

Albert Einstein, expressed the best that the physical scientists have to say on atomic power and the future. In a long article, appearing in a recent issue of the *New York Times Magazine*, Dr. Einstein wrote eight words, and only eight words, that made sense to the social scientist. Those words were: "Today we must abandon competition and secure co-operation." This phrase would seem to have been determined for Einstein by the trend of State controls to an all-over Receivership of the State on behalf of the property owners of the capitalist class—a co-operation of capitalist forces against the working class.—Editor S.S.R.] The many, many words that surrounded this statement, and that purported to show how co-operation could be secured, echoed—in substance—the similar words of other socially minded physicists, chemists and mathematicians who have been rushing into print with "solutions" to the newly dramatized social problem.

"Future thinking must prevent wars." "Our defence is in law and order." "... as Mr. Baruch wisely said, it is a problem not of physics, but of ethics." "... it is easier to denature plutonium than it is to denature the evil spirit of man." "If Germany had not won a victory over France in 1879, what tragedy for the human race might have been averted!" "Ignoring the realities of faith, good-will and honesty in seeking a solution, we place too much faith in legalisms, treaties and mechanisms." "The real problem is in the hearts of men." "We will not change the hearts of other men by mechanisms but by changing our hearts and speaking bravely."

#### *Sloppy Social Thinking Caused by Failure to Admit Class Issues*

These extracts from Dr. Einstein's article give the "substance" of his view of the social problem and its "solution." True, he did touch upon United Nations endeavors, and suggested greater efforts away "from nationalism toward a supranationalism." But he failed utterly to recognize the capitalist (private and State) factors that make the U.N. what it is and that promote chauvinism and national rivalries. His avoidance of the capitalist factors and of the Socialist solution, and his concern with "ethics," "hearts," etc., that are but effects of the capitalist cause, indicate a frustration as complete as that of persons who resort to religious mysticism as balm for nerves shattered by the effects of class-ruled society.

We are not "picking on" Dr. Einstein. His co-workers in the physical sciences who possess social consciences are equally frustrated. They lack the knowledge of social science necessary to an understanding of society and its problems.

#### *Physical Scientists Don't Always Think Scientifically*

As we stated before, the theory that scientists from the physical fields can solve social problems is plausible, but not necessarily true.

No matter how great their genius, physical scientists are subject to the same limitations as "ordinary mortals" in subjects outside of their particular fields. An Einstein, entering the field of social science, is as lost as any other

man who touches a subject in which he has no basic knowledge and training. Physical scientists are as confused as men of other professions and trades in political and social thinking. Some are conservatives, others are liberals, still others think they are Socialists. Some are Fascists, others accept the limited political democracy of capitalism as the "highest" ideal, still others are as apolitical as the disillusioned, and unenlightened, worker who is "against politics" while he lends tacit support to the politicians in charge of the operations of the capitalist State.

#### *Examples of "Scientific" Confusion*

Examples may be cited on the "outside thinking" of scientists. Sir Oliver Lodge, the physicist, was a passionate believer in spiritualism. Sir James Jeans, the astro-physicist, is a mystic in his social thinking. Max Planck, the inventor of the quantum theory, though now in the process of "rehabilitation," was a Fascist. Robert Millikan and Arthur Compton, the physicists, and present heads of capitalist schools, are as Babbitt-like as Nicholas Murray Butler in their defences of capitalism as it is. Einstein and other well-known scientists claim, or have claimed, to be Socialists. Harold Urey, discoverer of "heavy water," and one of the major workers on atomic fission, once followed the Stalinist party line, and still considers himself an advanced liberal. And, to mention but one more of the modern scientists, J. B. S. Haldane is an active Stalinist—and as naive in his blind acceptance of reform as he is realistic in physiology and engineering. [Actually he is a realistic Stalinist supporter of State capitalism.—Editor S.S.R.D.]

These modern examples can be matched from the past. The greatest of all scientists in theoretical and applied physics and in pure and applied mathematics, Sir Isaac Newton, was not above playing cheap politics to gain office, and probably spent more time tracing biblical "chronology" and in vain theological research than he did in the field in which he towered. Sir John Napier, inventor of logarithms, had as his real passion the discovery of the "proof" that the Roman Catholic Church was the "scarlet woman."

[See further reference to Prof. Oliphant and atomic energy under COMMENT in No. 28 *Southern Socialist International Digest*.]

#### *THE SHEPHERD'S COUNSEL TO HIS SHEEP*

The *New York Herald Tribune* reports from Rome, November 15, that the Pope said:—

"... the courageous employment of one's own or borrowed capital are bases for the simple, hard-working, thrifty and pious lives that have long characterized good farmers."

Simple, hard-working, thrifty and pious lives for farmers and workers? Why not for priests and Pope?

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# Review

REVIEW BY PAUL MATTICK

## STALIN, TROTSKY AND LENIN

The alleged purpose of Trotsky's biography of Stalin\* is to show "how a personality of this sort was formed, and how it came to power by usurpation of the right to such an exceptional role (XI).\*\*\* The real purpose of the book, however, is to show why Trotsky lost the power position he temporarily occupied and why his rather than Stalin's name should follow Lenin's. Prior to Lenin's death it had always been "Lenin and Trotsky"; Stalin's name had invariably been near or at the end of any list of prominent Bolsheviks. On one occasion Lenin even suggested that he put his own signature second to Trotsky's. In brief, the book helps to explain why Trotsky was of the opinion "that he was the natural successor to Lenin," and in effect is a biography of both Stalin and Trotsky.

