

Max Shachtman is to the post-Trotsky Trotskyist movement what Trotsky was to the official 'Communist' movement — the arch-heretic, the great traitor, the Lucifer.

Shachtman was one of those leaders of the American Communist Party who, with James P Cannon and Martin Abern, broke out of that organisation in 1928 and started the Trotskyist movement in the USA. For the next dozen years he expounded Trotsky's politics. Probably he was the world's leading voice for those politics after Trotsky himself.

He broke with Trotsky in 1940, a few months before Trotsky's death, in a dispute which started over the Russian invasions of Poland and Finland in late 1939.

In August 1939 Stalin and Hitler agreed a non-aggression pact. It freed Hitler's hands for war. On 1 September 1939 the Nazi army invaded Poland. On 17 September the Russian army invaded Poland from the East, by agreement with the Nazis, and took control of a large part of the country.

In November the USSR gave Finland an ultimatum to surrender certain strategic parts of its territory to the USSR or go to war. This too had been agreed with the Nazis (as had been the Russian occupation of the three Baltic states of Lithuania, Estonia and Latvia, carried through in June-July 1940).

The Finns decided to fight. Instead of an easy victory, Stalin — whose purges had decimated the leadership of the Russian army two years before — found himself embroiled in a war that dragged on for 15 weeks. British and French aid to Finland by sending troops was, for a time, a serious project. It would have brought Stalin into the World War on Hitler's side.

The war ended with Finland ceding the demanded territory to Stalin on 13 March 1940. On 28 March the Allies decided to occupy bases in Norway; on 9 April the Nazis forestalled them by conquering and occupying Denmark and Norway. A month later, on 10 May, the Nazi blitzkrieg in the west began.

Trotsky was for the unconditional defence of the USSR for the sake of its nationalised economy. He considered that this was the decisive issue in Poland and Finland; he also, initially, expected the advance of the Russian army to spark mass anti-capitalist struggles. So he supported the Soviet Union. Shachtman argued for what became known as "conjunctural defeatism" — that is, favouring the defeat of the Soviet Union in Finland though in general favouring its defence.

The debate which ensued became mixed up with organisational grievances inside the

# Introduction to Shachtman

American Trotskyist movement, and Shachtman became the leader of an opposition which had the most diverse views on the USSR but united in criticising the 'bureaucratic conservatism' of the American Trotskyist leadership. The Trotskyist movement split in April 1940. And the positions taken in that debate, on the very eve of Trotsky's death, shaped and, I believe, warped the entire future of the mainstream Trotskyist movement.

For, of course, it was a discussion of far more than Poland or Finland or the Hitler-Stalin pact. It was about drawing up the balance sheet on Stalinism.

Already there were people in the ranks of the American Trotskyist movement who considered that the USSR could not in any sense, even the most residual, be considered a workers' state. They included James Burnham, a college teacher who was joint editor, with Shachtman, of the movement's magazine.

Trotsky himself produced a new balance-sheet, *The USSR in War*, in September 1939, in which he accepted the theoretical possibility that the USSR could maintain the nationalised economy which came out of the revolution and nevertheless have to be considered a new form of class society. Trotsky's arguments against in fact considering it such are very important to examine.

*"Scientifically and politically — and not purely terminologically — the question poses itself as follows: Does the bureaucracy represent a temporary growth on a social organism or has this growth already become transformed into a historically indispensable organ?"...*

*The historical alternative, carried to the end, is as follows: either the Stalin regime is an abhorrent relapse in the process of transforming bourgeois society into a socialist society, or the Stalin regime is the first stage of a new exploiting society [which is to supersede capitalism]... But are there such incontrovertible or even impressive objective data as would compel us today to renounce the prospect of the socialist revolution? That is the whole question...*

*By the sweep and monstrous fraudulence of his purge, Stalin testifies to nothing else but the incapacity of the bureaucracy to transform itself into a stable ruling class. Might we not place ourselves in a ludicrous position*

*if we affixed to the Bonapartist oligarchy the nomenclature of a new ruling class just a few years or even a few months prior to its inglorious downfall? Posing this question clearly should alone in our opinion restrain the comrades from terminological experimentation and overhasty generalisations..."*

After Trotsky's death, those who had been on his side in the 1940 split continued to maintain, for decades, that nothing much had changed in the USSR and that it was not necessary to change the framework in which it was viewed. The reality that the bureaucracy had shown itself to have gained solidity and substance, to be capable of running the nationalised economy as its own and replicating it outside the USSR, nevertheless forced its way into their theory and left them operating with a description of so-called "degenerated and deformed workers' states" which was actually one of new bureaucratic societies, Trotsky's "workers' state" tag functioned only to signify that these new bureaucratic societies were progressive, post-capitalist, and transitional between capitalism and socialism.

Shachtman broke with Trotsky in April 1940. In December 1940 he argued — as others like Burnham had already done during the faction fight — that the USSR was in fact a new form of class society, what he would eventually call 'bureaucratic collectivism'. He went through a range of versions of this theory in the 1940s, for a while calling the USSR bureaucratic-collectivist and *progressive*, then eventually settling for the view that it was *barbarism*, the alternative to capitalism and its historical successor if the working class did not make a socialist revolution in time.

Trotsky had argued that if the then economically dynamic USSR were considered a new form of class society, amidst the unending capitalist decline and stagnation of the 1930s, then the logical conclusion had to be that this new form of society was the next historical stage after rotting capitalism. No such conclusion necessarily followed from seeing the USSR as a new form of exploiting society in the epoch of vast capitalist expansion that followed World War 2; in that framework, the state-monopoly systems clearly appear as no more

than a historical parallel to capitalism (and in many ways a backward one) in a number of relatively underdeveloped countries.

Yet Shachtman, who lived until 1972, never made the necessary rectification to the views on this that (from a different angle) he shared with the Trotsky of 1940. He always talked of the state-monopoly systems as the *successor* to capitalism, and always of capitalism as declining. In this he paralleled the official Trotskyist movement, which took decades to register the post-war revival of capitalism.

In the '40s Shachtman's organisation, the Workers' Party, maintained a militant activity. Around 1947 there was serious talk of a reunification with the official Trotskyists. In 1949 the Workers' Party retreated and became the Independent Socialist League.

In 1958 it dissolved into the Socialist Party and its forces scattered. Shachtman reportedly supported the US-backed mercenary invasion of Cuba in 1961 and backed the US in the Vietnam war — considering the state-monopoly systems to be the worst evil and a mortal threat. He was a member of the Socialist Party when he died in 1972.

*Workers' Liberty* believes that the state-monopoly societies are systems of class exploitation, broadly parallel to capitalism in the development of the productive forces. Some of us think, with Shachtman, that these societies are a new form of class society, different from capitalism and in many fundamental respects — notably in what they do to the working class and to its possibilities of organising itself — regressive. With Shachtman's later politics — which flowed from his basic incoherence on the place of the state-monopoly systems in history — we have of course no sympathy. And it seems to us that Shachtman played a terrible role in 1940 when he split the Trotskyist movement.

But Shachtman is an important figure in the history of the Trotskyist movement, not least because his bureaucratic-collectivist thesis was an explicit working-through of the logic of Trotsky's ideas of 1940 — whereas the official Trotskyists have worked through those ideas incoherently and often irrationally. Much of the politics of the SWP in Britain, too, can only be understood as a dialogue with Shachtman: the forerunners of the SWP were associated with Shachtmanites until the end of the 1950s, and sold their literature.

We print here the first of two instalments of key articles by Shachtman as discussion material on the character of the bureaucratic state-monopoly class societies.

# The essential Shachtman part I



## Reflections on a decade past

Man, the political animal, does not start with theory but with action. It is only after a variety of actions have accumulated that he feels the need of drawing conclusions and acquires the possibility of theory which is only a generalisation from experience past to guide him in experience to come. Human progress is made only to the extent that this need is felt and the possibility utilised. If the goal of that progress is true human dignity, the process is not straightforward or uninterrupted or as rapid as it might be, it is due in large measure to the fact that the mind, while the most

remarkable organ we know, is also one of the most conservative: each idea which finally lodges in it after long and suspicious scrutiny offers resistance to every new idea or new theory.

All this holds true for man associated in political movements, including in different degrees the most iconoclastic or revolutionary. The greater his consciousness and his capacity for thinking, the more he strives to make his thoughts comprehensive, to bring order and system into them. But beyond a certain point, this striving, which is utterly indispensable for logical thinking and fruitful action, runs the risk of sterilising the movement

and its action by freezing thought into dogma. This risk is run especially by the revolutionary movement, precisely because of the importance it attaches to theory. The consequences of this risk are not unavoidable. They cannot be conjured away, however, simply by repeating after Engels that our theory is not a dogma but a guide to action. To understand why it is not a dogma and cannot be, is much more important.

In a world where everything but change itself is continuously changing, and where action (or inaction) contributes to change, theory, which is a guide to action applied to given conditions, cannot possibly apply in exactly the same way or to exactly the same extent under altered conditions. If theory is to remain revolutionary and valid, it must of necessity always be open to the criticism of experience, reaffirmed where practice confirms its validity, modified where that is dictated by a modification of conditions, and discarded where it proves to be ambiguous, outlived or false.

This constant re-examination and readiness to revise itself is provided for by Marxism itself which, because it is revolutionary and scientific, is critical and

therefore also self-critical. It is its only safeguard against shriveling into a dogma. By misapplying this safeguard, or ignoring it altogether, the Marxian movement of our time has contributed to its own enfeeblement. In this sense, it is not Marxism that has failed, as many gloomy critics find it so popular to say nowadays; it is the Marxian dogmatists who have failed.

To enter the second half of the century with nothing more than the political equipment the movement had at the beginning of the war is not so much criminal as it is preposterous. Those whose greatest boast is an impressive capacity for boasting may claim as their proudest virtue a "finished programme"; they are only announcing that their programme is as good as finished and they with it. As for ourselves, we lay no more claim to having a "finished programme" (what a *stupid* phrase! Just when was it finished? Just what finished it?) than Marxists have ever claimed since the days of the programme which Marx and Engels presented. We seek constantly to clarify, renovate and strengthen the socialist programme in harmony with the real developments and the needs of the struggle. Since it is a programme for struggle, and not a home for elderly radicals, we cannot say just when it will be "finished". The question is of little interest to us.

