world.

Many refused to go along with Bolshevism to any such point. The Bolsheviks insisted, however, that it was the duty of every proletarian, and particularly of every Marxist, to submit to their dictatorship. Those who declined to do so were branded as class enemies, counter-revolutionists, miserable traitors, more dangerous and corrupting than direct class enemies. The Bolsheviks look upon the bourgeois parties only as enemies with whom it is possible to negotiate under certain conditions and to conclude an armistice. On the other, hand, they regard the Socialists as cowardly deserters or rascally mutineers, fit to be hanged.

In this manner the Communists succeeded in weakening very materially the forces of the proletariat in all countries, at a time when the old regimes had collapsed in many states, although no world revolution was to be expected, and when the proletariat throughout Europe had attained to a position of higher significance.

By considering their dictatorship more important than the unity of the proletariat the Communists split the Socialist parties outside of Russia after the war as they had split the socialist parties inside Russia before the war. They aggravated this division of the proletarian forces by extending the schism into the ranks of the trade unions.

The Communist parties which arose outside of Russia as a result of this policy were forbidden to have any views of their own but were obliged to follow blindly the orders of the center in Moscow. This center was always very badly informed as to conditions abroad, its mercenary tools and informers reporting the situation not as it really was but as the dictator in Russia wished it to be. Every despot in history was always thus misled by his servile tools.

As a consequence, the Communists abroad were frequently drawn into senseless adventures which brought them severe and often annihilating defeats and which, in turn, were very detrimental in their prolonged repercussions upon the proletariat of the countries in question.

The ultimate expression of this criminal policy was the fact that whenever a socialist party found itself engaged in a bitter struggle with the bourgeois enemy, the Communists not only failed to support the Socialists but stabbed them in the back, thus giving aid and comfort to the reaction.

Weakening of the forces of the proletariat and strengthening of the enemy was the consequence of the policy of the Communist International. This was neither mere accident nor occasional mistake but the inevitable result of the policy of dictatorship in the party, in the state, in the International begun by Lenin three decades ago, and which had become the foundation stone of his sect.

Not theoretical differences of opinion and hair splittings but the realities of dictatorship with its inescapable consequences



constitute the obstacle which render impossible any cooperation between Communists and Socialists. Trotsky who now speaks of the necessity of such cooperation against Hitlerism would not urge it if he did not regard it, as he frankly does, as a convenient Communist maneuver to destroy the Socialists. He would not even mention the idea of such cooperation if he himself were still in power as the dictator.

The Communists expect to bring about a "united front« of the proletariat, so essential at this moment, in quite different manner. They point to the fact that the Communist vote in Germany has been growing steadily for some time. It cannot be denied that for the time being they have been increasing their vote at each succeeding election, partly at the expense of the Socialists. But a still greater increase in votes, including working class votes, has been gained by the Fascists. The gains of both Communists and Fascists are to be attributed to the same source, the growing misery of the proletariat. These gains are evidence not of the merits of Fascist and Communist theory and practice but of the growing spread of unemployment in Germany. They prove how widespread is the despair in the ranks of the workers, how the crisis has killed all self confidence in many proletarians, how it has atrophied their capacity to appraise calmly the realities of the situation and stimulated powerfully the cry for miracles and miracle men.

Were the entire German working class to succumb to the enervating and intellectually destructive influence of the crisis there would be no prospect for the Socialists except destruction. But the Communists are mistaken in their belief that this would make it possible for them to lead the proletariat to victory. Such a situation would leave the proletariat divided between the Communists and the Fascists, to be used by unscrupulous and ignorant dictators

like Max Hoelz and Hitler as cannon fodder, stripped of all independence and deprived of any will of its own.

Fortunately for the German proletariat, the dream of the Communists will not come true. For decades the Socialists of Germany have been instilling so much knowledge, power, confidence, solidarity and devotion to their party in the German workers that not even the destructive and bewildering effects of the World War, the peace, and the world crisis have shaken the foundations of the Socialist Party and of the organizations supporting it, notably the trade unions.

For the moment the Socialist Party is at a standstill. But it is not retreating. It stands firm as a rock against which the waves of Fascism and Communism beat in vain. Nevertheless the Fascists will derive advantage from the crisis as long as it continues. This makes it all the more necessary for Socialists to exert all their energies to save the party Proletariat and the whole of mankind from the shameful destruction with which they are being threatened by the dictators of the right and on the left.

For a Socialist who understands the nature of his party there can be no compromise with dictatorship, because dictatorship demands the constant and complete submission of the human being to its commands without the slightest hesitation and questioning. The submission dictatorship demands is the submission of a corpse. It is the most extreme form of militarization of the state.