Because of the "gigantic factory of lies which was organized by the Kremlin," "little is known of the character-forming early life of Stalin. But the falsifiers did not succeed completely. The basic warp of his narrative, Trotsky points out, "is made up of documents, memoirs, and other objective sources." He has not, he says, "overlooked a single fact, document, or bit of testimony redounding to the benefit of Stalin (XII)." He admits, of course, that some of his "objective sources" are not really objective, but he increases their objectivity by interpolating "one or another episode from his personal reminiscences." The "memoirs," on which he relies, are "undoubtedly prejudiced," as they are written by Mensheviks and other "enemies of the revolution." But Trotsky thinks he knows "how to find the kernel of truth" in these sources. What this kernel is may be seen from the following:

Out of Trotsky's book, Stalin emerges as a man in whose "spiritual life, the personal, practical aim always stood above the theoretical truth, and the will played an immeasurably greater part than the intellect (19)." The main-spring of his personality is "envy of all who are more gifted, more powerful, rank higher than he (336)." He measures "every situation, every political circumstance, every combination of people by one criterion—usefulness to himself, to his struggle for power, to his relentless itch for domination over others (386)."

By his "very nature," Trotsky relates, Stalin "had always been a person of little culture, an opportunist and double-dealer." He is lazy, crude, sly, cruel.

\**Stalin*: An appraisal of the man and his influence. Edited and translated from the Russian by Charles Malamuth. Harper and Brothers, New York, 1946. (516 pp.; \$5.00)—The first seven chapters and the appendix, that is, the bulk of the book, Trotsky wrote and revised himself. The last four chapters, consisting of notes, excerpts, documents, and other raw materials, have been edited.

\*\*The numbers in parentheses refer to pages in Trotsky's book.

crude, malevolent, sullen, sadistic, revengeful; a "sluggish thinker," "undeniably vulgar," with a "partiality for criminals." Indeed a "very difficult person to get along with." Real revolutions upset him, because "his nature craves a centralized political machine (358)." He is no more than a "small-time propagandist and organizer"; it took him much too long to get into the Central Committee of the Party, and in the beginning he managed that only by way of the back door (202). He had always been regarded as a "second-rate figure," and has been looked upon as "a practico, i.e., as a rank and file revolutionist, useful primarily for local organizational activity (114)."

Stalin is not only a sluggish thinker, he is "no thinker at all." He "cannot make head or tail of international matters," and simply does not "fit into any public activity." His "style of writing is bad," at times he is unable to write more than "two articles a month." He wrote only one book of importance, and that was not his own. It was practically dictated to him by Lenin (157). Worst of all, perhaps, Stalin "is neither a marksman nor a hunter, in the sporting sense of the word. He has a general appearance which makes it easier to imagine him placing traps at night than firing a gun at a bird in flight (172)."

Not only to the general reader, but curiously enough to Trotsky himself, "Stalin's personal characterization or his political biography . . . have scarcely any significance (21)." But Trotsky, though he considers these questions "subsidiary," mixes main questions and subsidiary questions in such a manner that answers to the latter questions must also serve as answers to the former. Just as Lenin, by virtue of his political and personal good qualities, is made mainly, if not totally, responsible for the success of the October Revolution, so Stalin's bad personal and political qualities are seen as the chief reason for the particular ways in which the Revolution "degenerated." The great-man theory, veiled in pseudo-materialistic garb with respect to Lenin, becomes in Stalin's case a small-man theory, embellished with historical data so selected and interpreted as to allow Trotsky to pose as a Marxist historian.

To an unbiased reader of this biography, that is, to a reader not so much concerned with Stalin and Trotsky as with the Russian Revolution, it soon becomes apparent that this particular book of Trotsky's belongs to the same mental and political climate that produced the Moscow Trials and that instigated the murder of Trotsky himself. In fact, the competition in proven and unproven accusations is really breathtaking, the climax in Trotsky's case being his strong suspicion that Stalin poisoned Gorki and Lenin in order to make more secure his dictatorial position.

The personal and moral characteristics of Stalin, true or untrue, are of little interest with respect to the history of Bolshevism. And, of course, it can only be the history of Bolshevism, not that of Stalin, with which the "Marxist" Trotsky must really be concerned in order to justify the writing of this book, particularly because Trotsky points out that Stalin "took possession of power,

not with the aid of personal qualities, but with the aid of an impersonal machine. And it was not he who created the machine, but the machine that created him (XV)." Although it should follow from this that Trotsky's real interests should centre around the machine, his main concern is with Stalin's lack of personal qualities.

As far as the machine is concerned, Trotsky cannot help but defend it, being himself one of his creators. What he regrets is not the existence of the machine, but the fact that it was not foolproof against political up-starts of the type of Stalin. That the political machine created by the Bolsheviks was incapable of doing other than serve the dictatorial rule of the Party and, within the Party, the absolutistic rule of its leaders, is of no real concern to Trotsky. Here, too, as in other respects, he holds that "it is not only a question of what is being done, but also who does it (408)."

This dictum of Trotsky's springs from necessity. His own past incorporates that type of policy which at a later date was given the derogatory name of Stalinism. All beginnings are small, of course, and the Bolshevism of Lenin and Trotsky differs from present-day Stalinism just as Hitler's brown terror of 1933 differed from the Nazism of the Second World War. But Stalin's totalitarianism, at least in its organizational aspects, resulted from Lenin's and Trotsky's organizational and tactical innovations which were dressed up as the "dictatorship of the proletariat," and were executed by its vanguard, the Bolshevik party.