The principal new problem faced by Marxian theory, and therewith Marxian practice, is the problem of Stalinism. What once appeared to many to be either an academic or "foreign" problem is now, it should at last be obvious, a decisive problem for all classes in all countries. If it is understood as a purely Russian phenomenon or as a problem "in itself" it is of course not understood at all. It exists as a problem only in connection with the dying out of capitalist society, on the one hand, and the struggle to replace it by socialism, on the other. It is only in this connection that we can begin to understand it.

If our movement had done nothing more than to make its contribution to the understanding of Stalinism, that alone would justify its existence. It is our unique contribution, and all our views are closely connected with it. We consider it decisive for the future of capitalism, in so far as it has one, and for the future of socialism.

An understanding of Stalinism is too much to expect from the bourgeoisie. The modest theoretical capacities at its disposal are still further restricted by class interests which blind it in the investigation of serious social problems, especially when it is so exclusively preoccupied with frenzied but futile efforts to patch together a social order that is falling apart at every point. To the extent that its thinkers and statesmen try to *explain* Stalinism in more or less coherent terms, they inform us that collectivism necessarily leads to tyranny — a homily usually prefaced by the well-worn banality from Lord Acton about how power corrupts and absolute power corrupts absolutely. The explanation does not explain much, least of all how it happens that the tyran-

ny of collectivism is supplanting the freedom of capitalism. But nothing more can be asked from a theory which was intellectually developed and popularised by the savants in the abattoirs of American yellow journalism.

Most of the time, the bourgeoisie does not transcend demonology. It explains Stalinism in the simple terms of evil spirits, witchcraft, black magic, conjurations and other unnatural forces, which can be exorcised by adequate police measures or by stocking more atomic bombs than the demonic forces. Stalinism remains for the bourgeoisie what Winston Churchill, not its most obtuse representative, describe as an enigma and a riddle and a mystery. The military mind of Mr Churchill — which is only a species of the common police mind — hears no special call to undo the enigmas, ravel the riddles

**“Stalinism is that  
gruesome punishment  
visited upon the  
working class when it  
fails to perform the  
task of sweeping  
doomed capitalism  
out of existence”.**

and pierce the mysteries of society. Explain Stalinism? It is enough to blow it up by an atomic bomb.

The international Social Democracy has little more to offer. Theory in general and Marxian theory in particular ceased long ago to hold its interest. In part this explains why it alternates between joining with the Stalinists against the bourgeoisie (in the East) and joining with the bourgeoisie against the Stalinists (in the West). About a quarter of a century ago, the Russian Menshevik leaders who retained some respect for theoretical generalisation described Stalinism as "state capitalism" or as "one of its forms". In more recent times, the same theory has regained a pallid existence, or a multiplicity of existences, among smaller groups in and around the Trotskyist movement: Stalinism is Red Fascism or bureaucratic Fascism, or caste-ruled state capitalism, or bureaucratic state capitalism or some other variety of state capitalism

One inconvenience of this theory is that the Stalinist social system is not capitalist and does not show any of the classic, traditional, distinctive characteristics of capitalism. Another is that there is no capitalist class under the rule of Stalinism,

and there are as many embarrassments in conceiving of a capitalist state where all capitalists are in cemeteries or in emigration as in grasping the idea of a workers' state where all the workers are in slave-camps or factory-prisons. A third is that nowhere can an authentic capitalist class, or any section of it, be found to support or welcome Stalinism, a coolness which makes good social sense from its point of view since it is obvious to all but those who extract theories from their thumbs that Stalinism comes to power by destroying the capitalist state and the capitalist class. There are a dozen other inconveniences about the theories of "state capitalism," or any theory based upon the idea of a single "universal capital" which Marx, rightly, we think, jeered at as nonsensical. But the most important one is the fact that the theories preclude any understanding of the actual social conflict in which Stalinism is involved and offer no possibility of an effective political course for the working class movement. To combat it as a capitalist force is like galloping with tilted rubber hose at a windmill that is not there.

There remains the Trotskyist movement. During the lifetime of Trotsky, his theoretical contribution to the understanding of the degeneration of the Russian Revolution out of which Stalinism was born, was the only serious and fruitful one produced within or outside the Marxian movement. In the Trotskyist movement today gnomes have succeeded the giant and misery has fallen heir to grandeur. The changing tides of events which sweep the islet on which they are marooned without sail or chart or compass or ship or pilot, seems to give them the illusion that it is they who are moving. Actually, they are immobilised victims of a dogma. They repeat ritually that although Russia is a vast prison of the workers and the peoples, it nevertheless remains a workers' state because property is in the hands of the state. This state is, however, completely in the hands of an uncontrollable bureaucracy which directs the economy in its own interests. And while it is totalitarian and counter-revolutionary, it nevertheless overturns capitalism in one country after another and extends the domain of the workers' state as it was never extended before. More baseless theories have been concocted about many things; a weirder one is hard to think of.

This dogma is the substance that has made it possible, today as in the past, for Stalinism to exercise a strong magnetic attraction upon the Trotskyist movement, forcing it into reluctant alignment in the most fundamentally important political developments and leaving it essentially only with the criticism not so much of what Stalinism does as the "methods" by which it does it. This was already true in part during Trotsky's leadership; since his death, it has become *the* trait of the Trotskyist movement, which is obscured at times only by its erroneous analyses of Stalinism's line as a "capitulation" to capitalism. This the bourgeoisie would



Roosevelt and Stalin

like to believe in, but it has come to understand ruefully that the "capitulation" is only chimerical. The growing frenzy of enthusiasm which the Trotskyist movement has worked up for the Tito regime, which is socially identical with the Russian Stalinist regime even if the Fourth International only yesterday solemnly designated it as Bonapartist capitalism, is only another case of the magnetic attraction to which it yields. This disoriented movement cannot, without radically reorienting itself, make any positive contribution to the reorientation of the working class movement in general.

The Second World War served at least this useful purpose: it underscored the tendencies of development of capitalism and Stalinism, and by making more explicit what was already implicit in them, brought them into clearer perspective.

The decay of capitalist society continues at a rapid pace and almost without interruption. One after another, its organs are attacked by the poisons of decomposition. The mere fact that one part of the capitalist world found it imperative to ally itself with so mortal an enemy of capital as Stalinism is enough to show that we are in the presence of a dying social order. The same thing is shown by the fact, now almost universally acknowledged by the bourgeois world, that the problems which the incredibly destructive war purported to solve are still unresolved and must wait for solution upon victory in the "cold war" which, it is not very sanguinely hoped, will prevent the open military collision of a third world war. Another world war, the third in two or at most three generations and this one a war of incalculable consequences for whatever civilization we have — is more than any social system we can endure. Yet there is no other perspective before world capitalism, and few serious

representatives of the capitalist camp confidently offer any other.

The economy of capitalism has never been so chaotic, unstable and so far removed from classical capitalist economy. The reactionaries who complain, unavailingly, that the system of "free enterprise" is being undermined in all capitalist countries, even in the United States, by "socialist" measures, are quite right, in their own way. All they fail to understand is that for capitalism to exist at all nowadays it must allow for its *partial negation*, for that "invading" socialism of which Engels wrote some four-score years ago. However, the mixture of the "invader" with decaying capitalism produces an increasingly insufferable monstrosity.

The chaos of capitalist economy is organized, as it were, only by an ever heavier emphasis on war economy, on the production of means of destruction which do not re-enter the process of production to enrich the wealth of the nation and which "enter" the process of production of the enemy nation only to disrupt and destroy it. If the war budgets were reduced throughout the capitalist world to what was normal no more than thirty years ago, complete economic prostration would follow immediately and automatically. Such burdens, capitalism cannot escape. They are breaking its back, no matter how much they are shifted to the shoulders of the working people.

In the political sphere, there is a corresponding development. It would almost suffice to point out that in the last real fortress of capitalism, the United States, taken on the whole, there is today less democracy than existed under the Hohenzollern and Habsburg monarchies before the First World War. Partly under the necessity and partly on the pretext of fighting the "fifth column" of Stalinism,

one long-standing democratic right after another is being assaulted in the country, undermined, restricted or wiped out altogether. The criminality of the assault is matched only by the hypocrisy of the Stalinist protestants, the cowardly flabbiness if not direct connivance of most of the liberal world, and the tacit approval of the drive by the official labour movement which conducts its own drive in parallel with it. In the other capitalist countries the situation is no better; in many of them it is worse and much worse.

The more the ownership and control of the means of production and exchange are concentrated in the hands of the few — the greater is the centralization of authority and power in the hands of the state and the further are the masses removed from control of economic and political conditions. The deeper the economic crisis of capitalism, the shakier its foundations, the greater the ineffectualness of the market as the automatic regulator of capitalist production — the wider and deeper is the intervention of the state into the economy as substitute-regulator, substitute-organiser, substitute-director. The more extensive the wars and the war preparations, the vaster, more critical and more complex the efforts required to sustain them both in the economic and the political (and the ideological) fields — the more the state is obliged to regiment and dictate in all the spheres of social life, the less tolerant it becomes of all "disruption", the more it demands conformity to the "national effort", to state policy, for all the classes.

The working class is least able to conform because the accumulating burdens rest primarily on its shoulders. To protect its economic interests it is compelled to oppose the prevailing trends. To resist effectively it must have and exercise those democratic rights which, while valuable to all classes, are absolutely indispensable to the working class. The more it exercises these rights out of the simple necessity of defending its economic position — the stronger is the tendency of the bourgeois state, out of the simple necessity of defending its position, to curtail these rights and even to nullify them entirely. Self-preservation generates in the working class a craving for democracy and dictates the fight for it *against the bourgeoisie*.

The socialist movement, which is (or should be) nothing but the conscious expression of the fight of the working class, can be restored to a decisive political force if it realises that, today far more than ever before, the all-around and aggressive championing of the struggle for democracy is the only safeguard against the encroaching social decay, and the only road to socialism. We are or must become the most consistent champions of democracy, not so much because the slogans of democracy are "convenient weapons" against an anti-democratic bourgeoisie, but because the working class, and our movement with it, must have democracy in order to protect and promote its interests. The last thirty years in particular have confirmed or reminded

us or awakened us to the fact that without the attainment of democracy all talk of the conquest of power by the working class is deceit or illusion, and that without the realisation of complete democracy all talk of the establishment of socialism is a mockery. A socialist movement, grant it the best intentions in the world, which ignores or deprecates the fight for democracy — for all democratic rights and institutions, for more extensive democratic rights and the most democratic institutions — which is suspicious about such a fight being somehow not in consonance with or something separate from (let alone inimical to) the fight for socialism, which trails along behind that fight or supports it reluctantly or with tongue in cheek, will never lead the fight for socialist freedom.