That there is nothing in the arsenal of Stalinism that cannot also be found in that of Lenin and Trotsky is attested to by the earlier writings of Trotsky himself.\* For example, Trotsky, like Stalin, introduced compulsory labor service as a "socialist principle." He, too, was convinced "that not one serious socialist will begin to deny to the Labor State the right to lay its hands upon the worker who refuses to execute his labor power." It was Trotsky who hurried to stress the "socialistic character" of inequality, for, as he said, "those workers who do more for the general interest than others receive the right to a greater quantity of the social product than the lazy, the careless, and the dis-organizers." It was his opinion that everything must be done to "assist the development of rivalry in the sphere of production."

Of course, all this was conceived as the "socialist principle" of the "transformation period." It was dictated by objective difficulties in the way of full socialization. There was not the desire, but the need to strengthen party dictatorship until it led to the abolishment of even those freedoms of activity which, in one fashion or another, had been granted by the bourgeois State. However, Stalin, too, can offer the excuse of necessity, and does actually offer it when he distinguishes between "socialism" and "communism." And until the Stalinist "world revolution" has taken place and secured itself, he, too, can

\*See, for instance, L. Trotsky's "Dictatorship vs. Democracy," New York, 1922; particularly from page 135 to page 150.

speak of the process of transformation as justification for the harshness of dictatorship.

In order to find other argument against Stalinism than his personal dislike for a competitor in intra-party struggles, Trotsky must discover an construct political differences between himself and Stalin and between Stalin and Lenin in order to support his assertion that without Stalin things would have been different in Russia and elsewhere. It will be necessary to pay some attention to these "differences," the more so because for quite some time Trotsky prided himself on being the unacknowledged originator of many of Stalin's "successful" policies, as, for instance, the launching of the first Five-Year Plan.

Lenin, Trotsky, Stalin belonged to the Bolshevik Party; Trotsky, the late comer, entered the party only after the February Revolution. All three, however, had been members of the Social Democratic Party before it split into Menshevik and Bolshevik. All were Marxists at a time when, as Trotsky writes, Marxism in Russia "was still passing through its intelligentsia stage (15)," a stage that "involved a kind of defence of the progressive mission of capitalism (25)," as against the Populist idea that Russia might escape the capitalist stage of development altogether. The whole revolutionary movement prior to 1905 was financed principally by the liberal bourgeoisie. And up to 1917 the "political machine of the Bolshevik Party was predominantly made up of the intelligentsia, which was petty-bourgeois in its origin and conditions of life and Marxist in its ideas (203)."

The peculiar social structure of the Party machine, regarded by Trotsky as one of the causes for the Party's later "degeneration," is at the same time recognized by him as a "historical necessity" because of the backwardness of the Russian masses. Lenin's principle of centralism, however, is for Trotsky not a source of Stalinism, although it, too, finds its explanation "in the lack of homogeneity and the backwardness of the toilers—that is, in the general social conditions which make imperative that very centripetal leadership of the class by its vanguard (61)." And Lenin's hierarchical system of professional revolutionists receives Trotsky's full approval. He defends it against all those who see in it a source of Stalinism. "A professional revolutionist is a person," he says, "who completely dedicates himself to the labor movement under conditions of illegality and forced conspiracy. . . . The young men and young women who devoted themselves entirely to the revolutionary movement without demanding anything in return were not the worst representatives of their generation. . . . they cannot suffer by comparison with any other social group (54)."

Stalin, too, was a professional revolutionist. And if the professionals "demanded nothing in return" as revolutionists, they fought nevertheless for professional leadership over the whole of Russia, and, if possible, the world. Their revolutionary goal would be reached with their transformation into government officials. This, as we already learned from Trotsky, is a "historical necessity," in view of the backwardness of the masses.

Trotsky's defence of Bolshevik principles is supposed to harmonize his anti-Stalinism with his Leninism. The organizations of Trotsky's "Fourth International" are all constructed in the Leninist manner, yet they are not expected to suffer the fate of Stalin's party. There must, then, be a difference between Lenin and Stalin, but in spite of all of Trotsky's efforts, it is not possible to find significant personal or political differences between the two. Aside from Trotsky's assertion that when he was near death Lenin fully recognized the dangerous character of Stalin and tried to oppose him, Stalin appears throughout the biography as the truest follower of the master. In fact, it is Lenin himself who pushes his prize pupil higher and higher in the party hierarchy.

If Trotsky "did not notice Stalin even among the second-rate members of the Central Committee of the Party (242)," nevertheless it was Lenin who put him there: "Greedily, Lenin seized upon the capable and energetic Stalin and helped to advance his candidacy at the Duma elections (150)." Lenin, Trotsky explains, was "advancing Stalin, that 'splendid Georgian,' as he once called him, because of his enthusiasm for people who showed resoluteness, or were simply successful in carrying out an operation assigned to them," and "because he valued Stalin's firmness, grit, stubbornness, and to a certain extent his shyness, as attributes necessary in the struggle (243)." It was particularly "the ability to 'exert pressure' which Lenin prized so highly in Stalin (270)." Of course, this was not a one-sided love affair: "on all the most important occasions Stalin insured himself by voting with Lenin (228)."

There could not have been any "theoretical" differences between Lenin and Stalin, as the only theoretical work bearing the name of the latter had been inspired and supervised by Lenin. And if, as we have learned, Stalin's "nature craved" the centralized party machine, it was Lenin who constructed the perfect machine for him, so that on that score, too, no difference could arise. In fact, as long as Lenin was active, Stalin was no trouble to him, however troublesome he may have been to "Number Two Bolshevik."

Still, in order for Trotsky to explain the "Soviet Thermidor," there must be a difference between Leninism and Stalinism, provided of course, there was such a Thermidor. On this point Trotsky has brought forth various ideas as to when it took place, but in his Stalin biography he ignores the question of time in favor of the simple statement that it had something to do with the "increasing privileges for the bureaucracy." However, this only brings us back to the early period of the Bolshevik dictatorship which found Lenin and Trotsky engaged in creating the State bureaucracy and increasing its efficiency by increasing its privileges.

If it is not possible to make Stalin responsible for the Russian bureaucracy, he might be made responsible for its "Stalinist" version. There have been great changes in Russia, but these changes do not suggest a definite distinction between Leninism and Stalinism.

Frequent changes in governmental policy caused by internal and external circumstances have been accompanied by a changing composition of the bureaucracy. However, it would be false to consider all the intra-Russian bureaucratic struggles as reflections of deeper-rooted social upheavals caused either by internal or international difficulties. The main reason for these struggles is the bloody process of the formation and organization of a new ruling class in the developing system of State-capitalism. Of necessity the competing adversaries disguise their narrow goals, that is, their positions of power and privileges, with arguments of an apparently wider vision based on the remaining plurality of interests within Russian society and international power struggles.

The fact that the relentless struggle for position came into the open only after Lenin's death suggests something other than the Soviet Thermidor. It simply indicates that by that time the Bolshevik State was of sufficient strength, or was in a position, to disregard to a certain degree both the Russian masses and the international bourgeoisie. The developing bureaucracy began to feel sure that Russia was theirs for keeps; the fight for the plums of the Revolution entered its more general and more serious stage.

All adversaries in this struggle stressed the need of dictatorship in view of the unsolved internal frictions between "workers" and "peasants," the economic and technological backwardness of the country as a whole, and the constant danger of attack from the outside. But within this setting of dictatorship all sorts of arguments could be raised. The power-struggle within the developing ruling class expressed itself in policy-proposals either for or against the interests of the peasants, either for or against the limitation of factory councils, either for or against an offensive policy on the international front. High-sounding theories were expounded with regard to the estimation of the peasantry, the relationship between bureaucracy and revolution, the question of party generations, etc., and reached their climax in the Trotsky-Stalin controversy on the "Permanent Revolution" and the theory of "Socialism in One Country."

It is quite possible that the debaters believed their own phrases; yet, despite their theoretical differentiations, whenever they acted upon a real situation they all acted alike. In order to suit their own needs, they naturally expressed identical things in different terms. If Trotsky rushes to the front—to all fronts, in fact—he merely defends the fatherland. But Stalin "is attracted by the front, because here for the first time he could work with the most finished of all the administrative machines, the military machine (295)," for which, by the way, Trotsky claims all credit. If Trotsky pleads for discipline, he shows his "iron hand"; if Stalin does the same, he deals with a "heavy hand." If Trotsky's bloody suppression of the Kronstadt Rebellion was a "tragic necessity" (337), Stalin's suppression of the Georgian independence movement is in the manner of a "great-Russian Russifier riding roughshod over the rights of his own people as a nation (360)." And

*vice versa*; suggestions made by Trotsky are called false and counter-revolutionary by Stalin's henchmen; when carried out under Stalin's auspices they become additional proof of the great leader's wisdom.

To understand Bolshevism, and in a narrower sense Stalinism, it is not enough to follow the superficial and often silly controversies between Stalinists and Trotskyites. After all, the Russian Revolution embraces more than just the Bolshevik Party. It was not even initiated by organized political groups, but by spontaneous reactions of the masses to an unbearable and apparently endless misery connected with the breakdown of an already precarious economic system in the wake of an unsuccessfully waged war. The February upheavals "started" with hunger riots in market places, protest strikes in factories, and the spontaneous declaration of solidarity with the rioters on the part of the soldiers. But all spontaneous movement in modern history have been accompanied by organized forces. As soon as the collapse of Czarism was imminent, organizations came to the fore with directives and definite political goals.

If prior to the Revolution Lenin had stressed organization rather than spontaneity, it was because of the retarded Russian conditions, which gave the spontaneous movements a backward character. Even the politically advanced groups offered only limited programs. The industrial workers desired capitalistic reforms similar to those enjoyed by the workers in more capitalistically advanced countries. The petty-bourgeoisie and important layers of the capitalist class wanted a Western bourgeois democracy. The peasants desired land in a capitalist agriculture. Though progressive for Czarist Russia, these demands were of the essence of bourgeois revolution.

The new liberalistic February government attempted to continue the war. But it was the conditions of war against which the masses were rebelling. All promised reforms within the Russian setting of that time and within the existing imperialistic power relationships were doomed to remain empty phrases; there was no way of directing the spontaneous movements into those channels desired by the government. In new upsurges the Bolsheviks came into power not by way of a *second revolution*, but by a forced change of government. This seizure of power was made easy by the lack of interest that the restless masses were showing in the existing government. The October *coup*, as Lenin said, "was easier than lifting a feather." The final victory was "practically achieved by default. . . . Not a single regiment rose to defend Russian democracy. . . . The struggle for supreme power over an empire that comprised one-sixth of the terrestrial globe was decided between amazingly small forces on both sides in the provinces, as well as in the two capital cities (239)."