To cling to the terms of the old polemics between left and right wings of socialism — “dictatorship” versus “democracy” — not under a passed situation but in a radically different situation, is political madness. The Russian Revolution has been destroyed; it is no longer the polestar of the socialist proletariat. The Socialist proletariat is no longer on the offensive; its struggle for power is nowhere on the order of the day. The main obstacle on the road, not to socialist power, but simply to the reconstitution of a socialist working class movement, are not the parliamentary illusions of the proletariat. They are the illusions of Stalinism.

Today, not reformism but Stalinism is the principal threat to the integrity, the consciousness, the interests of the working class. Today, the term dictatorship does not bring to the mind of the worker the image, clear or dim, of the inspiring soviet democracy of the Bolshevik revolution. It represents what he had experienced in his own day and on his own back: Fascist or Stalinist totalitarianism. The fear and hatred which these despotisms stir in him are deep and justified. The worker of today who wants “democracy” and rejects “dictatorship” does so for entirely different reasons than the worker of 30 or more years ago. He is unerring in his class instincts, and right in his “prejudices” for democracy, despite the confused form in which he may express them. The meaning of political terms especially is determined in the long run by the people and not by an élite, and even if that élite is socialistic and scientific it loses little or nothing by bowing to the popular verdict.

The class instinct of the proletariat are a safeguard against many things. But they do not suffice for the victory of socialism. For that, a *conscious* proletariat is required, a socialist proletariat. The question that once arose as an academic one is now posed as a real one: what is the social trend when capitalism has become ripe and overripe, objectively, for the socialist reorganisation, and the working class, for one reason or another, fails to develop its socialist consciousness to the point where it is capable of dealing capitalism the death-blow?

Socialism does not and cannot come into existence automatically. Does

capitalism then continue in existence automatically and indefinitely? We are familiar with the theory that Stalinist Russia is a workers' state which decays and decays and decays further, but which will nevertheless always remain a workers' state until overturned by the capitalist class. There is evidently also a theory that capitalism continues to decay and decay and decay still further but that until it is overturned by the socialist proletariat, no matter how long that may take, it will continue to exist as a capitalist society. Neither theory, for all the stereotyped references to dialectics, is worth the paper devoted to it.

To say that capitalism is decaying is to say that it is increasingly incapable of coping with the basic problems of society, of maintaining economic and political order — that is, or course, order on a capitalist foundation. Modern society, based on large-scale manufacture and world trade, is an intricate and highly integrated complex. Every serious disturbance of its more or less normal operation — crisis, war, sharp political conflict, revolution — violently dislocates the lives of millions and even tens of millions all over the world. The dislocations in turn render difficult the return to normal operation. The difference between capitalism flowering and capitalism declining lies in the growth of the number, scope, gravity and intensity of these disturbances. It is increasingly difficult for capitalism to restore an equilibrium and to maintain it for long. Where the crisis reaches an acute stage, and the forces of capitalism are more or less paralysed, the proletariat is called upon to restore order, its own order, by the socialist revolution.

But what if the proletariat is not organised to carry through the socialist revolution? Or, having carried it out, as in Russia in 1917, what if it remains isolated and is therefore not yet able to discharge its only task as a new ruling class, namely, to abolish all ruling classes by establishing socialism? From the days of the Paris Commune to the defeat of the Chinese Revolution of 1925-27, the answer was always the same: the proletariat pays off failure in bloody retribution inflicted by the bourgeoisie restored to power.

In the last quarter of a century, an epoch of the exceptionally rapid disintegration of capitalism, we have seen that the answer to the failure of the working class may also take another form. Where the bourgeoisie is no longer capable of maintaining (or, as in the case of Russia), of restoring its social order, and the proletariat is not yet able to inaugurate its own, a social interregnum is established by a new ruling class which buries the moribund capitalism and crushes the unborn socialism in the egg. The new ruling class is the Stalinist bureaucracy. Its social order, hostile both to capitalism and socialism, is bureaucratic or totalitarian collectivism. The bourgeoisie is wiped out altogether and the working classes are reduced to state slaves.



Poland, 1981

The elements of the new ruling class are created under capitalism. They are part of the vast social mélange we know as the middle classes. Concentration of capital, capitalist crisis — these uproot the numerous strata which are intermediate between the two basic classes. They tend more and more to lose their stake in the capitalist system of private property. They lose their small properties or the proper-



ties lose their value; they lose their comfortable social positions or their positions lose importance. The sharper and longer the agony of capitalism, the more of these elements become declassed. Their old social allegiances give way to new ones, the choice depending on a whole mass of circumstances. They are attracted to anti-capitalist movements, real or spurious.

When the socialist movement is in a

growing, healthy, self-confident condition, they are drawn to it, become its valuable allies and are greatly influenced by its democratic and socialist ideology. Under other circumstances, many of them are drawn to a fascist movement which promises to check the excesses of capital without permitting the rule of labour. However, fascism in power proved to be a crucial disillusion to the anti-big-

capitalistic middle classes and, particularly since its defeat in the war, suffered a tremendous moral-political blow on a world scale. Today it is Stalinism, in the absence of a revolutionary socialist movement which it has helped so signally to strangle, that exercises a magnetic power over these elements.

Stalinism is represented by a powerful and seemingly stable state. Outside of

Russia it commands, or tries to command, powerful mass organisations. Its authentically anti-capitalist nature is established in the minds of all social groups, including the precariously-situated or declassed elements from the old middle classes: intellectuals, skilled, semi-skilled and unskilled; individuals from the liberal professions; officials and employees of all sorts, including those from the swollen but impoverished governmental apparatus; and above all else, labour bureaucrats. They have less and less to lose from the abolition of private property by the incorporation of the bourgeoisie, and more and more to gain from a movement which will overturn capitalism without imposing upon them the democratic discipline and equalitarian principles of the socialist proletariat.

In Stalinism they find a movement able to appeal to the masses for the struggle against capitalism, but yet one which does not demand of them — and the socialist movement does — the abandonment of the ideology which is common to all oppressor classes, namely: command is the privilege of superiors, obedience the lot of inferiors, and the mass must be ruled by kindly masters for its own good. Such elements gravitate easily to the Stalinist bureaucracy precisely because it already has, or has the possibility of acquiring, the leadership of one of the main social classes, which has in common with them a growing disinterest in the preservation of capitalist property.

Given the existence and normal growth of the proletarian movement and its assimilation of a socialist consciousness, all these elements taken together would not constitute a very decisive social force. But the weight of social forces is not absolute but relative. The socialist consciousness and coherence of the working class have suffered tremendous blows in the past three decades from reformism, on the one hand, and from Stalinism on the other. Its disorientation and demoralisation have been aggravated by the continuing decomposition of capitalism. While we do not believe for one moment that this condition will continue without end, the fact is that this is what the situation has been for some time.

Compared with a working class in such a state, the elements we have described, especially when bolstered by a big Stalinist state, can for a time act as a decisive social force in one country after another where the crisis has prostrated the bourgeoisie. What is more, this force can destroy the bourgeoisie, its state and its economy, and transform itself into a new ruling class. It can do it and it has done it. That the auto-certified Marxists refuse to recognise this fact is small comfort to the bourgeoisie that has been crushed and the working class that has been subjugated.

While the power of Stalinism was confined to Russia, this analysis and conclusion may have appeared abstract or premature. The reserve is no longer possible. It is possible now to re-read the history of the Russian Revolution with greater profit. It proved that the working

class, democratically organised, self-acting and class-conscious, can carry out the socialist revolution, can "establish democracy". Unless this is attributed to some we-do-not-know-which quality unique to Russians, it is valid for the working class as a whole. It proved also that the working class in power either moves toward the socialist reconstruction of society or loses power altogether.

During and after the Second World War, the new Stalinist bureaucracy became the master of just those more-or-less peripheral countries in which the most striking and complete collapse of the bourgeoisie — economic, political,

“We are, or must become, the most consistent champions of democracy... because the working class, and our movement with it, must have democracy in order to protect and promote its interests”.

military and ideological — occurred, and precisely because of that collapse. Poland, Hungary, Albania, Czechoslovakia, Rumania, Yugoslavia, China — these are not yet the world, or the decisive part of the world; far from it. But whether Stalinism conquered them from abroad (regimes imposed by the Russian army) or by means of a native movement, the symptomatic significance of the events is clear. A new state machine, replica in every respect of the Russian state machine, is established by the bureaucracy and under its exclusive, totalitarian control. All the means of production and exchange are sooner or later converted into state property. The decadent and demoralised bourgeoisie is sooner or later exterminated. The working classes are deprived of any right whatever and transformed into modern slaves.

Capitalism has become reactionary and obsolete not because it no longer develops the productive forces but because it converts more and more of those forces at the disposal of society into means of destruction which do not enrich but impoverish it, and prevent it from making the pro-

gress that a rationally-organised economy would assure. That — according to Marx and according to what we can see all around us with the naked eye.

The reactionary character of Stalinism is determined in the same way. The productive forces available to society are converted into means of destruction to no smaller — perhaps even to a larger — extent under Stalinism than under capitalism. The enormous wastage in production under Stalinism is notorious and inherent in bureaucratic collectivism. The physical using up of the most important productive force in society, the workers and their down-right annihilation in the slave camps, is appalling under Stalinism; it has yet to be exceeded by capitalism. The vast technological advantages of state ownership are constantly dissipated precisely by the social relations established by Stalinism and its parasitic ruling class. To determine the class character of the Stalinist bureaucracy by asking if it is historically necessary, in the way Trotsky demanded and his unthinking epigones repeat, is, to put it quietly, erroneous. They would be hard put to it to prove that all ruling classes in history were historically necessary in the sense they give to this phrase. Was the feudal ruling class historically necessary? It would be interesting to hear what The Theoreticians would answer to this question, and how their answer would differ from, let us say, the one given by Engels.

The Stalinist bureaucracy in power is a new ruling, exploitive class. Its social system is a new system of totalitarian exploitation and oppression, not capitalist and yet having nothing in common with socialism. It is the cruel realisation of the prediction made by all the great socialist scientists, from Marx and Engels onward, that capitalism must collapse out of an inability to solve its own contradictions and that the alternatives facing mankind are not so much capitalism or socialism as they are: *socialism or barbarism*. Stalinism is that new barbarism.