The Bolsheviks did not try to restore the old conditions in order to reform them, but declared themselves in favor of the *concrete results* of the conceptually backward spontaneous movements: the ending of the war, the workers' control of industry, the expropriation of the

ruling classes and the division of land. And so they stayed in power. The backwardness of the masses had not prevented them from acting in a forward way, for in Russia the time for concessions to the suffering and exploited masses was past. In the turmoil of war and defeat there was no room for capitalistic reforms of the traditional type.

The pre-revolutionary demands of the Russian masses had been backward for two reasons: they had long been realized in the main capitalist nations, and they could no longer be realized in view of existing world conditions. At a time when the concentration and centralization process of world capitalism had brought about the decline of bourgeois democracy almost everywhere, it was no longer possible to initiate it afresh in Russia. If *laissez faire* democracy was out of the question, so were all those reforms in capital-labor relations usually related to social legislation and trade unionism. Capitalist agriculture, too, had passed beyond the breaking up of feudal estates and production for a capitalist market to the industrialization of agriculture and its consequent incorporation into the concentration process of capital.

The Bolsheviks did not claim responsibility for the Revolution. They gave full credit to the spontaneous movements. Of course, they underlined the obvious fact that Russia's previous history, which included the Bolshevik party, had lent some kind of vague revolutionary consciousness to the unorganized masses, and they were not backward about asserting that without their leadership the course of the Revolution would have been different and most probably would have led to a counter-revolution. "Had the Bolsheviks not seized power," writes Trotsky, "the world would have had a Russian name for Fascism five years before the March of Rome (412)."

But counter-revolutionary attempts on the part of the traditional powers failed not because of any conscious direction of the spontaneous movements, not because of Lenin's "sharp eyes, which surveyed the situation correctly (196)," but because of the fact that these movements could not be diverted from their own course. If one wants to use the term at all, the only "counter-revolution" possible in the Russia of 1917 was that inherent in the Revolution itself, that is, in the opportunity it offered the Bolsheviks to restore a centrally directed social order for the perpetuation of the capitalistic divorce of the workers from the means of production and the consequent restoration of Russia as a competing imperialist power.

During the revolution the interests of the rebelling masses and of the Bolsheviks merged to a remarkable degree. Beyond the temporary merger, there also existed a deep unity between the socializing concepts of the Bolsheviks and the consequences of the spontaneous movements. The revolutionary movement, reaching out by force of circumstances beyond the traditional confines of the bourgeois revolution, yet able only by virtue of internal and extra-Russian conditions to capitalize the nation, could realize itself only in the equally restricted and developed form of Russian State-capitalism. Too "backward" for social-

ism, but also too "advanced" for liberal capitalism which the Bolsheviks considered a pre-condition of socialism, namely, State-capitalism.

By identifying themselves with the spontaneous movement they could not control, the Bolsheviks gained control over this movement as soon as it had spent itself in the realization of its immediate goals. There were many such goals differently reached in different territories. Various layers of the peasantry satisfied, or failed to satisfy, divergent needs and desires. Their interests had no real connection with those of the proletariat. The working class itself was split into various groups, with a variety of specific needs and general plans. The petty-bourgeoisie had still other problems to solve. In brief, there was a spontaneous unity against the conditions of Czarism and war, but there was no unity in regard to immediate goals and future policy. It was not too difficult for the Bolsheviks to utilize this social division for building up their own power, which finally became stronger than the whole of society because it never faced society as a whole.

Like the other groups which asserted themselves within the revolution, the Bolsheviks, too, pressed forward to gain their particular end—the control of government. This goal reached farther than all the other ends aspired to by other interests represented in the social upheaval. It involved a never-ending struggle, a continuous winning and re-winning of power positions. Peasant groups settled down after dividing the land, workers returned to the factories as wage-laborers, soldiers, unable to roam the countryside for ever, returned to the life of peasant and worker, but for the Bolsheviks the struggle only really began with the success of the Revolution. Like all governments, the Bolshevik regime, involves submission of all existing social layers to its authority. Slowly centralizing all power and control into their hands, the Bolsheviks were soon able to dictate policy. Once more Russia became thoroughly organized in the interests of a special class—the class of privilege in the emerging system of State-capitalism.

All this has nothing to do with Stalinism and "Thermidor," but represents Lenin's and Trotsky's policy from the very day they came to power. Reporting to the Sixth Congress of Soviets in 1918, Trotsky complained that "Not all Soviet workers have understood that our administration has been centralized and that all orders issued from above must be final. . . . We shall be pitiless with those Soviet workers who have not yet understood; we will remove them, cast them out of our ranks, pull them up with repressions (291)." Trotsky now claims that these words were aimed at Stalin, who did not co-ordinate his war activity properly, and we are willing to believe him. But how much more directly must they have been aimed at all those who were not even "second-rate," but had no rating at all in the Soviet hierarchy. There already existed, as Trotsky relates, "a sharp cleavage between the classes in motion and the interests of the party machines. Even the Bolshevik Party cadres, who enjoyed the benefit of exceptional revolutionary training, were definitely inclined to disregard the

masses and to identify their own special interests with the interests of the machine on the very day after the monarchy was overthrown (204)."

Trotsky holds, of course, that the dangers implied in this situation were averted by Lenin's vigilance and by objective conditions which made the "masses more revolutionary than the Party, and the Party more revolutionary than its machine (204)." But the machine was headed by Lenin. Even before the Revolution, Trotsky points out, the Central Committee of the Party "functioned almost regularly and was entirely in the hands of Lenin (163)." And even more so after the Revolution. In the Spring of 1918 the "ideal of 'democratic centralism' suffered further reverses, for in effect the power within both the government and the Party became concentrated in the hands of Lenin and the immediate retinue of Bolshevik leaders who did not openly disagree with him and carried out his wishes (240)." As the bureaucracy made headway, nevertheless, the emerging Stalinist machine must have been the result of an oversight on the part of Lenin.

To distinguish between the ruler of the machine on the one hand, and between the machine and the masses on the other, implies that only the masses and its top-leader were truly revolutionary, and that both Lenin and the revolutionary masses were later betrayed by Stalin's machine which, so to speak, made itself independent. Although Trotsky needs such distinctions to satisfy his own political interests, they have no basis in fact. Until his death—disregarding occasional remarks against the dangers of bureaucratization, which for the Bolsheviks are the equivalent of the bourgeois politicians' occasional crusades for a balanced budget—Lenin never once came out against the Bolshevik party machine and its leadership, that is, against himself. Whatever policy was decided upon received Lenin's blessing so long as he was at the helm of the machine, and he died holding that position.

Lenin's "democratic" notions are legendary. Of course, State-capitalism under Lenin was different from State-capitalism under Stalin because the dictatorial powers of the latter were greater—thanks to Lenin's attempt to build up his own. That Lenin's rule was less terroristic than Stalin's is debatable. Like Stalin, Lenin catalogued all his victims under the heading "counter-revolutionary." Without comparing the statistics of those tortured and killed under both regimes, we will admit that the Bolshevik regime under Lenin and Trotsky was not strong enough to carry through such Stalinist measures as enforced collectivization and slave-labor camps as a main economic and political policy. It was not design, but weakness, which forced Lenin and Trotsky to the so-called *New Economic Policy*, that is, to concessions to private property interests and to a greater lip-service to "democracy."

Bolshevik "toleration" of such non-Bolshevik organizations as the *Social Revolutionists* in the early phase of Lenin's rule did not spring, as Trotsky asserts, from Lenin's "democratic" inclinations, but from inability to destroy all non-Bolshevik organizations at once.

totalitarian rule of the party had the goal from the outset, which implied the division of the oppositional groups in order to break them one after another. The totalitarian features of Lenin's Bolshevism were accumulating at the same rate at which its control and police power grew. That they were forced upon the Bolsheviks by the "counter-revolutionary" activity of all non-Bolshevik labor organizations, as Trotsky maintains, can not, of course, explain their further increase after the crushing of the various non-conformist organizations. Neither could it explain Lenin's insistence upon the enforcement of totalitarian principles in the extra-Russian organizations of the Communist International.

Unable to blame non-Bolshevik organizations entirely for Lenin's dictatorship, Trotsky tells "those theoreticians who attempt to prove that the present totalitarian regime of the U.S.S.R. is due . . . to the ugly nature of bolshevism itself," that they forget the years of Civil War, "which laid an indelible impress on the Soviet Government by virtue of the fact that very many of the administrators, a considerable layer of them, had become accustomed to command and demanded unconditional submission to their orders (384)." Stalin, too, he continues, "was moulded by the environment and circumstances of the Civil War, along with the entire group that later helped him to establish his personal dictatorship (385)." The Civil War, however, was initiated by the international bourgeoisie. And thus the ugly sides of Bolshevism under Lenin, as well as under Stalin, find their chief and final cause in capitalism's enmity to Bolshevism which, if it is a monster, is only a reluctant monster, killing and torturing in mere self-defence.

And so, if only in a roundabout way, Trotsky's Bolshevism, despite its saturation with hatred for Stalin, leads in the end merely to a defence of Stalinism as the only possible self-defence for Trotsky. This explains the superficiality of the ideological differences between Stalinism and Trotskyism. The impossibility of attacking Stalin without attacking Lenin helps to explain, furthermore, Trotsky's great difficulties as an oppositionist. Trotsky's own past and theories preclude on his part the initiation of a movement to the left of Stalinism, and condemned "Trotskyism" to remain a more collecting agency for unsuccessful Bolsheviks. As such it could maintain itself outside of Russia because of the ceaseless competitive struggles for power and positions within the so-called "communist" world movement. But it could not achieve significance, for it had nothing to offer but the replacement of one set of politicians by another. The Trotskyist defence of Russia in the Second World War was consistent with all the previous policies of this, Stalin's most bitter, but also most loyal, opposition.

Trotsky's defence of Stalinism does not exhaust itself with showing how the Civil War transformed the Bolsheviks from servants into masters of the working class. He points to the more important fact that it is the "bureaucracy's law of life and death to guard the nationalization of the means of production

and of the land (408)." This means that "in spite of the most monstrous bureaucratic distortions, the class basis of the U.S.S.R. remains proletarian (406)." For awhile—we notice—Stalin had Trotsky worried. In 1921, Lenin had been disturbed by the question as to whether the *New Economic Policy* was merely a "tactic" or an "evolution" (405). Because the N.E.P. released private-capitalistic tendencies, Trotsky saw in the growing Stalinist bureaucracy "nothing else than the first stage of bourgeois restoration (429)." But his worries were unfounded; "the struggle against equality and the establishment of very deep social differentiations has so far been unable to eliminate the socialist consciousness of the masses or the nationalization of the means of production and the land, which were the basic social conquests of the revolution (406)." Stalin, of course, had nothing to do with this, for "the Russian Thermidor would have undoubtedly opened a new era of bourgeois rule, if that rule had not proved obsolete throughout the world (406)."