The old Marxists could foresee it in general but could not describe it in detail. We can. The workers will fail to take command of society when capitalism collapses only on penalty of their own destruction, warned Engels. Stalinism is that gruesome punishment visited upon the working class when it fails to perform the task, in its own name and under its own leadership, of sweeping doomed capitalism out of existence and thus fulfilling its social destiny. For this failure it must record not the triumph of the invading socialist society but of the invading barbarism.

These are the basic thoughts that determine our outlook and politics.

They determine our attitude toward Stalinism and other currents within the working class movement. The analysis we have made of the social forces and trends excludes any consideration of Stalinism as a working class tendency. It operates *inside* the working class movement, but is not *of* the working class. Those who put the Stalinist bureaucracy on the same plane with the reformist labour

bureaucracy are like people digging a well with a washcloth. The security and progress of the reformist leadership require the maintenance of a reformist labour movement — but a labour movement! — of some form of democracy — but not its complete abolition! The triumph of the Stalinist bureaucracy *requires* the destruction of the labour movement and of all democracy. Whoever cannot see this after the victory of Stalinism in a dozen different countries, cannot see a fist in front of his nose.

Therefore, drive Stalinism out of the labour movement! But only by the informed, democratic decision of the working class itself, and *not* by the bureaucratic methods of the reformist and conservative labour officials.

We are for democracy, in full and for all, in every field, including above all the labour movement. Complete and equal democratic rights for the Stalinists in the labour movement and outside of it, we say, and not the aping of Stalinism in the fight against it. Relentless struggle to uproot Stalinism from the labour movement by democratic political and organisational means, and combination with all democratic elements in the labour movement to defend it from conquest and subjugation by the champions and protagonists of the most outrageous anti-labour regimes in the world! Whatever

scores there are to settle between socialists and reformists or conservatives in the labour movement — and there are not a few — will be settled democratically and at the right time inside the labour movement. But no thinking socialist, no thinking worker, will combine with Stalinism, or do anything but resist it, when it invades the labour, or in general, the democratic movements and seeks to replace the present leadership with its own.

Our views determine our attitude toward democrats of different types. We do not differ from them because they are for democracy, but because to support capitalism, to tolerate it, to do anything but work for its replacement by socialism, is to be reconciled to a narrow class democracy and to be armed in face of that sapping even of bourgeois democracy which capitalism requires for its continued existence. It is not necessarily true that to fight against capitalism is to fight for democracy, we grant. But it is decidedly true that to fight for democracy is to fight against capitalism.

We do not differ from any socialist because he is for democracy as the road to socialism. That we believe — in the sense given that ideal by Marx and Engels, in the sense that the attainment of democracy is possible and equated to the winning of political power by the socialist

proletariat. We differ with those who believe in the growing democratisation of capitalism. It is an illusion. We differ with them because of their belief in the collaboration between classes which are irreconcilable. We differ with anyone who shows resistance to the complete independence and self-reliance of the working class. We differ with those who, hating Stalinism without understanding it, oppose it by tolerating and even urging the subordination of the working class to the doomed and dying capitalist regime. It is this very policy of reconciliation with capitalism instead of socialist struggle against it that has made possible the rise of Stalinism and its victories. The workers need a lifebuoy to carry them out of danger from the foundering ship of capitalism and not the anchor. We are revolutionary socialists, we are democratic socialists.

If a socialist can at all permit himself the overly youthful luxury of using such terms as "optimistic" or "pessimistic" about theoretical questions or even political perspective, it would be in this connection. Pessimism does not lie in stating that Stalinism has conquered here and there and defeated the working class. Our "optimism" does not consist in the belief that the working class is always revolutionary, or is always ready to make the revolution, or that it cannot be defeated, or even that it is always right. It derives from our belief, scientifically grounded, that the working class, no matter what the setbacks it suffers, has a solid position in society, which gives it inexhaustible powers of self-renewal and recuperation to resume the attack against the conditions of its existence. These attacks have continued; they will continue because they must.

Capitalism is dying and even disappearing, along with the capitalist classes. But the working class cannot be killed off, and it cannot exist without struggle. Stalinism has, it is true, appeared on the scene, but before this regime of permanent crisis can think of consolidating itself all over the world its first excursions beyond its original frontiers have already brought it into a violent and irresolvable conflict with itself which is doing more to reveal its real nature to the working class world than a dozen good theories.

The idea that the working class can struggle but never win, that it can do nothing more than suffer under new oppressors, is a superstitious prejudice which ruling classes have ever been interested in cultivating. The idea that the workers, whose numbers are overwhelming, can forever attack but never break through to self-rule is worthy of an inventor of perpetual-motion machines. The working class learns more slowly than was once thought; but with interruptions and distractions it learns. Sooner or later it will learn its emancipating task, and the power it has to perform it. On its banner then the watchword of democracy will be indistinguishable from the watchword of socialism. We are here to help make it sooner.

# More on Eastern Europe



Reform or revolution in Eastern Europe  
A Socialist Organiser pamphlet

available from PO Box 823,  
London SE15 4NA. 80p +  
20p P&P.



# Isaac Deutscher's Stalin

We come finally to Isaac Deutscher's biography of Stalin. The author's credentials entitle him to a serious hearing for a serious work. He was a militant in the old Polish Communist movement, then in the Polish Trotskyist movement which he seems to have left either just before or after the outbreak of the second world war. He is obviously at home in the history of the Russian revolution and of the revolutionary movement in general. His book is free of those bald errors, grotesque misunderstandings and falsehoods which swarm over the pages of most of the current literature about the Bolshevik revolution. His appraisal of Stalinism does not aim, as do most others written nowadays, to discredit that revolution and with it the fight for socialism.

He refuses to regard the Bolshevik revolution as the Original Sin from which all the evils of our time flow, and endeavours to present an objective sociological, even Marxian, analysis of Stalinism, free of the primitive diabolism which is generally substituted for analysis. Deutscher's analysis really comes to grips with what has become *the key question* of our time.

What is Stalinism? Deutscher finds the basis for understanding it in what he sets forth as the fundamental development that "has been common to all revolutions so far". This, essentially, is the development:

*"Each great revolution begins with a phenomenal outburst of popular energy, impatience, anger, and hope. Each ends in the weariness, exhaustion, and disillusionment of the revolutionary people. In the first phase the party that gives the fullest expression to the popular mood outdoes its rivals, gains the confidence of the masses, and rises to power...Then comes the inevitable trial of civil war. The revolutionary party is still marching in step with the majority of the nation. It is acutely conscious of its unity with the people and of a profound harmony between its own objectives and the people's wishes and desires. It can call upon the mass of the nation for ever-growing efforts and sacrifices; and it is sure of the response. In this, the heroic phase, the revolutionary party is in a very real sense democratic, even though it treats its foes with dictatorial relentlessness and observes no strict constitutional precept. The leaders implicitly trust their vast plebeian following; and their policy rests on that trust. They are willing and even eager to submit their policies to open debate and to accept*

*the popular verdict"*.

But this relationship hardly survives the civil war. The party emerges weary and the people wearier. "The anti-climax of the revolution is there". The fruits of the now secured revolution ripen too slowly to permit immediate fulfillment of the promises made to the people by the party.

*"This is the real tragedy which overtakes the party of the revolution. If its action is to be dictated by the mood of the people, it will presently have to efface itself, or at least to relinquish power. But no revolutionary government can abdicate after a victorious civil war, because the only real pretenders to power are the still considerable remnants of the defeated counter-revolution...The party of the revolution knows no retreat. It has been driven to its present pass largely through obeying the will of that same people by which it is now deserted. It will go on doing what it considers to be its duty, without paying much heed to the voice of the people. In the end it will muzzle and stifle that voice"*.

The chasm between the rulers and the people widens, without the former having a full understanding of what is happening as they "acquire the habits of arbitrary government and themselves come to be governed by their own habits". The party divides in two.

*"Some of its leaders point in alarm to the divorce between the revolution and the people. Others justify the conduct of the party on the grounds that the divorce itself is irremediable. Still others, the actual rulers, deny the fact of the divorce itself: for to admit it would be to widen further the gap between the rulers and the ruled. Some cry in alarm that the revolution has been betrayed, for in their eyes government by the people is the very essence of revolution — without it there can be no government for the people. The rulers find justification for themselves in the conviction that whatever they do will ultimately serve the interests of the broad mass of the nation; and indeed they do, on the whole, use their power to consolidate most of the economic and social conquests of the revolution. Amid charges and counter-charges, the heads of the revolutionary leaders begin to roll and the power of the post-revolutionary state towers hugely over the society it governs..."*

*It is in this broad perspective that the metamorphosis of triumphant Bolshevism and Stalin's own fortunes, can best be understood"*.

That, according to Deutscher, is the law of revolutions, it is the "general trend of events; and this has been common to all great revolutions so far". To make his

analysis more specific and to round it out we must go further with Deutscher. Although Stalinism represents a "metamorphosis of Bolshevism", it is not its negation. In Stalin, there is still the Bolshevik, but no longer in the more or less pure state, as it were. His puzzled opponents ask: "What is Stalin, after all? The architect of an imperial restoration, who sometimes exploits revolutionary pretexts for his ends, or the promoter of Communist revolution, camouflaging his purpose with the paraphernalia of the Russian imperial tradition?" Deutscher answers: *Both!* Stalinism is revolutionism and traditionalism, stranded in strange interplay; or as he puts it elsewhere, in Stalin there is the "conflict between his nationalism and his revolutionism". As a result of this duality (in Stalin or Stalinism), he carried out, five years after Lenin's death, Soviet Russia's "second revolution". It is true that