With this last statement of Trotsky's we approach the essence of the matter under discussion. We have said before that the concrete results of the revolution of 1917 were neither socialistic nor bourgeois, but State-capitalistic. It was Trotsky's belief that Stalin would destroy the State-capitalist nature of the economy in favor of a bourgeois economy. This was to be the Thermidor. The decay of bourgeois economy all over the world prevented Stalin from bringing this about. All he could do was to introduce the ugly features of his personal dictatorship into that society which had been brought into existence by Lenin and Trotsky. In this way, and despite the fact that Stalin still occupies the Kremlin, Trotskyism has triumphed over Stalinism.

It all depends on an equation of State-capitalism with socialism. And although some of Trotsky's disciples have recently found it impossible to continue making the equation, Trotsky was bound to it, for it is the beginning and the end of Leninism, and, in a wider sense, of the whole of the social-democratic world movement of which Leninism was only the more realistic part. Realistic, that is, with regard to Russia. What was, and still is, understood by this movement under "workers' state" is governmental rule by the party; what is meant by "socialism" is the nationalization of the means of production. By adding control over the economy to the political control of the government the totalitarian rule over all of society emerges in full. The government secures its totalitarian rule by way of the party, which maintains the social hierarchy and is itself a hierarchical institution.

This idea of "socialism" is now in the process of becoming discredited, but only because of the experience of Russia and similar, if less extensive, experiences in other countries. Prior to 1914 what was meant by the seizure of power, either peacefully or violently, was the seizure of the government machinery, replacing a given set of administrators and lawmakers with another set. Economically, the "anarchy" of the capitalistic market was to be replaced by a planned

production under the control of the State. As the socialist State would by definition be a "just" State, being itself controlled by the masses by way of the democratic processes, there was no reason to expect that its decisions would run counter to socialistic ideals. This theory was sufficient to organize parts of the working class into more or less powerful parties.

The theory of socialism boiled down to the demand for centralized economic planning in the interest of all. The centralization process, inherent in capital-accumulation itself, was regarded as a socialistic tendency. The growing influence of "labor" within the State machinery was hailed as a step in the direction of socialism. But actually the centralization process of capital indicated something else than its self-transformation into social property. It was identical with the destruction of *laissez faire* economy, and therewith with the end of the traditional business cycle as the regulator of the economy. With the beginning of the 20th century the character of capitalism changed. From that time on it found itself under permanent crisis conditions which could not be resolved by the "automatic" workings of the market. Monopolistic regulations, State interferences, national policies shifted the burden of the crisis to the capitalistically under-privileged in the world economy. All "economic" policy became imperialistic policy, culminating twice in world-wide conflagrations.

In this situation, to reconstruct a broken-down political and economic system meant to adopt it to these new conditions. The Bolshevik theory of socialization fitted this need in an admirable way. In order to restore the national power of Russia it was necessary to do in a radical fashion what in the Western nations had been merely an evolutionary process. Even then it would take time to close the gap between the Russian economy and that of the Western powers. Meanwhile the ideology of the socialist movement served well as protection. The socialist origin of Bolshevism made it particularly fitted for the State capitalist reconstruction of Russia. Its organizational principles, which had turned the party into a well-functioning institution, would re-establish order in the country as well.

The Bolsheviks, of course, were convinced that what they were building in Russia was, if not socialism, at least the next best thing to socialism, for they were completing the process which in the Western nations was still only the main trend of development. They had abolished the market economy and had expropriated the bourgeoisie; they also had gained complete control over the government. For the Russian workers, however, nothing had changed; they were merely faced by another set of bosses, politicians, and indoctrinators. Their position equalled the workers position in all capitalist countries during times of war. State capitalism is a war economy, and all extra-Russian economic systems transformed themselves into war economies, into State capitalistic systems fitted to the imperialistic needs of modern capitalism. Other nations did not copy all the innovations of Russian State capitalism, but only those

best suited to their specific needs. The second world war led to the further unfolding of State capitalism on a world-wide scale. The peculiarities of the various nations and their special situations within the world-power frame provided a great variety of developmental processes towards State capitalism.

The fact that State capitalism and fascism did not, and do not grow everywhere in a uniform manner provided Trotsky with the argument of the basic difference between bolshevism, fascism and capitalism plain and simple. This argument necessarily stresses superficialities of social development. In all essential aspects all three of these systems are identical, and represent only various stages of the same development—a development which aims at manipulating the mass of the population by dictatorial governments in a more or less authoritarian fashion, in order to secure the government and the privileged social layers which support it and to enable those governments to participate in the international economy of to-day by preparing for war, waging war, and profiting by war.

Trotsky could not permit himself to recognize in Bolshevism one aspect of the world-wide trend towards a fascist world economy. As late as 1940 he held the view that Bolshevism prevented the rise of Fascism in the Russia of 1917. It should have long since been clear, however, that all that Lenin and Trotsky prevented in Russia was the use of a non-Marxian ideology for the fascist reconstruction of Russia. Because the Marxian ideology of Bolshevism merely served State capitalistic ends, it, too, has been discredited. From any view that goes beyond the capitalist system of exploitation Stalinism and Trotskyism are both relics of the past.