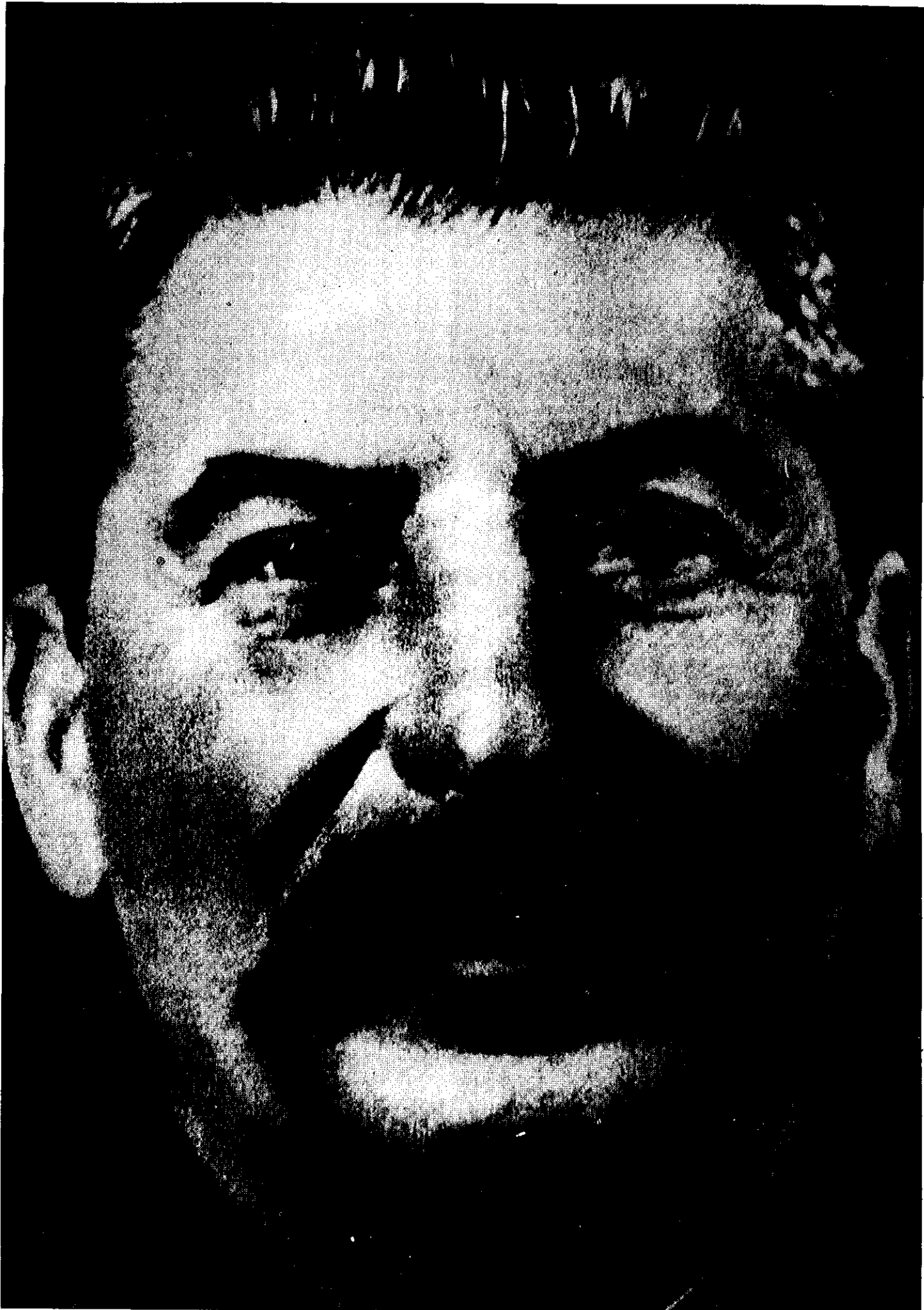
*"The ideas of the second revolution were not his. He neither foresaw it nor prepared for it, yet he, and in a sense, he alone, accomplished it."*

It is likewise true that the cost was "the complete loss, by a whole generation, of spiritual and political freedom", but the "rewards of that revolution were astounding" — namely, the rapid industrialisation, the modernisation of agriculture, the reduction of illiteracy, the bringing of Asiatic Russia nearer to Europe even while European Russia was detached from Europe. Yet the Stalinist revolution differs from the Bolshevik revolution, and the most important difference

*"...lies in the method of the revolution. Broadly speaking, the old Bolshevism staked its hope on the revolutionary momentum of the international labour movement. It believed that the Socialist order would result from the original experience and struggle of the working classes abroad, that it would be the most authentic act of their social and political self-determination. The old Bolshevism, in other words, believed in revolution from below such as the upheaval of 1917 had been. The revolution which Stalin now carried into eastern and central Europe was primarily a revolution from above. It was decreed, inspired, and managed by the great power predominant in that area"*.

The movement connected with his name, "at once progressive and retrograde," shows Stalin to be of the "breed of the great revolutionary despots, to which Cromwell, Robespierre, and Napoleon belonged" (elsewhere Deutscher adds: Bismarck and Czar Alexander).

*"Like Cromwell as Lord Protector or*



*Napoleon as Emperor, Stalin now remained the guardian and trustee of the revolution. He consolidated its national gains and extended them. He "built socialism"; and even his opponents, while denouncing his autocracy, admitted that most of his economic reforms were indeed essential for socialism".*

But the fact that Stalin can take his place by the side of Napoleon and Bismarck is not accidental. Here Deutscher finally rounds out his analysis so that the conclusions are clearly implicit in it. Stalin's role

*"...results from one peculiar parallelism between the bourgeois and the Socialist revolution in Europe, a parallelism that has come to light only since the Second World War. Europe, in the nineteenth century, saw how the feudal order, outside France, crumbled and was replaced by the bourgeois one. But east of the Rhine feudalism was not overthrown by a series of upheavals on the pattern of the French revolution, by explosions of popular despair and anger, by revolutions from below, for the spread of which some of the Jacobins had hoped in 1794. Instead, European feudalism was either destroyed or undermined by a series of revolutions from above. Napoleon, the tamer of Jacobinism at home, carried the revolution into foreign lands, to Italy, to the Rhineland, and to Poland, where he abolished serfdom, completely or in part, and where his Code destroyed many of the feudal privileges. Malgré lui-même, he executed parts of the political testament of Jacobinism.... The feudal order had been too moribund to survive; but outside France the popular forces arrayed against it were too weak to overthrow it "from below"; and so it was swept away "from above". It is mainly in Napoleon's impact upon the lands neighbouring France that the analogy is found for the impact of Stalinism upon eastern and central Europe. The chief elements of both historic situations are similar: the social order of eastern Europe was as little capable of survival as was the feudal order in the Rhineland in Napoleon's days; the revolutionary forces arrayed against the anachronism were too weak to remove it; then conquest and revolution merged in a movement, at once progressive and retrograde, which at last transformed the structure of society."*

Now the reader has all he needs to know about Deutscher's analysis of Stalinism. It is not identical with Trotsky's analysis, but only because it is an extreme and one-sided presentation of it. Yet the similarity between the two leaps to the eye. To the extent that Trotsky incorporated it into his own analysis, he drove himself, toward the end of this work, into a theoretical and political blind alley, in which his sightless followers have since milled around with such calamitous consequences. Deutscher himself does not follow the practice that his theory entails, for reasons that are not clear but which cannot possibly be objective. His book ends with a tentative sort of advocacy of what Trotsky called the "supplementary

revolution" against Stalinism. But this half-hopeful note does not even modify the fact that Deutscher has worked out the theoretical basis for a socialist capitulation to Stalinism. To the extent that the working-class and socialist movement shares this theory, any progressive struggle against Stalinism is doomed and with it the struggle for socialism itself. The socialist movement can rise again to a full consciousness of its problem and how to resolve it only — we stress it again: only — if it understands the root-falsity of the theory to which Deutscher has given such utterly tragic and disorienting expression.

The crux of Deutscher's disaster lies in his "peculiar parallelism" between bourgeois and socialist revolutions. Historical analogies are by their very nature seductive. There is especially good reason for comparing the socialist revolu-

**"Deutscher has worked out the theoretical basis for a socialist capitulation to Stalinism".**

tion with the great bourgeois revolutions of the past two centuries. Indeed, unless they are compared, and their similarities established, the socialist revolution becomes incomprehensible or, at best, is cast back to the utopias of pre-scientific socialism. But this is no less important: unless they are contrasted, and the fundamental differences between them clarified, the socialist revolution becomes impossible! Deutscher's treatment of the two revolutions suffers from two defects, but those two suffice: he does not deal with their differences at all, and he presents them as similar precisely in those respects where they are and must be different, decisively different, so different that they cannot be compared but only contrasted to one another.

The aim of every bourgeois revolution was simple: to establish the economic supremacy of the market, of the capitalist mode of production. These already existed to one degree or another under feudalism. But feudalism impeded their full unfoldment, it "fettered" them. Its outlived laws, customs, traditions, regulations, estate-ish and geographical divisions, privileges — all blocked off the "primitive accumulation of capital" required for the full expansion of the new mode of production; all were constricting

clamps upon the winding and unwinding of that mainspring which is the stimulator and regulator of capitalist production, namely, the free market. The removal of these fetters, blocks and clamps was all that was essentially required for the triumph of the bourgeois revolution, and not necessarily the complete destruction of feudalism in all its forms or even of the feudal lords themselves. Indeed, in many (if not most) countries where the fetters of feudalism were finally broken, the new mode of production could and did co-exist, either at home or within their world empires or both, with the old feudalists and their economic forms, intact or more or less capitalistically transformed.

But because social progress required the victory of the bourgeois revolution, it did not follow that the bourgeoisie was everywhere the organiser and leader of the revolution. In our Marxist literature, the bourgeoisie of the period in which feudalism was generally replaced by capitalism is often referred to as having been "a revolutionary class" or "the revolutionary class". This is true, but only in a very specific, distinctly limited sense. The capitalist mode of production, even in its incipency under feudalism, to say nothing of its post-feudal days, was inherently of a kind that constantly required expansion, and was therefore an intolerant rebel against the feudal fetters upon it. The bourgeoisie was revolutionary primarily and basically only in the sense that it was at once the agent, the organiser and the beneficiary of capital; in the sense that it was the bearer of the new mode of production which was irreconcilable with the supremacy of feudal backwardness and stagnancy. But never — more accurately, perhaps, only in the rarest of cases — was the bourgeoisie revolutionary in the sense of organising and leading the political onslaught on feudal or aristocratic society. That would have required either a radical break with the feudalists for which it was not prepared, or the unleashing of "plebian mobs and passions" which it feared — or both.

The Great French Revolution was great — the greatest of all the bourgeois revolutions, the classic among bourgeois revolutions — precisely because it was not organised and led by the French bourgeoisie! It was the work of the Jacobins, of the lowly artisans and peasants and tradesfolk, the plebian masses. The Cromwellian revolution was far more the work of the small independent landlord, the artisan, the urban tradesman than the work of the then English bourgeoisie — in fact, Cromwell's Puritans had to fight bitterly against the Presbyterian bourgeoisie. Napoleon, who extended the bourgeois revolution to so many lands of feudal Europe, based himself not so much upon the bourgeoisie of France as upon the new class of allotment farmers. In Germany, it was not the bourgeoisie that unified the nation and levelled the feudal barriers to the expansion of capitalism, but the iron representative of the Prussian Junkers, Bismarck.

He carried out the bourgeois revolution in the interests of the feudal Junkers, and made his united Germany a powerful capitalist country, but without the bourgeoisie and against it. Much the same process developed in distant Japan. As for that late-comer, czarist Russia, the bourgeoisie remained a prop of the semi-feudal autocracy to the last, and the bourgeois revolution was carried out in passing by the proletariat and only as an episode in the socialist revolution.

Yet in all the countries (except of course in Russia) where the bourgeois revolution was carried out — always without the bourgeoisie, often against the bourgeoisie — it did not fail to achieve its main and primary aim: to assure the social rule of the bourgeoisie, to establish the economic supremacy of its mode of production. This was all that was needed to satisfy the fundamental requirement of bourgeois class domination.

It cannot be underlined too heavily: Once the fetters of feudalism were removed from the capitalist mode of production, the basic victory and the expansion of the bourgeoisie and its social system were absolutely guaranteed. Once the work of destruction was accomplished, the work of constructing bourgeois society could proceed automatically by the spontaneous expansion of capital as regulated automatically by the market. To the bourgeoisie, therefore, it could not make a **fundamental** difference whether the work of destruction was begun or carried out by the plebian Jacobin terror against the aristocracy, as in France, or by the aristocracy itself in promotion of its own interests, as in Germany.

Neither the revolutionary French plebians nor the Napoleonic empire builders could replace feudalism with a special economic system of their own, or create any social system other than bourgeois society. In Germany, no matter how exclusively Bismarck was preoccupied with maintaining the power of the Prussian king and the Junkers, with modernising the nation so that it could defeat its foreign enemies, the only way the nation could be united and modernised was by stimulating, protecting and expanding the capitalist order. A prerequisite for this was of course the removal of all (or most) feudal and particularist obstacles in its path.

If Bonapartism and Bismarckism prevented the bourgeoisie from exercising the direct political influence that, ideally, it prefers, this was more than compensated by the fact that they suppressed or curbed an infinitely greater threat to the rule of the bourgeoisie — the plebian and later the proletarian masses. And if the bourgeoisie gives up or allows the curbing or even destruction of its own representative parliamentary institutions, under a Bonapartist or Bismarckian regime, or under its most decadent manifestation, fascism, it only admits, to quote the famous passage from Marx, "that in order to preserve its social power unhurt, its political power must be broken; that the private bourgeois can continue to ex-

ploit the other classes and rejoice in 'property', 'family', 'religion' and 'order' only under the condition that his own class be condemned to the same political nullity of the other classes". But its social power is preserved "unhurt" just the same, and the evidence of that is the prosperity that the bourgeoisie enjoyed under Napoleon, Bismarck and Hitler.

When, therefore, Deutscher stresses the fact that east of the Rhineland the "popular forces arrayed against it (moribund feudalism) were too weak to overthrow it 'from below'; and so it was swept away 'from above'," he is as wide of the mark as he can possibly be if **this fact is adduced to show the similarity between "the chief elements of both historical situations", namely, the spread of Bonapartism and of Stalinism.**

The absurdity of the comparison is

**"The socialist revolution does not lend itself to the kind of comparison with the bourgeois revolution that Deutscher makes".**

clear if we bear in mind the equally incontestable fact that whether feudalism was swept away "from above" or "from below", the difference in the result was, at the very most, secondary. In both cases the victory of capitalist society was secured and its growth guaranteed. Once the feudal fetters on capitalism were broken — whether by Cromwell's Ironsides or Napoleon's Grand Army, by Robespierre's Jacobins or Bismarck's Junkers — capitalism and **only capitalism** could be solidly established.

According to Deutscher, feudalism could be swept away and the rule of capitalism installed by a revolution carried out, from above or below, by the plebian masses, the petty bourgeois masses, the bourgeoisie itself, even by feudal lords themselves (and even by the modern imperialist big bourgeoisie, as we know from their work against feudalism in some of the colonies they penetrated). For the comparison to be less than ludicrous, it would have to be demonstrated that today "moribund capitalism" can also be swept away and the rule of socialism also installed by a revolution carried out by the petty bourgeoisie, the bourgeoisie, and any other class, as well as by the proletariat or as an adequate substitute for it. It would also have to be demonstrated that, just as

it made no essential difference to the bourgeoisie how its revolution was effected, so today it makes no decisive difference to the proletariat whether it makes its own socialist revolution or the revolution is made by a GPU which enslaves and terrorises it. To demonstrate that would be difficult.

The socialist revolution does not even lend itself to the kind of comparison with the bourgeois revolution that Deutscher makes.

The emancipation of the working class, said Marx, is the task of the working class itself. To which we add explicitly what is there implicitly: "of the conscious working class". Is this mere rhetoric, or a phrase for ceremonial occasions? It has been put to such uses. But it remains the basic scientific concept of the socialist revolution, entirely free from sentimentality and spurious idealism.

The revolution which destroys the fetters of feudalism, we wrote above, assures, by that mere act, the automatic operation and expansion of the new system of capitalist production. (We stress the word "new" to distinguish capitalism in the period of its rise and bloom from capitalism in its decline and decay, when the automatic regulators of production break down more and more frequently and disastrously. But that period is another matter.) Conscious direction of the capitalist economy plays its part, as does the nature of the state power; but at most these are secondary or, better yet, auxiliary to what Marx calls the "self-expansion of capital".

It is **altogether** different with the socialist revolution. In this case we cannot say that regardless of what class or social group destroys the fetters of capitalism, the act itself assures the automatic operation and expression of socialist production. Socialist production and distribution will take place automatically, so to speak (each will give what he can and take what he needs), only decades (how many we do not know or need to know) after the revolution itself has taken place, only after civilised socialist thinking and behaviour have become the normal habit of all the members of the community.

But immediately after the socialist revolution takes place, production and distribution must be organised and regulated. The bourgeoisie can no longer organise production, since it has just been or is about to be expropriated, and thereby deprived of the ownership and control of the means of production. The market can no longer regulate production automatically, for it has been or is being abolished along with the other conditions of capitalist production; in any case, it disappears to exactly the extent that socialist production advances.

Unlike capitalist production, socialist production (that is, production for use) demands *conscious* organisation of the economy so that it will function harmoniously. It is this consideration and this alone that requires of the new revolutionary regime the nationalisation, sooner or later, of all the principal means of pro-

duction and exchange. And it is this centralisation of the means of production that makes possible, to an ever-increasing degree, the harmonious planning of production and distribution.

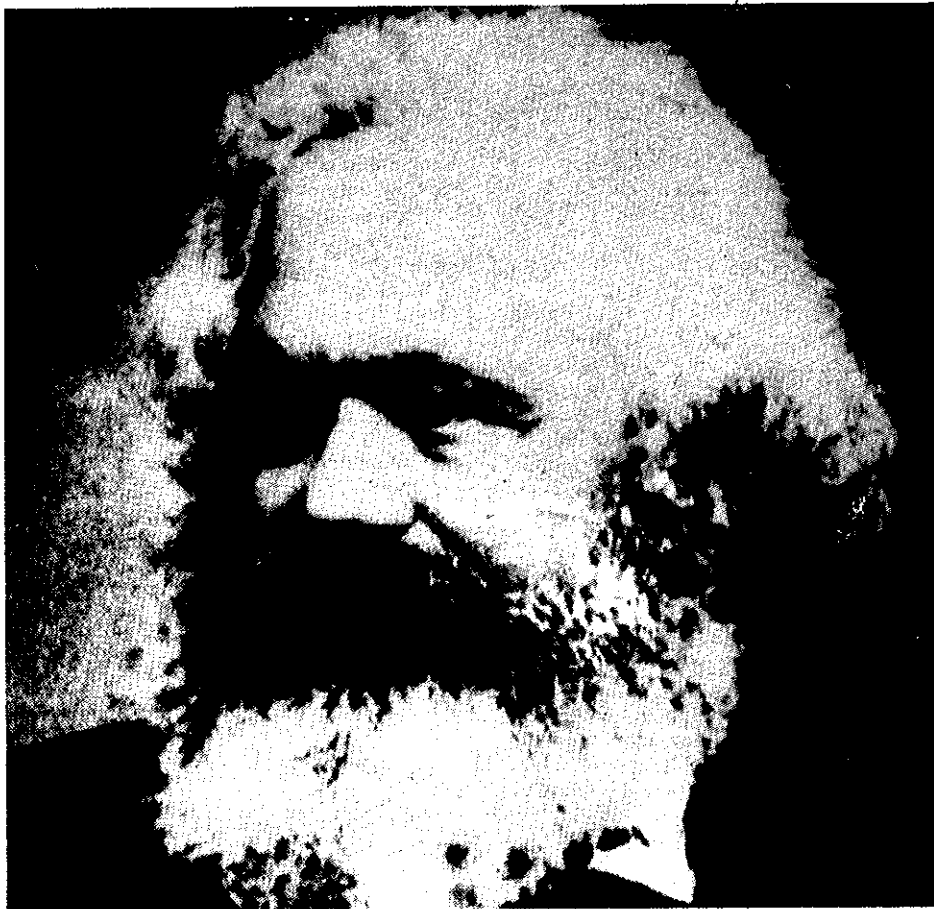
Planning, in turn, implies the ability to determine what is produced, how much of each product is produced, and how it is distributed to the members of the community (limited only by the level of the available productive forces) — to determine these things consciously, in contrast to capitalism which produces according to the dictates of the blindly-operating market and distributes according to glaring class inequalities.

Now, what assurance is there that the masses, who have made the revolution in order to establish a socialist economy, will be the main beneficiaries of the planned decisions that are taken and executed? (We say, cautiously, “main” and not sole beneficiaries, for obviously, in the first stage of the new society the economy will necessarily be encumbered by “parasitic” specialists, military households and bureaucrats.) Only one assurance: that the decisions on what and how much is produced and how it is distributed are taken by the masses themselves, concretely, through their freely and easily elected — and just as freely and easily recallable — representatives. Otherwise, there is no assurance whatever that those who make the decisions on how the economy shall be organised will make them in conformity with the economic principles of socialism, or principles that are socialist in type, socialist in direction.