—Paul Mattick.

The above Review appeared in *Politics*.

## Essay on Socialist Theory

[*Politics* is the name of a monthly magazine edited and published in New York by Dwight Macdonald.]

### SCIENCE AND *Politics*

#### A Materialist Analysis

The following Essay was started by a young nuclear physicist in Chicago, and others collaborated in presenting it in the form it now appears. It was submitted to Dwight Macdonald for publication in *Politics*, but, we understand, it was rather contemptuously rejected; maybe, the criticism was too good, as it did not come from professional writers. The publication of it has been delayed, as it was first intended to appear in a New York magazine; as the publication of that periodical is delayed I have been given the green light to go ahead and print. *Politics* is the name of monthly magazine edited and published in New York by Dwight Macdonald.—Editor S.S.R.]

It has been a particularly unhappy experience for me to witness the changes in subject matter and focal concern in *Politics* during the last year. There has been a marked departure from exposing the established order of society along the lines laid down in the first issue, which said of the new magazine: "Its predominant intellectual approach will be Marxist, in the sense of a method of analysis, not of a body of dogma." The apparent trend in *Politics* today is toward the non-operational (and therefore mystical) eternal verities, universal values and ultimate truths. There is apparently a "new failure of nerve" observable among many of the independent leftists who have in the past withstood the pressures of acquiescence to class society, whether capitalist or Bolshevik, who have seen through the fakery of manipulated culture and imperialist war.

Certainly, to explain the current flight of radicals to reform and to religion, one must look beyond the *status quo* pressures of cultural conformity and the reward-laden hands of the ruling class, which beckon no less now than always. The political situation in the world today forces the thinking radical to a re-consideration of his basic assumptions. It is enough to mention the failure of radical parties, the pointlessness of most types of radical action employed to date, the apparent entrenchment of capitalist-fascist ruling classes, and of the Soviet bureaucracy. World War II has functioned to strengthen the grip of the United States and Russia (with England already an American satellite) upon the rest of the world, and the fast growing competition between them is clear for all to see. Scientific advances pyramid at an ever increasing rate, and under the existing arrangement of society, science is a tool providing greater power than ever in the hands of the ruling class. (Nevertheless, the great strides in technology, making available tremendous sources of energy and, therefore, of potential material plenty for everyone, accentuate the contradictions of class society. To this point we return later.)

The current flight from a reasoned and radical approach to society, into the arms of the ruling class (via reform or via religion), derives in part at least from the feeling of impotence in the face of these historical developments, and from the evident inability of orthodox Marxism, as represented by the various parties, to provide the answers. We reject, however, for reasons to be discussed below, the idea that the failure of the parties means the failure of socialism. And we similarly reject the idea that socialist politics can be implemented by a "search for Absolute Truth." We suggest that accurate understandings of social processes are obtainable by empirical inquiry designed on the basis of class analysis. And we will demonstrate how these can serve as a guide to political action. It should be noted that the scientific radical behavior are separable matters; here our concern is solely with the former.

In this article the attempt is made to show in outline. (1) The limits within our social development can be predicted in relation to the possibilities for an egalitarian socialist society; (2) possibilities for influencing the course and rate of class political development; (3)

some important types of deliberate intervention in social processes which radicals can undertake; (4) some of the politically important areas where knowledge is lacking. The analysis is presented in three sections. I) First we deal with the relevancy of scientific method to political action; and some implications of the revolt among radicals against utilization of scientific method. II) In the second part we describe briefly some of the principal patterns of action among the major social classes which are relevant to socialist politics. III) And thirdly, we discuss specific areas for political action, based upon the preceding analysis, and contrast them with the obscurantist notions of the "anti-Marxists" writing in the "New Roads" series.

### I.—SCIENTIFIC METHOD: A TOOL FOR RADICALS

During the war years we heard a great deal about the invaluable services rendered by the natural scientists on behalf of the war effort. The atomic bomb was the super-duper culmination of a whole series of military tools devised in Allied laboratories. People who disliked war on various political grounds could not help but observe the service of the scientists, and some drew the inference that not only the scientists and their works were serving the ruling classes, but that even the scientific method, the procedures of inquiry used to develop the knowledge applied for ruling class purposes, is politically reactionary. If it is not explicitly reactionary, then so closely has it appeared to be intertwined with the activities of the ruling classes that it could hardly be relevant to a resistance and revolt against the *status quo*.

It is crucially important to draw a clear distinction between science and technology, method and its application. The same knowledge of natural phenomena can be used to make death-dealing explosives or to provide an unlimited source of energy for production. In a class society, the technological utilization of scientific understandings are, of course, exploited for the social purposes of the ruling class.

Scientific procedures are employed in investigations in the natural sciences. These pragmatic methods are essential for getting results in terms of knowledge of the underlying mechanisms and processes. And the search for knowledge is channeled in our society in those fields where it can aid profitability. Similarly, in the social sciences, in recent years, there have been certain serious, albeit limited, attempts to apply scientific methods for obtaining knowledge about society. What kind of knowledge? The attitudes of workers at their jobs have been investigated with a view to establishing the bases for management manipulation of worker attitudes. Extensive inquiries are being conducted under business and government auspices in public opinion measurement and control devices. And among the anthropologists the latest trend is toward "applied anthropology," which means simply appropriate arrangement of the cultural low-down on colonial peoples to facilitate the peaceful administration of their affairs by officials who, equipped with such information, are better able to manipulate their charges.