In other words, the economic structure that replaces capitalism can be socialist (socialistic) **only** if the new revolutionary regime (the state) is in the hands of the workers, only if the working class takes and retains political power. For, once capitalist ownership is destroyed, all economic decisions are necessarily political decisions — that is, decisions made by the state which now has all the economy and all the economic power in its hands. And if the working class then does not have political power, it has no power at all.

Here we come to another basic difference between the two social systems, and not their similarity, as Deutscher says. It relates to the question of **how** social power is exercised in each case.

The bourgeoisie’s power over society rests fundamentally upon its ownership of property (the means of production and exchange). That ownership determines, in Marx’s excellent phrase, its mastery over the conditions of production, and therefore over society as a whole. Any state, any political power, which preserves capitalist power, is a bourgeois state, is indeed the “guardian and trustee” of the social power of the bourgeoisie. This holds for the state of Napoleon, Bismarck, Roosevelt, Ramsey Macdonald or Hitler. Deutscher understands that well enough, for he writes that “when the Nazi facade was blown away, the structure that revealed itself to the eyes of the world was the same as it had been before Hitler, with



its big industrialists, its Krupps and Thyssens, its Junkers, its middle classes, its **Grossbauers**, its farm labourers and its industrial workers”. The social power of the bourgeoisie was and remains its property ownership, its economic power.

It is exactly the other way around with the proletariat! It is not a property-owning class and it cannot be — not under capitalism, not under the revolutionary regime that separates capitalism from socialism, and certainly not under socialism itself, which knows neither property nor proletariat. The revolution which expropriates the bourgeoisie does not turn its property over to the workers (this worker or group of workers now owns a steel mill; that one a railroad; the other a bank, etc.). That would indeed be a revolution-for-nothing, for it would merely create a new type of capitalist, property-owning class. No, the revolution nationalises, immediately or gradually, all social property, turns it over to the new regime, the revolutionary state power. That is what happened in Russia in 1917, when the revolution was carried out “from below” (the “old Bolshevik” method). Every politically-educated person knows that it was a socialist revolution, that it raised the proletariat to the position of ruling class, that it abolished capitalist property and established socialist (socialistic) property in its place.

In that case, wherein lies the **fundamental** difference between that revolution and those carried out “from above” by Stalin throughout the Balkans and the Baltic?

The bourgeoisie was expropriated, politically as well as economically, its property was nationalised and turned over to the new state power.

According to Deutscher, there is no basic difference, no class difference, so to say. Just as Napoleon carried the bourgeois revolution to Poland, so Stalin carried the socialist revolution all the way to Germany. The “orthodox” (Oof!) Trotskyists are reluctantly but irresistibly drawing closer to the same monstrous conclusion. Their embarrassment over Deutscher is due entirely to the fact that he has anticipated them.

Yet there is a difference and it is fundamental. The *Communist Manifesto* stresses (and how much more emphatically should we stress it in our time?) “that the first step in the revolution by the working class, is to raise the proletariat to the position of ruling class, to win the battle of democracy”. It is not just some new political power in general that will socialistically expropriate the bourgeoisie, but the new proletarian power. As if in anticipation of present controversies, Marx underscores the point, at the beginning and at the end: “The proletariat will use **its political supremacy**, to wrest, by degrees, all capital from the bourgeoisie, to centralise all instruments of production in the hands of the state” — what state? to make sure he is understood, Marx adds: “i.e. **of the proletariat organised as the ruling class**”. That test of this “formula” for the socialist revolution (to say nothing of a dozen other tests) was passed

precisely by the Bolshevik revolution.

Nothing of the sort happens in the case of the Stalinist "socialist revolution", the revolution "from above". The proletariat is never allowed to come within miles of "political supremacy". What the new state "wrests" first of all, and not very gradually, either, are all the political and economic rights of the proletariat, reducing it to economic and political slavery. The difference between the revolution "from below" and the revolution "from above" is not at all a mere matter of difference in "method" but one of social, class nature. It might be compared to the difference between cropping a dog "from the front" and "from behind". By one "method", the tail is cut off, and the dog, according to some fanciers, is healthier and handsomer; but if the other "method" were employed and his head were cut off, we would not have a "bureaucratically-degenerated dog" but a dead one. Like all comparisons, this one too has its limitations: Stalinism does not cut off the head of the socialist revolution only because it does not allow that revolution to grow a head.

Yet Stalin, while depriving the proletariat of all political power, did maintain state property in Russia, did extend it vastly, and did convert capitalist property into state property in Poland, Rumania, Czechoslovakia and elsewhere. Because the Bolshevik revolution established state property, and Napoleon's extension of bourgeois property seems to lend itself to analogy, Stalin becomes, to Deutscher, the representative of those rulers who, "on the whole, use their power to consolidate most of the economic and social conquests of the revolution", and even to extend these revolutionary conquests at home and abroad. The formula, alas, is originally that of Trotsky, who wrote that the Russian workers "see in it (the Stalinist bureaucracy) the watchman for the time being of a certain part of their own conquests". If that is true, so much the worse for the Russian workers. In any case it does not reduce the magnitude of the error.

By what it says and implies, this formula tells us that the state is socialistic (a proletarian state) because the economy is nationalised, statified. The nature of the state is determined by the property form. That is indubitably true in all societies where private property exists. But it is radically false when applied to a society where the state owns the property. The exact opposite is then true, that is, the nature of the economy is determined by the nature of the state! That it is necessary to argue this ABC of Marxism and of evident social reality today, is one of the indications of the sorry state of the radical movement.

The theory that the economy is socialistic simply because the state owns it was originated by Stalinism. It was needed by Stalinism to help achieve its counter-revolution. It constitutes to this day the quintessential theoretical basis for its worldwide mystification. As early as 1925, almost coincidental, significantly enough,

with the launching of the theory of "socialism in one country", the Stalinists began to put forth, cautiously but unmistakably, the theory that Deutscher has so uncritically taken for granted. As cautiously as the one but not so uncritically as the other, the then Leningrad Opposition (Zinoviev and Kamenev) took issue with the theory and warned against it. Kamenev's speech on the question of the nature of the economy toward the end of 1925, is therefore of prime interest:

*"Do we perhaps doubt that our factories are enterprises of a "consistently-socialist type"? No! But we ask: Why did Lenin say that our enterprises are "enterprises of a consistently-socialist type"? Why didn't he say directly that they are genuinely socialist enterprises?"*

*What does this mean: enterprises of a consistently-socialist type? It means that these enterprises are essentially socialistic enterprises. They are socialist in what are called property-relations. The factories belong to the proletarian state, that is, to the organised working class...*

*The correct conception of our state industry consists in this, that our state enterprises are really enterprises of a consistently socialist type, inasmuch as they represent the property of the workers' state, but that they are far from being complete socialist enterprises because the mutual relations of the people engaged in them, the organisation of labour, the form of the labour wage, the work for the market, represent no elements of an unfolded socialist economy"*

At this point, it is worth noting, the congress minutes report an interruption from one of the hostile Stalinist delegates: "You have discovered America!" In those early days, the Stalinists did not dare challenge, directly and openly, the simple ABC ideas Kamenev was expounding. His ideas are clear. The property, the economy, can be considered socialist-in-type (not even socialist, but as yet only socialist-in-type) only because "they represent the property of the workers' state", only because "the factories belong to the proletarian state, that is, to the organised working class". The character of the economy is determined by the character of the political power, the state!

The Stalinists needed the very opposite theory in order to cover up and justify their destruction of the political power of the working class and therewith the workers' state. Where Kamenev, and all other Marxists, declared that the property is socialist only because it is owned by a workers' state, "that is, the organised working class" in power — the Stalinists declared the state is socialist simply because it owns the property. This theory is now canonised as constitutional law in all Stalinist lands and all arguments against it are promptly and thoroughly refuted by the GPU.

The theory is a Stalinist invention from start to finish. The finest-toothed comb drawn through all the writings of every Bolshevik leader — Lenin, Trotsky, Bukharin, Zinoviev, Kamenev — will not find so much as a phrase to sustain it. Un-

til Stalin turned the Marxian view upside-down, every one of the Marxists, without exception, repeated literally thousands of times that because the state is in the hands of the proletariat, therefore the economy is proletarian (socialist-in-type). They never argued that because the economy is in the hands of the state, therefore the state is proletarian — never!

How could they? The proletariat, not similar to the bourgeoisie but in contrast to it, establishes, asserts and maintains its social power only when it gets and holds political power. As the bourgeoisie is nothing without its economic power, its ownership of property, so the proletariat is nothing without its political power. Only political power can give it economic power, the power to determine the "conditions of production".

Deutscher's theory, or rather his adoption and adaptation of Stalin's, leads him to downright apologetics for the new tyranny — all very objectively put, to be sure, for there seems no doubt about his personal antipathy toward the abominations of the regime.

There is, first of all, the law of revolutions which Deutscher sets forth, as we have quoted it above. It is superficial; it is false and misleading. Certainly all the old revolutions and their leaders made promises to the masses that they did not fulfill. But that is a "law" of all bourgeois revolutions and is absolutely characteristic of them. Bourgeois revolutions are made under the sign of ideologies, using that term strictly in the sense in which the early Marx used it, namely as a synonym for *false consciousness* or as we would say after Freud, for *rationalisation*. They think and say they are fighting for Freedom. "They" includes, as Marx wrote, not only men like Danton, Robespierre, St. Just and Napoleon, "the heroes as well as the parties", but even "the masses of the old French Revolution". But no matter what they think or what they say or what they do, the revolution does not and cannot go beyond the "task of their time: the emancipation and the establishment of modern bourgeois society". At bottom, all that Freedom can mean in the bourgeois revolution is...freedom of trade.

That's why the bourgeois revolutions could not keep their promises to the masses, why they often had to establish the most dictatorial governments over and against the masses in the post-revolutionary period. But since Deutscher has tried the impossible task of formulating a law of all revolutions, when he might have known that every different social revolution develops according to different laws, the most important fact has escaped his attention: **the bourgeois revolutions did fulfill their promises to the bourgeoisie.** The plebian masses were crushed after such revolutions, but that was only in the nature of the revolution: while it may have been made by them, it was not and could not have been made for them. It was made for the bourgeoisie and the bourgeoisie prospered under it. Which is why it deserves the not-at-all

dishonourable name, bourgeois revolution!

Deutscher, however, gives Stalin's over- turns the distinctly honourable name, **socialist revolution**, and adds with a refined shrug, if the masses suffered all sorts of horrors, cruelties and oppressions after this revolution, if the promises made to them were not kept, why, "this has been common to all great revolutions so far".

**Preposterous conclusion:** while the bourgeois revolution does keep its promises to the bourgeoisie for whom it is made, the socialist revolution does not keep its promises to the masses for whom it is made.

**Correct conclusion:** the Stalinist revolution is not a socialist revolution in any sense and therefore is not intended to make good its promises to the masses; it is a revolution of the totalitarian bureaucracy and it most decidedly does keep its promises to this bureaucracy!

There is, in the second place, Deutscher's weird justification of the "follies and cruelties" of Stalin's "second revolution", the industrialisation of Russia. We have listened with sheer amazement, in recent times, to the same justification on the lips of British socialists who are not abashed at abusing the name of Trotsky by assuming it. Now we see it in print under Deutscher's signature. Stalin's "follies and cruelties" we read, "inevitably recall those of England's industrial revolution, as Karl Marx described them in *Das Kapital*". He continues:

*"The analogies are as numerous as they are striking. In the closing chapters of the first volume of his work, Marx depicts the "primitive accumulation" of capital (or the "previous accumulation", as Adam Smith called it), the first violent processes by which one social class accumulated in its hands the means of production, while other classes were being deprived of their land and means of livelihood and reduced to the status of wage-earners. The process which, in the Thirties, took place in Russia might be called the "primitive accumulation" of socialism in one country...*

*In spite of its "blood and dirt", the English industrial revolution — Marx did not dispute this — marked a tremendous progress in the history of mankind. It opened a new and not unhopeful epoch of civilisation. Stalin's industrial revolution can claim the same merit".*

The comparison is so microscopically close to being an outrage as to be indistinguishable from one, and it shows how Deutscher has literally lost his bearings.

The period of the old Industrial Revolution was a brutal one, but a harsh social task faced society and it had to be performed. By whom? The feudal aristocracy could not perform it; the foetus of a proletariat was not yet able to perform it. There was left only the young, lusty, callous bourgeoisie. It proceeded to concentrate property and capital in its hands in sufficient quantity to develop the forces of production of a vast scale and at a

breath-taking pace.

Who suffered the hideous cruelties and horrors of this accumulation? The little people — small peasants, the yeomanry, tradesfolk, the artisans and their social kith and kin. Who were the beneficiaries of these horrors? The bourgeoisie. Moral indignation apart, the process unfolded as it had to unfold, given the times, given the class relationships. It was a question of the primitive **capitalist** accumulation.

Accumulation is a need of all societies, the socialist included. Indeed, fundamentally the problem of a socialist accumulation was the economic rock on which the ship of state of the Russian Revolution foundered (a subject that requires the special study that it merits). The problem was not unknown to the leaders of the revolution. They debated it often and warmly. In the early Twenties, Preobrazhensky devoted a special work to the subject, which soon evoked a violent controversy. He pointed out that in the past, every social order achieved its

**"The Stalinist  
revolution is not a  
socialist revolution...  
it is the revolution of  
a totalitarian  
bureaucracy".**

particular accumulation at the expense of ("by exploiting") earlier and inferior economic forms. Therefore, continued Preobrazhensky:

*"The more economically backward, the more petty-bourgeois, the more agricultural is the country that is passing over to a socialist organisation of production, the slighter the heritage that the proletariat receives for the fund of its socialist accumulation at the time of the social revolution — the more the socialist accumulation will have to base itself upon the exploitation of the presocialist economic forms and the lighter will be the specific gravity of the accumulation derived from its own basis of production, that is, the less will this accumulation be based upon the surplus product of the worker in socialist industry". (The basic law of Socialist Accumulation, in the Herald of the Communist Academy, 1924.)*

Although the Trotskyist Opposition, of which Preobrazhensky was a prominent leader, did not endorse his views, the Stalinists let loose a hue and cry against Preobrazhensky that echoed for years. In his restrained way, Stalin denounced these views because they would "undermine the

alliance between the proletariat and the peasantry" and shatter the dictatorship of the proletariat — no less — for Preobrazhensky's views so easily lent themselves to the interpretation that the peasantry as a whole had to be exploited to build up the fund for socialist accumulation.

But what if someone had merely hinted, in the most delicate way, that the **socialist** accumulation fund would have to be built up not only by exploiting the peasantry, which is not, properly speaking, a socialist class, but also by exploiting the proletariat, which is the socialist class; and that the **socialist** accumulation would have to proceed along the same barbarous lines as the primitive capitalist accumulation in England? If he were not hooted out of sight as a crude defamer of socialism, it would only be because everybody else would be stricken with dumbfounded silence.

That Stalin's "second revolution" did start a process "by which one social class accumulated in its hands the means of production", and along the lines of the primitive capitalist accumulation, is absolutely true. But his accumulation, like the English, was directed against and paid for by the popular masses. It had nothing in common with socialism or socialist accumulation. It was not the "second revolution"; it was the counter-revolution.

"Marx did not dispute this", Deutscher reminds us. He did not dispute that the industrial revolution "marked tremendous progress in the history of mankind", but only for the reason given above: there was no other class but the bourgeoisie to carry it out and it carried it out in the class way characteristic of it. To have looked for the proletariat to carry out the old industrial revolution was **utopian**, because whatever proletariat existed then in England or Europe was utterly incapable of performing the mission which therefore fell to the bourgeoisie.

It only remains to ask: is it likewise utopian to expect the present proletariat to carry out the modern revolution for the socialist reconstruction of society? Or, since capitalism today is moribund and cannot be reinvigorated by man or god, must the work of dispatching it be left to a social force that puts in its place the most obscene mockery of socialism and social progress ever devised by man?

Deutscher gives no direct answer, to be sure. But implicit in his theory, in his whole analysis, is an answer in the affirmative, even if it is accompanied by shuddering resignation.

He writes movingly about those tragic figures, the great captains of the revolution, who were paraded through the prisoner's dock of the Moscow Trials by a new ruling class installed in the "second revolution". He explains — rightly, on the whole, we think — what brought these once indomitable revolutionists from recantation to capitulation to recantation until they finally allowed themselves to be used for the nightmarish indignities of the Trials. Deutscher's appraisal of the

revolutionary capitulators is noteworthy: "Throughout they had been oppressed by the insoluble conflict between their horror of Stalin's methods of government and their basic solidarity with the social regime which had become identified with Stalin's rule".

Insoluble conflict? Right. But especially right if we understand that all of them had abandoned any belief in the possibility of a proletarian revolutionary movement independent of Stalinism. That only removed the last barrier to an already indicated capitulation. They believed that the Stalinist regime represented at bottom a socialist or proletarian state, and horror over its methods could not eliminate the feeling that it was the regime of their class and by that sign also their own. So long as they thought, as Trotsky also did for a long time, that Stalinism represented a return to capitalism, they fought it openly and vigorously. They were wrong in that analysis and Stalin was not long in proving them wrong. When it became perfectly clear that Stalinism mercilessly crushed capitalism wherever he had the power to

do so, that he preserved and extended the realm of stratified property, they simply equated his anti-capitalism with the defence of socialism. Their "basic solidarity with the social regime which had become identified with Stalin's rule" decided, if it did not guarantee, their capitulation to Stalinism.

And really, from the standpoint of Deutscher's analysis, why not? The German bourgeoisie may not have been enthusiastic over all the methods of Bismarck, of Wilhelm II, and later of Hitler. But they were "in basic solidarity with the social regime which had become identified", successively, with those three names. They never fought these regimes; they never rebelled against them, except, perhaps, for an inconsequential handful of bourgeois and military plotters against Hitler. In their way, they were certainly right: "It is our regime, the regime of our class".

"In his exile", writes Deutscher, after the words we quoted above, "Trotsky, too, wrestled with the dilemma, without

bending his knees". True. We do not believe that Trotsky would ever have capitulated to Stalinism, and that not only because of his unsurpassable personal qualities as a revolutionist. To the extent that he shared the fatal theory that Stalinist Russia is a workers' state and that the Stalinist bureaucracy is still a sort of watchman over some of the conquests of the revolution, the same must be said of him as that said of Deutscher: the course of most of his followers since his death bears witness to this.

But everything within limits. In the first place, Trotsky introduced a radically modifying "amendment" to this theory, in a small but increasingly invaluable section of his ten-years-ago polemic against us which has proved so much more durable than those remaining sections which should be mercifully consigned to the archives. The amendment did neither less nor more than allow that events might prove that the Stalinist "workers' state" was only a new class system of totalitarian collectivist exploitation, the state of neo-barbarism. In the second place, he replied unhesitatingly and confidently in the affirmative to the key question he posed there: "Will objective historical necessity in the long run cut a path for itself in the consciousness of the vanguard of the working class?"

These views, despite his internally-contradictory theory about Stalinist Russia, enabled Trotsky to remain the active and dreaded mortal enemy of Stalinism. Because he could write that the one and only decisive standpoint for the revolutionist was the enhancement of "the consciousness and organization of the world proletariat, the raising of their capacity for defending former conquests and accomplishing new ones", he remained the greatest contemporary champion of the proletarian socialist revolution, that "revolution from below" which alone is socialist. It is these views that mark the chasm between their upholders, on the one side, and those who, out of despair or panic or premature fatigue, have retired from the struggle for socialism or gone over to any enemy camp.

Let them go. But those still resolved to carry on the fight must rid themselves and all others of the last trace of the view that, in some way, in some degree, the Stalinist neo-barbarism represents a socialist society. The view is disseminated, for different reasons but with similar results, by both the bourgeois and the Stalinist enemies of socialism. It has become the curse of our time. Of that, Deutscher's book is only another and saddening proof. Its value in the fight against Stalinism can only be to startle some people into thinking and rethinking the problem of Stalinism and seeing it for what it is. For it is a problem about which we can say with Jean Paul: "Wenn Ihr Eure Augen nicht braucht, um zu sehen, so werdet Ihr sie brauchen, um zu weinen" — If you do not use your eyes to see with, you will need them to weep with.

**LABOR ACTION**  
 AUGUST 18, 1940  
**STALIN HAS MURDERED OUR COMRADE TROTSKY**  
**Farewell, Leon Trotsky...**